



The Two Way Street

With Christmas now over, the chances are that many children have obtained a game console from Santa, or upgraded their old one! The remarkable value of games for children has never been in much doubt. They can do everything from teach tots valuable motor skills using a mouse to helping youngsters understand such relatively complex issues as the history of mankind through games like Civilization.

The very best gaming is always safe gaming – which means games should be played responsibly. The ideal way to ensure that your children are playing the right games and are playing sensibly is to take an active interest in what they are playing. But more than that, as parents or guardians you can also take direct control of just what games your children play at home and even how they play them and for how long.

Whether your children play on a PC or one of the latest consoles, Microsoft's Xbox 360, Nintendo's Wii or Sony's PlayStation, their gaming choices can be safely steered by you.

The UK's game industry funds Ask About Games, which is a website offering advice, insight and further reading. Feel free to check it out at www.askaboutgames.com



Play Safe Gaming Tips

- Engage. Find out what your children are playing and take an interest. Better still, join in the fun and play alongside them yourself.
- Check – is the game age related? Some games have an age restriction and **THESE ARE THERE FOR A REASON!** Grand Theft Auto and Call Of Duty are NOT suitable for a primary aged children even as observers. If you play these games yourself as an adult, ensure your child is NOT in the same room watching. Some children are tempted to replicate what they have seen in imaginative play on the playground.
- Lighten up. Games should be played in well-lit rooms.
- Ideally, you should restrict the amount of time your child plays games. Remember to insist on taking breaks. Some games can be especially intense, so at least five minutes every 45 minutes as a rule of thumb.

REMEMBER – while your child is playing games, they are not; -

- engaging in any physical activity (other than their thumbs!). Physical activity is vital for a healthy lifestyle. It develops gross motor skills which in turn helps fine motor skills (related to the ability to write, thread, cut etc). Being active can also help prevent childhood obesity.

- engaging in conversation – this is vital for early language acquisition.
- practising reading – again, this is vital for their education.
- developing friendships as they are not interacting socially.

To summarise, gaming can be a good thing, but in excess, it can be detrimental. A common sense approach would be to get a good balance of activities! Read a bit, talk a bit, engage in physical activity a bit, play with friends a bit and engage in games a bit! Using gaming as a reward for engaging in all the other activities is a good idea to get the balance. As parents, you can use gaming to your advantage. 😊

Your questions answered

Why do I sometimes have to wait at reception in the mornings for someone to deal with my enquiry?

The staff in the office work from 08.30 until 16.30. Teaching staff come in early to prepare lessons and resources for the day. Their day officially starts at 08.45. You can always make an appointment to see a staff member at a mutually agreed time or send in a letter/email

and we will get back to you.

The office staff can be quite busy in the mornings and after school – sadly, staff are often dealing with forgotten lunch boxes, missing jumpers, or seeking information that has been sent out already on newsletters! If you do need clarification, please look at the board in the reception area first – copies of the letters are put on there at the end of each school day and are available on the website under correspondence.

School does not keep money on the premises for obvious reasons! We may have some change if others have paid before you. Ideally, sending the correct money and consent slips inside a labelled envelope is

much easier and then you will not have to wait for change. We are in the process of finalising administration so that you can pay on line using Parent Mail 2 (+pay) therefore you will have the opportunity to pay for clubs and trips using this method.

Why do I have to wait for change when paying for trips and clubs at reception?

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us on our address specifically for the 'Two Way Street'

Email address:

twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk

