Dear Parents and Carers, welcome to June’s Safeguarding letter.

**1.Use the parental controls on your gaming device**

Most devices allow you to set time limits on game play, set age limits for content, and restrict in-app purchases.

Go to the website below for links to detailed instructions on your child’s device – it covers PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Apple and Android phones, and Nintendo Switch:

Ask About Games - www.askaboutgames.com/advice/parental-controls

**2. Turn off the voice chat feature**

Speak to your child to make sure they understand how to use this feature safely. Encourage them to follow the steps below if they meet someone who is offensive or inappropriate in the game. To disable the in-game voice chat function:

Open the settings menu (the 3 lines on the right-hand side of the screen), then choose the cog icon Select the ‘audio’ tab Tap the arrows next to ‘voice chat’ To ‘mute’ individual players: Pause the game Hover over the player you wish to mute and select the mute button (a loudspeaker icon)

**3. Make sure your child knows how to report inappropriate behaviour**

To report players who make your child feel uncomfortable: Select the menu icon then ‘Report player’

On the ‘Reason’ tab, select your reason from the available options On the ‘Player name’ tab, select the player you want to report, then – if you want to – add any extra information on the ‘Additional info’ tab Select ‘Send report’

Kind Regards

Andrew Grant -DSL

**ONLINE GAMING & GAMBLING** **SUPPORT.** To support parents and carers we have provided a bite-sized guide to the key points :

Research suggests that between 60% and 80% of teenagers gamble each year. This has grown considerably over the last few years and the amount of gambling adverts on the TV encourages this. 18 is the legal gambling age however there are many ways around this including in-app gambling which is causing issues when young people pressurise parents/ carers into paying for in-app purchases e.g ‘loot boxes’ ( virtual currency bought with real money) or then potentially using parent’s card details without their knowledge or permission.

Signs to look out for:

* changes in mood, sleep/tiredness and behaviour- withdrawal from social interactions
* sudden changes/discrepancies in how much money your child has or what they say they’re spending it on
* struggling with schoolwork or preoccupation with sporting odds and gambling activities portrayed online or on TV.

If you are worried your child is gambling online and that their well-being is being negatively affected, contact https://www.gamcare.org.uk/ for advice and support.

As ever, please feel free to contact school if you have any concerns. We are here to help where we can.