- Gaming can be addictive and stop you from spending time with your family or friends. It can stop you from sleeping if you struggle to stop playing. This can affect your mood or confidence.

keeping gaming safe

- Check the games age rating before you start playing to make sure it is appropriate for you.
- Before you start playing check how to report, block or mute other players in case things upset you later.
- Tell a trusted adult if something does upset you when you are gaming.
- Never arrange to meet someone that you meet online without telling a trusted adult who you are meeting and where you are going. Ideally meet them in public and take a friend.
- If someone bullies you when you are gaming block / mute them or stop playing with them and try and find others to play with.
- Take regular breaks from gaming. Most organisations, including games manufacturers agree that you should take a 15 minute break after every hour. Also remember to make time for family and friends.

Who can help?

- For information and advice about staying safe online visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk.
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/help/contact-social-sites/ also has information about how to report and remove upsetting content from social media.
- If someone's asking you to send naked images of yourself you can respond with GIFs from the ZIPIT app. ZIPIT can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play and it also gives advice on how to stay in control when chats get intimate.
- If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way that someone has been communicating with you online then contact www.ceop.police.co.uk to find out how to report it.

Other useful websites / organisations

- youngminds.org.uk
- nhs.uk
- mind.org.uk

www.nsmind.org.uk

A Young Person's Guide to

Social Media & Gaming

mind
for better mental health

North Staffs

Social media

Social media is a great way to keep in touch with friends and share information and photos about interests and experiences.

It is also a really good way to access information about things that you enjoy, such as movies or sport, or things that you want to buy.

Social media can help you experience, understand and interact with other cultures and countries.

Social media risks

- In order to use social media sites you need to be at least 13 years old because of the risks that you can face.
- It can be difficult to know who you are talking to online. Some people make up fake profiles to gain your trust. They may lie about their age, gender and interests in order to make a connection with you.
- Sometimes adults gain trust in this way and then use this relationship to get young people to do something sexual. This is called online grooming.
- Some people post things on social media, like videos or images that you may find upsetting or offensive.
- Sometimes people post mean things about you. This might include comments or photographs that can leave you feeling sad and upset. This is called online bullying.
- People that you know and trust, like your boyfriend or girlfriend, might ask you to send naked or sexual images of yourself. This is called sexting. It is illegal to share an image of anyone in this way if they are under 18 years old. Once you have sent a photograph like this it can get shared with people who you don't want to see it.
- The immediacy of social media means that it can be easy to post comments or views that you later regret. Once these comments have been shared it can be difficult to remove them and they may still be seen in years to come when you are an adult.

Keeping social media safe

- Make sure you set the privacy settings on your social media sites so that you are in control of who can access your info.
- Know who your friends are. Accepting friend requests from strangers can help make you feel popular but you can't be certain who they actually are or what their motives might be.
- Take a few minutes to think before you post or share anything online so that you don't regret the post later. If it helps try and imagine how you would feel if your teacher or parents saw it?
- Don't post anything that shares your personal information like your name, address, date of birth or even which school you go to. This can include photographs of the badge on your school uniform, as people you don't know may use this to try and find where you are.
- They may also trace where you are via the location services on social media platforms so learn how to disable these services.
- Never arrange to meet someone who you meet online without telling a trusted adult where you are going or who you are meeting. Arrange to meet them in a public space and take a friend with you so you aren't on your own.
- Don't be swayed by peer pressure to join in with things that you are uncomfortable with, or that are making someone else sad or upset.
- Learn how to report anything that you are concerned about or that you find upsetting.

Gaming

Gaming is a great way to unwind and take your mind off things.

It can also be an opportunity to interact with other people who share similar interests to you on multiplayer games.

Gaming risks

- The content of some games can be inappropriate for younger age groups and may leave you feeling upset, scared or confused.
- Some games encourage you to make in-app purchases which can be expensive.
- Some of the people who you play against online may say mean things to you, destroy your items in the game or exclude you from playing. This is a form of online bullying.
- Some of the people that you play against and speak to online may be adults. They may help you complete stages of the game or buy you items in the game and compliment you to gain your trust before arranging to talk to you outside of the game. This is another form of online grooming.