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Blocking Tools and Guides to Counter the Gambling Elements of Video Games 2025

Contents of Slide Deck

Terminology

This slide deck may contain unfamiliar terms and phrases. It may be helpful to review the following guides on key terminology in advance or keep them open in a separate tab for reference while reading.

- Esports Glossary - This resource covers what is esports, game genres, esport games and gaming terminology.

- A - Z Esports and Competitive Gaming Jargon list - This resource covers all text and communication abbreviations and other terminology used in the gaming community.

Gambling and Gaming Terminology: Key Terms

Loot Boxes: "Loot boxes are items in video games that may be bought for real-world money, but which provide players with a randomized reward of uncertain value. When paying their money, players have no way of knowing exactly what they will receive in return for their investment" (Zendle et al., 2019).

Cosmetic Items: "Cosmetic items provide the possibility to alter the image (e.g. look, shape, form, and colour) of in-game characters, weapons and other objects. This alteration does not influence the outcome of the gameplay" (Randau, Nguyen & Mirgolozar, 2018).

Gacha Games: "A gacha game is a video game that is developed around the gacha mechanic, despite the fact it is not necessarily the game's core mechanic. The gacha mechanic is a monetization model that emerged in video games, containing randomized virtual in-game rewards with varying rarities. Providing a lucky-draw experience where players spend in-game currency to receive a random virtual item in the game" (Rentia & Karaseva, 2022).

Gambling and Gaming Terminology: Key Terms

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In-game Purchases: Contains in-game offers to purchase digital goods or premiums with real world currency, including but not limited to bonus levels, skins, music, virtual coins and other forms of in-game currency, subscriptions, season passes and upgrades (e.g., to disable ads) (ESRB Ratings Guides, Categories, Content Descriptors).

In-game-Purchases (including random items): Contains in-game offers to purchase digital goods or premiums with real world currency (or with virtual coins or other forms of in-game currency that can be purchased with real world currency) for which the player doesn't know prior to purchase the specific digital goods or premiums they will be receiving (e.g., loot boxes, item packs, mystery awards) (ESRB Ratings Guides, Categories, Content Descriptors).

Gambling and Gaming Terminology: Key Terms

Gamblification: Refers to the work in the field of gambling studies that have advanced the notion of gamblification (Gainsbury et al., 2015) to characterise the digitally mediated diffusion of gambling game mechanics and principles (Zanescu, French & Lajeunesse, 2021). In short, it is the gamblification of non-gambling games, in which customers can win items of value.

Pay-to-Win: "Where the player can spend money in exchange for rewards that affect the gameplay directly, reduce the required time to achieve in-game goals, or increase the available playtime set by gameplay limiters" (Hietamäki, 2025).

Free-to-Play: "Free-to-play (F2P) has become an increasingly popular revenue model for the video games industry. A F2P game can be acquired and played free of charge while players are encouraged to buy virtual goods during game play" (Alha et al., 2014).

Key Take Home Points

- There are many different gambling elements that feature across video games and esports. There are risks of harm associated with gambling – not just the financial aspects but also health, wellbeing and social consequences. As a result, caregivers and educators need to be aware of these gambling elements.

- The slide deck will provide information surrounding multiple games, consoles, platforms, devices, internet service providers and online stores. This will help provide readers with additional information to have a greater understanding about what games children are playing and what devices they are using.

Key Take Home Points

- The work provides readers with step-by-step guides and instructions to walk caregivers and educators through multiple devices, video games and operating systems used. This in turn will help expand awareness for those individuals who have or look after children on how to set screen time limits, age restrictions, and password and pin protection for payments.

- Finally, the slide deck provides additional tools, resources and downloadable guides. It also identifies support and treatment services for addressing gambling harms in gaming and esports. These include in-person and online support services within the North East and across England.

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Part 1: Introduction

The Purpose of this Resource

The purpose of this slide deck is:

To provide caregivers and educators with information on the various methods to apply blocking tools, enhance security, promote awareness and contribute to limiting the promotion and exposure of gambling and gambling-related harms to children and young people across the video game communities.

The Need for this Resource

The need for this resource has been identified due to a lack of resources, knowledge and awareness about gambling elements in esports and video games.

This resource provides caregivers and educators with information and guidance about parental controls and other resources that can be used to reduce exposure to gambling in esports and video games and minimise the risk of gambling-related harms.

Parental controls can be used to manage screen time, block inappropriate content, prevent accidental spending, and increase safety online. Research shows they improve digital wellbeing when used alongside regular conversations about online activities (Internet Matters).

This work aligns with one of the eight identified pillars of the Regional Gambling Related Harms Programme (Protecting Young People) and supports the work being done to address gambling related harms.

This slide deck will accompany the Esport and Video Game Academic Slide Deck.

The Need for this Resource

This is a separate resource from the core toolkit due to the wide variety of video games, different devices (mobile phones, tablets, computers and consoles) and numerous streaming and communication services or platforms available. Additionally, multiple layers of security and protection are needed to limit screen time and prevent exposure to potentially harmful content and age-restricted information.

This guide includes a range of popular video games and popular esport titles, along with details about the various platforms, internet browsers and online stores. It is important to note that this is not a definitive list, as there are thousands of video games and other esport titles currently available. This guide will be updated as new and popular titles emerge.

This work is not intended to criticise the esport and video games industry as esports and video games offer many social, mental and skills-based benefits to players. However, it is recognised that the gamblified features in video games and esports can cause harm.

Video Games and Esports are not Harmful

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Esports engage a wide demographic of young people and are intrinsically a fun, team-building activity that promote leadership, character development, communication and social skills.

Esports can improve confidence, strategic thinking, problem solving ability, reading comprehension and phonic skills and can help with the development of digital and cyber skills. These skills can be transferred into physical sports and schoolwork. Esports also offer a multitude of career pathways (British Esports, 2019).

Further evidence provided by British Esports supports this position:

• British Esports Benefits of Esports

• School pupils survey shows Esports increases concentration, behaviour and attendance levels

• Deputy Headteacher explains the benefits of Esports to their Alternative Provision School

Video Games and Esports are not Harmful

UNICEF and the Video Games Industry highlight the benefits of using video games as an educational tool both in the EU and around the world (Powell, 2025).

Video game play is positively correlated with well-being (Johannes, Vuorre & Przybylski, 2021). Video games have been evidenced to improve decision making and cognitive skills (Reynaldo et al., 2021). Video games helped individuals during the Covid-19 pandemic by providing cognitive stimulation and opportunities to socialise. This provided positive outcomes related to mental health including reducing anxiety and stress (Barr & Copeland-Stewart, 2022).

The Need for this Resource

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The objectives of the slide deck are to:

1. Highlight the wide range of devices and platforms that may feature or expose children and young adults to gambling.

2. Provide resources and links for caregivers and educators to access tools and information on how to promote a safer online experience for children and young people.

3. Describe different devices, video game and platforms and identify how they tackle, reduce and or ban gambling exposure to children and young people.

Evidence on the Harms associated from Gambling in Video Games and Esports

For further information on the various types of harms someone may experience from gambling elements in video games and esports, please refer to the Esport and Video Game Academic Slide Deck.

For more general harms and risks from gambling and the various gambling related-harms, please see the Academic Slide Deck on Gambling Related Harms.

Utilising this Resource

Controls can be divided into multiple areas. These include:

1. Game-specific: The game title itself.

2. Store-specific: The platform where the game was purchases (not applicable to all games).

3. Platform-specific: The device and or console used to play the game.

4. Network-specific: The internet service provider used to play the game online.

By considering these areas together, caregivers and educators can gain a clearer understanding of the games children and young people play, the amount of time spent playing and the financial costs involved.

Blocking and monitoring tools assist to manage screen time and spending, while also giving caregivers and educators the confidence to better navigate and supervise participation in video games and esports.

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Part 2: Age, Content, Interactive Elements and Ratings

Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB)

In 2008, rating summaries were introduced to provide additional detail about the content found in video games. These ratings are provided by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB).

Ratings can be found on the ESRB website or mobile app to assist caregivers and educators in having a better understanding of what games are appropriate for their children and or students.

Ratings have three parts:

1. Rating categories
2. Content descriptors
3. Interactive elements

All be found here: https://www.esrb.org/ratings-guide/

Age Ratings for Video Games

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The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) has developed categories that assess the suitability of video games based upon their content for viewing across different age ranges. Categories include the following:

Everyone
Content is generally suitable for all ages. May contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

Everyone 10+
Content is generally suitable for ages 10 and up. May contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language and/or minimal suggestive themes.

Teen
Content is generally suitable for ages 13 and up. May contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling and/or infrequent use of strong language.

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Age Ratings for Video Games

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MATURE 17+
M
ESRB

Mature 17+

Content is generally suitable for ages 17 and up. May contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content and/or strong language.

ADULTS ONLY 18+
AO
ESRB

Adults Only 18+

Content suitable only for adults ages 18 and up. May include prolonged scenes of intense violence, graphic sexual content and/or gambling with real currency.

Image Source

Age Ratings for Video Games

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Rating Pending

Not yet assigned a final ESRB rating. Appears only in advertising, marketing and promotional materials related to a physical (e.g., boxed) video game that is expected to carry an ESRB rating, and should be replaced by a game's rating once it has been assigned.

Rating Pending — Likely Mature 17+

Not yet assigned a final ESRB rating but anticipated to be rated Mature 17+. Appears only in advertising, marketing, and promotional materials related to a physical (e.g., boxed) video game that is expected to carry an ESRB rating, and should be replaced by a game's rating once it has been assigned.

Image Source

Content Descriptions for Video Games

ESRB Content Descriptors indicate content that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern. These include:

- All content
- Substances
- Blood / Gore
- Humour
- Violence
- **Gambling**
- Language
- Nudity
- Sexuality

Content Descriptors indicate content that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern.

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Interactive Elements

Gambling Themes

- Prominently featured images or activities that are typically associated with real-world gambling even if they are not directly simulating a gambling experience.

Real Gambling

- Player can gamble, including betting or wagering real cash or currency.

Simulated Gambling

- Player can gamble without betting or wagering real cash or currency. Typically assigned to simulations of casino-based gambling.

EVERYONE

Comic Mischief
Mild Lyrics

ESRB

In-Game Purchases

Interactive Elements highlight interactive or online features that may be of interest or concern but do not influence the rating assignment of a product. This includes users' ability to interact with each other, the sharing of users' location with other users, if purchases of digital goods or services are offered, and/or if unrestricted internet access is provided.

Image Source

Interactive Elements

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In-Game Purchases

- Contains in-game offers to purchase digital goods or premiums with real world currency, including but not limited to bonus levels, skins, music, virtual coins and other forms of in-game currency, subscriptions, season passes and upgrades (e.g., to disable ads).

EVERYONE

E ESRB

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Interactive Elements

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In-Game Purchases (Includes Random Items)

- Contains in-game offers to purchase digital goods or premiums with real world currency (or with virtual coins or other forms of in-game currency that can be purchased with real world currency) for which the player doesn't know prior to purchase the specific digital goods or premiums they will be receiving (e.g., loot boxes, item packs, mystery awards).

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Image Source

Guide: What Free-to-Play Really Means?

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ESRB published the blog post 'A Parent's Guide: What Free-To-Play Really Means' to discuss the meaning of free-to-play games.

Free-to-play games are not completely free to play and have hidden costs and payments within them.

This blog post contains FAQs for caregivers and educators to consider before buying any game.

It also includes tools to manage in-game purchases and examples of games that have these in-game purchases.

Link to article here: https://www.esrb.org/blog/what-free-to-play-really-means/

A Parent's Guide: What "Free-to-Play" Really Means

Image Source

Additional Resources - ESRB

The following are links to resources on the ESRB website for topics on specific consoles and or topics to better equip caregivers and educators:

• Parental Controls which includes a FAQ section and different search functions by console type then filter by age rating, control spending, limit time settings and restricting communications.

• Family Gaming Guide to help caregivers navigate the world of video games and set smart boundaries.

• The ESRB Mobile App to have quick and easy access to check video games content if they are suitable for your children and or classroom.

Additional Resources - ESRB

The ESRB and PTA (and other stakeholders) came together and developed a booklet titled, "A Parent's Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and Online Safety". It includes additional information about the following topics:

- Message from ESRB and PTA

- About the ESRB and Video Game Rating System

- Parental Controls

- Advice from GamerDad

- Parents Tips and Safety Measures

- Family Discussion Guide

- Resources for Parents.

Age Ratings for Video Games: Additional resource

British Esports has developed an age guide for esport and video games.

This was published in 2021 and breaks down each age rating with accompanying games and their suitability for children, adolescents and young adults.

Link to resource: Esports Age Guide 2021 | British Esports Federation

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BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION

ESPORTS AGE GUIDE 2021

This guide is designed to inform parents, children and teachers which competitively-played video games are suitable for various age groups, from 3+ up to 18+. We've included official PEGI age ratings where possible, however some PC download-only games do not have age ratings, so we've also offered our own recommendations at points. See the blurb at the bottom of this infographic and below Counter-Strike for more information.

For more information including typical game length and price, visit www.britishesports.org

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Part 3: Internet Service Providers

Internet Parental Controls

Parental controls can be set up through internet service providers to help manage and restrict the type of content that can accessed online. Many providers offer the option to set different restrictions for each user.

Wi-Fi networks need to be configured to apply these controls, which usually involves accessing the router and or specific devices. If you're unsure how to do this, your internet provider can guide you through the process.

Keep in mind, these controls only apply when a child or young person is connected to the home Wi-Fi network. Some internet providers allow parental controls to be applied to mobile data plans. If a child or young person is accessing public Wi-Fi connections or using Wi-Fi at someone else's house, settings on their device will need to be adjusted to ensure parental controls are active.

Home Wi-Fi Providers

Commonly used home Wi-Fi providers include:

- EE
- BT
- TalkTalk
- PlusNet
- Sky
- Virgin Media
- Vodafone

A summary of available parental control features and instructions for setting them up with different providers can be found at How to set up and update parental controls.

EE Broadband

To help reduce risks and harms when using EE Broadband, **Internet Matters** has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block specific websites

- Block content categories

- Pause Wi-Fi access for individual devices or groups of devices

- Schedule time offline.

More information can be found at Using parental controls on EE

Image credit and source

BT Broadband

To help reduce risks and harms when using BT Broadband, **Internet Matters** has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block specific websites

- Block content categories

- Limit access to YouTube

- Set 'homework time' filters to add additional restrictions during specific periods of time

- Pause parental controls or override to access a blocked website as required.

More information can be found at BT Parental Controls

Image credit and source

TalkTalk Broadband

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To help reduce risks and harms using TalkTalk Broadband, **Internet Matters** has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block specific websites
- Block content categories
- Set up 'Homework Time'
- Activate 'Scam Protection' filters (this will also automatically block explicit content)
- Turn on virus alerts

TalkTalk
For Everyone

Image credit and source

More information can be found at Keeping your Family Safe - TalkTalk

PlusNet Broadband

To help reduce risks and harms when using PlusNet Broadband, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block specific websites

- Block content categories

- Set a browsing time limit

- Create a list of 'safe sites'

More information can be found at Plusnet SafeGuard in 2025

Sky Broadband

To help reduce risks and harms when using Sky Broadband, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- block or allow specific websites
- block or allow content categories using predefined and custom options
- set automatic changes to filtering levels based on the time of day.

More information can be found at Using Sky Broadband Shield

Image credit and source

Virgin Media Broadband

To help reduce risks and harms when using Virgin Media Broadband, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block specific websites
- Block content categories
- Set up screen time restrictions

More information can be found at How to use parental controls for internet use - Virgin Media

Image credit and source

Vodafone Broadband

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To help reduce risks and harms when using Vodafone Broadband, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set filters for age-appropriate content

- Block specific websites

- Block specific content categories

- Pause internet access

- Set 'focus times' that allows limited internet access for completing homework

- Set bedtimes

More information can be found at Vodafone Secure Net

Image credit and source

Mobile Data Providers

Parental controls can be set on some data plans through the provider website or through provider apps. Most providers will require a credit card when setting up to verify you are over 18.

Commonly used mobile data plan providers include:

- EE Mobile Network
- BT Mobile Network
- Sky Mobile Network
- Vodafone Mobile Network
- O2 Mobile Network
- Three Mobile Network
- Tesco Mobile

EE Mobile Network

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To help reduce risks and harms when using the EE Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following age-restrictions on content:

- Kids (under 12) - no content rated above PG, blocks social media apps, dating apps and gambling

- Teens (12+) - allows access to social media and streaming, 18+ content is blocked

- Adults (18+) - no restrictions

More information can be found at Using parental controls on EE

Image credit and source

BT Mobile Network

To help reduce risks and harms when using the BT Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set one of three predefined filter levels: Light, Moderate and Strict
- Block specific websites
- Block content categories
- Pause parental controls or override to access a blocked website as required.

Note: Individual devices on the same mobile network plan cannot be configured. If parental controls are activated, they will be applied to all devices on that plan.

More information can be found at BT Parental Controls

Image credit and source

Sky Mobile Network

To help reduce risks and harms when using the Sky Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block websites rated 18+ only

Note: You can apply different settings on each sim on your mobile network connection.

More information can be found at Parental controls on Sky Mobile

Image credit and source

Vodafone Mobile Network

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To help reduce risks and harms when using the Vodafone Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for activating Vodafone Content Control. This blocks all 18+ rated content.

Secure Net Mobile can also be set up on any mobile network via the Vodafone website or Secure Net app. Features include:

- Filter for age-appropriate content
- Block specific websites
- Block specific content categories
- Pause internet access
- Set 'focus times' that allows limited internet access for completing homework
- Set bedtimes

Image credit and source

Please note: Vodafone Secure Net Mobile has an incurred cost per month after an initial three-month free trial.

More information about Secure Net Mobile can be found at Secure Net

O2 Mobile Network

To help reduce risks and harms when using the O2 Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block websites rated 18+ only

Note: Virgin Media mobile users are now on the O2 network.

More information can be found at O2 Age restricted content and age verification

Image credit and source

Three Mobile Network

To help reduce risks and harms when using the Three Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block websites rated 18+ only

More information can be found at Three | Accessing and blocking adult content

Tesco Mobile Network

To help reduce risks and harms when using the Tesco Mobile Network, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following age-restrictions on content:

- Under-12s
- Under-18s
- 18+

More information can be found at Tesco | Parental controls and content settings

Image credit and source

Other Resources

Wi-Fi Blocker – Parental Controls App for Router

Wi-Fi Blocker is a single purchase, no subscription app available on the Apple Store and Google Play store.

The app includes the following features:

- Limit screen time
- Organise restrictions using individual profiles
- Pause internet access on demand
- Block specific devices
- Limit who can access your Wi-Fi network

Image credit and source

More information and instructions can be found at WiFi Blocker – Parental Control App

Other Resources

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Vodafone Guardian App

The Vodafone Guardian App is available free of charge to be downloaded on Vodafone smartphones and smartphones with the Android operating system.

Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Block internet access and use of apps at specific times
- Block specific contact and phone numbers
- Set specific times during which your child can make calls or use the camera
- Restrict calls to specific named contacts
- Transfer bullying messages to a secure folder that only you can access.

More information can be found at Vodafone | Protecting Children, Empowering Parents

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Part 4: Online Stores and Accounts

Online Stores and Accounts

An **app store** is a marketplace for finding and downloading apps to your device, offering a variety of options from games and productivity tools to utilities and content. Apps can be free to download or require a one-time payment or subscription. Some apps have in-purchase options to access additional content or remove advertising.

Online gaming stores allow you to purchase and download games directly to your computer or console. Parental controls applied to online gaming stores do not apply to the games purchased or the consoles they are used on. Please ensure you check the settings for the games and consoles in addition to the stores and embed parental controls at all levels (game, console and online store).

Common app stores include:
- Google Play Store
- Apple (iOS) App Store
- Microsoft Store
- Samsung Galaxy
- Electronic Arts (EA) Store

Common online gaming stores include:
- Epic Games Store
- Steam Store
- Electronic Arts (EA) Store

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Google Play Store

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Google Play Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Setting age restrictions on all apps and game downloads based on their PEGI (Pan European Game Information) age ratings.
- Restrict access to films and TV content
- Restrict access to books containing sexually explicit content
- Manage and restrict purchases

Spending limits on Google Play cannot be managed through the app's settings. However, you can set spending restrictions within the Google Play Store via Google Family Link.

More details on Google Family Link can be found on the Internet Matters **step-by-step guide**

More information can be found at **Parental guide to Google Play**

Image credit and source

Android Devices

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Android smartphones have parental controls for the Play Store but not on the device itself. These controls allow you to set the maturity level of apps and set a PIN code for purchases.

See 'Google Play Store' for details on setting up parental controls for Play Store.

Android Tablets allow you to create restricted profiles that limit the access your children have to content on Android Tablets and restricts in-app purchasing. Setting up a restricted user means you can select apps that you want restricted access to, such as internet browsers. A password will be required to log in as an unrestricted user.

A step-by-step guide with images for setting up restricted profiles on Android Tablets can be found at Android tablet safety guide for parents | Internet Matters

Image credit and source

Apple (iOS) Store

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Apple's **Family Sharing** feature allows caregivers to set up an Apple ID for kids, manage their screen time, approve app spending and downloads.

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Apple Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Prevent app store purchases

- Prevent installation or deletion of apps from device

- Restrict the use of built-in apps or features

- Prevent access to apps with explicit content and content ratings

- Allow or restrict changes to privacy settings

- Allow or restrict changes to other settings

More information and instructions can be found at Use parental controls on your child's iPhone or iPad

Image credit and source

Microsoft Store

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Microsoft Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set age limits - which will filter out content designed for users above the age limit

- Require permission for any purchases

More information can be found at Microsoft Family Safety

Image credit and source

Samsung Galaxy Store

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Samsung Galaxy Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set app and game age ratings to restrict app and game downloads from the following age settings: All ages (most restricted), 12+, 16+, and 18+ (no restrictions).

- Set a requirement for approval for all downloads and purchases from the following approval settings: All downloads and purchases, paid content only, or in-app purchases only

More information can be found at Parental controls available on your Galaxy phone or tablet

Image credit and source

Epic Games Store (Multiple Games)

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Epic Games Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set content limits
- Limit spending and purchases
- Control who can message your child as well as 'friend' them or engage in voice chat
- Limit the inappropriate language your child sees

These setting **do not** affect payments made on other gaming consoles and platforms such as PlayStation, Steam, Xbox, and Nintendo Switch. It also does not affected purchases made with in-game currencies.

More information can be found at https://safety.epicgames.com/en-US/parental-controls

See Part 6: Specific Games and Game Features for more information on parental controls for specific games sold by Epic Games.

Image credit and source

Electronic Arts (EA) Store (Multiple Games)

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Electronic Arts Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set up child accounts or teen accounts.
- Set monthly spending amounts to avoid accidental purchases that go over budget.
- Set the limits for 'game and expansion' purchases and to 'microcontent' purchases.

Child accounts cannot make purchases or access online play. However, EA app teen accounts can. Setting spending limits on teen accounts can help them manage their finances.

More information can be found at https://www.ea.com/en-gb/ea-app/parental-controls

Image credit and source

Steam Store (Multiple Games)

To help reduce risks and harms when purchasing and downloading games using the Steam Store, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up Family Management on Steam
- Add a child to your Steam Family
- Add your child as a Friend
- Turn on Steam's parental controls
- Block inappropriate games
- Manage screen time on Steam
- Restrict inappropriate content
- Add money on Steam

Image credit and source

Steam Families is a collection of family-related features. Steam families can have up to 6 members and can be managed via Steam Client, mobile device, or web browser.

More information can be found at Steam Support: Family View

Steam Families User Guide & FAQ

Steam Families User Guide & FAQ produced a step-by-step for caregivers and educators that provides details for setting and adjusting parental control features.

This includes controls and settings for the store, FAQs and advice for caregivers and educators.

- Steam Families Feature Overview
- Frequently asked questions
- Troubleshooting Steam Families
- Reporting an issue with Steam Families

Image credit and source

If you wish to learn more about the parental controls for the Steam Store, then please follow the link here: Steam Support Steam Families User Guide & FAQ

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Part 5: Xbox, PlayStation and Nintendo Consoles

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Xbox 360

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Xbox 360 consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Activating Parental Controls
- Editing Privacy Settings
- Microsoft Family

More information can be found at Xbox Support

Image credit and source

Xbox Series X|S

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on the Xbox Series X|S consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set in-game spending restrictions
- Limit buying and downloading
- Where to manage screen time for Xbox Series X|S
- Set regular screen time breaks
- Manage communication between users
- How to manage content restrictions
- Where to review Xbox privacy settings

More information can be found at Xbox Support

Image credit and source

Xbox Live

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Xbox Live consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up Privacy settings
- Security, family and Forums
- Privacy and Online Safety
- Select protection level for your Family

More information can be found at Xbox Support

Xbox One and Xbox One S

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To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Xbox One and Xbox One S consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up Privacy settings
- Security, family and Forums
- Privacy and Online Safety
- Select protection level for your Family

More information can be found at Xbox Support

Image credit and source

PlayStation

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on PlayStation consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Account Settings
- Family Management Tab
- Add Family Member
- Fill out details for your Child
- Accessing Email Account
- Set Parental Controls

More information can be found at PlayStation parental controls

PlayStation VITA (PS VITA)

PlayStation VITA is a handheld console. To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on PlayStation VITA (PS VITA) consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Accessing Parental Controls
- Setting a passcode
- Blocking features
- Setting age rating
- Adding playtime limits
- PlayStation Network

More information can be found at PlayStation parental controls

Image credit and source

PlayStation 3 (PS3)

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on PlayStation 3 (PS3) consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set a parental controls password
- Where to set content level for games
- Explanation of PS3 parental control levels
- Blu-Ray and DVD Parental Controls
- How to deactivate the PS3 browser

More information can be found at PlayStation parental controls

Image credit and source

PlayStation 4 (PS4)

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on PlayStation 4 (PS4) consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up parental controls
- Where to add family members
- Customise user permissions

More information can be found at PlayStation parental controls

Image credit and source

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PlayStation 5 (PS5)

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To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on PlayStation 5 (PS5) consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to add a family member to your PS5
- Manage spending limits in the PlayStation Store
- Restrict communication and user content
- How to manage screen time on PS5
- Setting age restrictions on PS5
- Blocking players on the PlayStation Network

Image credit and source

More information can be found at PlayStation parental controls

Nintendo Wii U

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To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Nintendo Wii U consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Setting up a Parental Controls pin
- Highest Game Rating allowed
- Online interactions in Games
- Access to the Internet Channel,
- Restrict Purchasing

The Wii U Parental Controls allow you to set restrictions for each family member, giving control over what games can be played or downloaded and how your children can search and interact online.

More information can be found at Nintendo parental controls

Image credit and source

Nintendo Switch

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To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Nintendo Switch consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up parental controls on Nintendo Switch
- Create a Family Group
- How to set spending restrictions
- Where to set age restrictions
- Setting a Play Time Limit

More information can be found at Nintendo parental controls

Image credit and source

Nintendo DS and 3DS

To help reduce risks and harms for playing games on Nintendo DS and 3DS consoles, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

• How to enable parental controls on Nintendo DS and 3DS
• Where to set up age limits for content
• Other available settings

More information can be found at Nintendo parental controls

Image credit and source

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Part 6: Specific Games and Game Features

How to Manage In-Game Spending

Internet Matters has produced a guide titled *'How to manage in-game spending: Supporting online money management'*. This guide provides an overview of what in-game spending and purchases looks like across a variety of games.

In addition, they have added tools and methods that caregivers and educators can use to limit time on these games, set spending limits and how to ask questions surrounding these games.

On average, 8–17-year-olds spend £38 a month on in-game purchases and 55% of parents worry that their children feel pressured to spend online. In another report, 49% of children and young people believe that online video games were only fun when you spend money.

How to Manage In-Game Spending

'How to manage in-game spending: Supporting online money management' discusses that children will struggle to understand the difference in spending in real world money versus the digital world. This is due to:

- How easy it is to buy digital items in-game due to a credit/debit card being linked to accounts and only one or two clicks needed to action a transaction.

- Games using terms such as stones, bucks, gems and tokens to represent real world cash which devalues real-world monetary value. Therefore, children may not realise the actual financial cost.

- Free-to-play games are not actually free and unknowingly children get brought into a game under a false premise to then encourage them to go to the in-game store.

- Many of these games do not disclose probability values and odds of winning in-game items. This promotes purchases through an in-game random item generator in the hopes of winning these items.

ESRB Game Overviews

The ESRB website has an extensive list of games that include gambling content and or in-game purchases.

Games in this list include the following video games:

- Overwatch 2
- Genshin Impact
- Roblox
- Apex Legends
- Borderlands 3
- Valorant

Additional games that are yet to have an ESRB page but are well known for having gambling and or in-game purchase elements include Team Fortress 2, Counter Strike: Global Offensive, DOTA 2 and Heroes of the Storm.

ESRB Game Overviews

ESRB rating pages also include some of the following popular sports-based titles:

- Football Manager 2024

- FIFA 23

- EA Sports UFC 5

- EA Sports FC Showcase 25

- EA Sports Madden NFL 25

- EA Sports College Football 25

- NBA 2K25

- EA Sports NHL 25

Game-Specific Features

Many game titles have gambling features, random item generators and or in-game purchases. The following slides review some of the more popular game titles and the tools that can be used to restrict or block these features.

This is not to suggest these games cause the most harm or risk. Slides examine how different games are supporting caregivers and educators to better use and monitor children's time and behaviours on these games.

Fortnite

To help reduce risks and harms when playing Fortnite, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set up Parental Controls
- Filter mature language
- Hide account names
- Limit new friends
- Text and video chat settings
- Monitor or limit screen time
- Limit in-game spending
- Privacy settings without Parental Controls
- Report a user
- Understand Cabined Accounts

Image credit and source

Fortnite: Cabined Accounts

Fortnite has an account feature called "cabined accounts". Players under the age of 13 are limited to cabined accounts until caregivers give them permission for additional features.

Taken from the Internet Matters Fortnite Parental Controls guide:

"*Cabined accounts allow children to play Fortnite and other games from Epic Games with limited features. They can access all previously purchased content but cannot talk to other players, make new purchases or receive any notifications among other limitations. Parents must consent to allow their child access to these limitations*".

More information about cabined accounts can be found on the Epic Games website.

Fall Guys

To help reduce risks and harms when playing Fall Guys, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

• Manage party chat settings
• Hide usernames
• Report someone
• Limit in-game spending

Fall Guys also features Cabined Accounts for players under the age of 13.

Image credit and source

Fall Guys: Where to limit In-Game Spending

Fall-Guys, like many of the Epic Games store products (Fortnite etc), have an in-game feature that, when activated, requires a pin code to be entered to authenticate purchases.

If this feature is not set up, young people can make purchases without needing authorisation, especially when an existing credit/debit card is linked to the account holder for the game.

The Fall Guys **step-by-step guide with images** from Internet Matters provides information on how to activate this feature (pg. 6-7).

Roblox

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To help reduce risks and harms when playing Roblox, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Set up and link a Parent Account
- Manage screen time
- Manage communication settings
- Set content maturity levels and block specific experiences within those levels
- Set spending restrictions
- Limit what interactions your child has with other players
- Report and block users
- Block specific friends
- Turn on 2-step Verification

Image credit and source

Roblox: Spending Restrictions

Roblox has useful features to limit in-game spending. This includes the following:

Monthly Spending Limit: This option allows you to set an amount that your child can spend on Roblox each month. They will not be able to exceed this amount.

Spending notifications: This allows you to set how often you receive notifications when your child spends money. You can choose to receive notifications whenever money is spent, only receive notifications for high spend amounts or not receive notifications at all.

Specific details can be found in the **Roblox Parental Controls Guide** produced by Internet Matters.
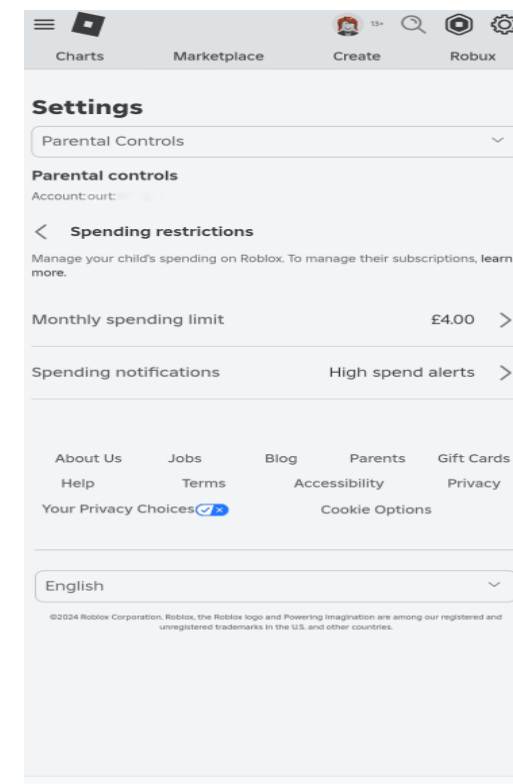
Image credit and source

Minecraft

To help reduce risks and harms when playing Minecraft, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to add, mute, block, or report players in-game
- Set player permissions in-game
- Access family friendly servers
- Customise or turn off in-game chat
- Set up realms for your child and their friends

Image credit and source

Minecraft Realms and YouTube

Minecraft Realms allow you to set up a private and secure server where your child and their friends can play Minecraft together. Players must be 13 years or older to join a realm.

This feature must be purchased as a subscription. The number of people who can play at one time depends on the plan purchased.

More information on Minecraft Realms can be found at Microsoft Realms Servers

Many Minecraft players discuss projects and gameplay on YouTube. If you child is a fan of Minecraft, it may be beneficial to ensure Parental Controls are activated on YouTube.

See 'YouTube' for details on setting up parental controls for YouTube.

Image credit and source

Minecraft: Spending Limits

Minecraft does have in-game purchases and downloadable content (DLC) for the game. For more information on this please refer to both the Minecraft website and the Xbox store for advice and guidance.

- Through the Minecraft website, you can set spending limits in two ways:
  - Through the Microsoft Family Safety Website
  - Through the Xbox Family Settings app.
- For general queries and support for all other topics outside of purchases please visit the Minecraft help centre: Home | Minecraft Help

Rocket League

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To help reduce risks and harms when playing Rocket League, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Manage text and voice chat settings
- Change quick chat commands
- Understand in-game purchases

Rocket League also features Cabined Accounts for players under the age of 13.

Rocket League can be played as a competitive esport. For streaming esports online safely, please see 'Streaming and Video Platforms' for details on setting up parental controls.

Image credit and source

Rocket League: In-Game Purchases

While Rocket League is free to download and play, it includes features available to purchase. Young people might be particularly influenced by this, so it is important to learn about these features to help them manage or limit spending.

To manage spending, set up parental controls on the console or platform they use to play the game (Internet Matters, p.7).

For the Epic Games Store, you can access step-by-step guidance. Be sure to do this before they start playing.

More information can be found at https://safety.epicgames.com/en-US/parental-controls

Pokémon Go

To help reduce risks and harms for playing Pokémon Go, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Report an Issue
- Restrict in-app purchases

Note about Pokémon Go Privacy Policy (Internet Matters):

'Part of the App policy now states that it can view a phone's settings and general information about the devices such as what other apps are being used on the device.'

Image credit and source

Twitter - @ADPHNE

Pokémon Go: In-Game Purchases

You can restrict in-app purchase on your device to prevent accidental or unauthorised purchases from the shop (Internet Matters, p.3).

Visit these guides to restrict in-app purchases on the following devices:

- Apple iPhone and iPad

- Android smartphone

- Android tablet

Gacha Games

This article published by uMobix provides a useful overview of Gacha Games.

'What are Gacha Games? Are They Safe for Kids?'

A Gacha game is uses '*in-game currency to snag random virtual goodies like characters, gear, or cards. It very much looks like (and, in itself, is – which is the basis of gacha game meaning) a lottery where you're crossing your fingers, hoping to get that one item you've been eyeing*" (uMobix).

Some of the top Gacha Games include :

- Genshin Impact
- Honkai: Star Rail
- Arknights
- Love and Deepspace
- Wuthering Waves
- Monster Strike.
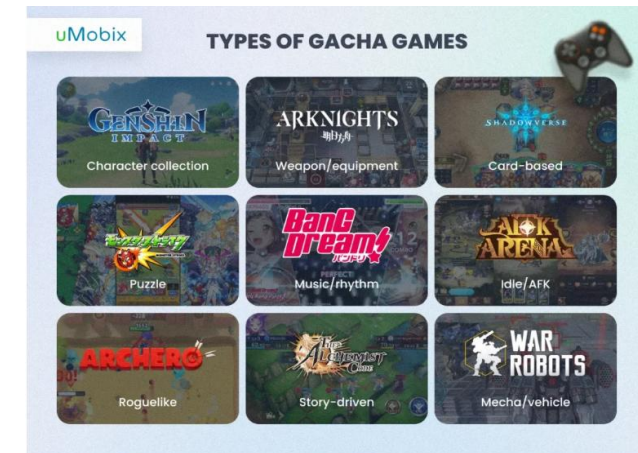
Image Credit and Source

Image credit and source

Gacha Games: uMobix Parental Control App

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The uMobix Parental Control Mobile app provides safety measures that control what young people can spend on purchases and how much time they spend on games.

This can be split into:

• Activity Monitoring

• Screen Time Management

• **In-game Purchase Control**: will help to set spending limits and block in-game purchases

• Location tracking

• Content Filtering

Image credit and source

FIFA – FIFA Games and Ultimate Team

FIFA is a popular game across consoles based on the football (soccer) leagues across the world. Players can create their own teams and or play against others using pre-set teams from the current league or their own creations.

FIFA does have a loot box feature known as FIFA packs. Gamers spend money on these packs to win FIFA players. Players are based on different levels of skills and abilities. The better the player, the rarer the item becomes and harder to find.

FIFA Ultimate Team is the section of the game that has many caregivers and researchers concerned as it contains gambling elements.

Image Source and Credit

Image credit and source

FIFA – FIFA Games and Ultimate Team

From the Mobicip Article on FIFA, they state that "*Packs in FIFA are generally considered "loot boxes" – a feature of gameplay that provides players with a random set of in-game items. While many online games today commonly feature them, especially free-to-download ones, FIFA became the first major video game developer to use them in 2008.*

Loot boxes are an important avenue of income for gaming companies as they are often available to gamers for purchase with real money. In 2023, loot boxes generate around 15 billion dollars in revenue".

FIFA – FIFA Games and Ultimate Team

Several resources are available to reduce harm and risks to children and young people playing FIFA:

- Refer to the EA Help page for information on in-game purchases.

- FIFA 21 football game safety tips for families from Internet Matters.

- Safer Schools has a FIFA Playbook Guide informing parents of the various risks through FIFA 22 game.

- Norris Bank Primary school has produced a helpful PDF poster on EA Sports FC 24 (the latest football game).

FIFA – Monitoring Use

Mobicip have produced a Parental Control App to assist caregivers and educators to ensure the safety of their children when using video games. The app has features including:

- App blocking
- Screen time limits
- Website filtering
- Purchase Monitoring
- Customizable app Usage
- Activity Reports
- Multiple device Monitoring
- Real-Time Alerts
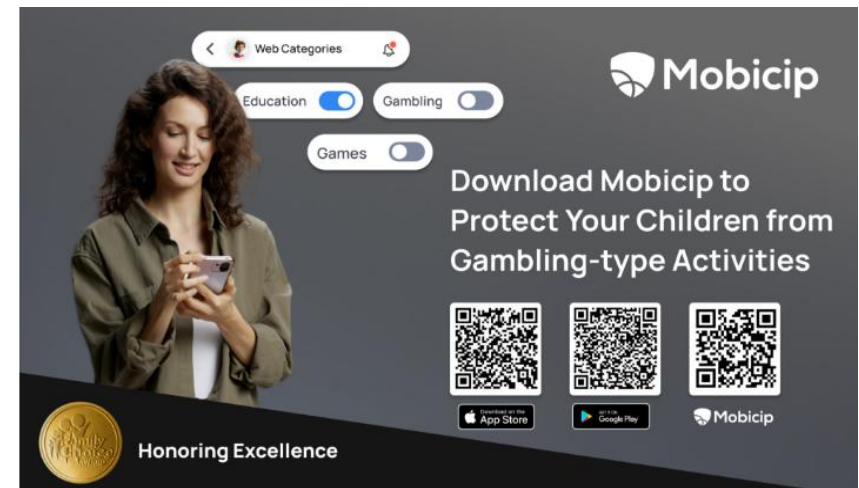
Image credit and source

Games directing to Third-Party Sites

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The games discussed in these slides are some of those that currently include parental controls to ensure children and young people are not purchasing beyond their limits and or spending too much time on these games.

These guides or materials do not address the promotion of third-party websites that promote gambling. This is a common feature of certain titles such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) and Player Unknowns Battlegrounds (PUBG).

These games have three types of "stores" or marketplaces for purchasing items. They include

1) In-game purchases – purchased directly from the game store itself

2) Third-party Websites – this is aimed at buying or selling items from the game outside of the official store.

3) Trading Platforms – some platforms allow direct trades that cater for swapping items for other in-game items without the use of cash.

Part 7: Streaming and Video Platforms

Streaming and Video Platforms

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Two of the most popular streaming and video game platforms includes Twitch (slides: 103 - 112) and YouTube (slides: 113 -124).

Both platforms have featured streamers and video game players promoting gambling, online casinos and or opening of loot boxes.

This has caused concern among caregivers, educators and the video game community due to the potential harm that gambling can pose to children and young adults.

Twitch

Twitch (owned by Amazon) is a live-streaming platform known for video games but also caters to music and other fields for content creators.

Twitch has a set of community guidelines to ensure the safety of their members.

Gambling is not banned from Twitch, the platform will only ban luck-based gambling such as slots, roulette or dice games that are streamed from casino websites that don't demonstrate enough consumer protection measures and appropriate licensing.

(BBC, 2022; Twitch, 2022)

Image credit and source

Twitch

Users can still watch streamers gamble on Twitch. However, after public pushback due to certain content creators on the platform, additional features have been added to restrict such content, and streamers will only be able to play at venues that the platform deem reputable enough to avoid predatory behaviours towards their users.

Sports betting, poker and or fantasy sports betting is not banned.

(PlayToday, 2024)

Twitter - @ADPHNE

Twitch

Prohibited Gambling Content on Twitch includes the following:

- Sharing links or affiliate codes to sites that contain slots, roulette, or dice games

- Sharing a referral code to a slots site with your chat

- Including a banner with a link to online roulette games

- Verbally referring your chat to a site containing dice games

Taken directly from Twitch's page, "Furthermore, similar to our prohibited games policy, we do not allow the sites below to be streamed on Twitch or linked to in chat. We consider many factors in determining whether a site is allowed, including whether the site includes safety protections, such as deposit limits, waiting periods, and age verification systems".

Twitch

As quoted from Twitch's page. "We also consider whether streamers use or encourage VPNs to evade geo-blocking, and whether the site is licensed in the US or other jurisdictions that provide sufficient consumer protections.

We do not allow the following sites or associated domains:"

- stake.com
- rollbit.com
- duelbits.com
- roobet.com
- blaze.com
- gamdom.com

Twitch

Prohibited Gambling Content FAQ:

Are free social versions of these websites allowed?

No, we do not allow free social versions of the sites listed above.

Does this policy prohibit fantasy sports, sports betting, and poker?

No, we still permit broadcasting websites focused on fantasy sports, sports betting, and poker at this time.

Is sponsorship of skins gambling, such as for CSGO skins, allowed on Twitch?

No, promotion or sponsorship of skins gambling is prohibited under our policy.

(Source: Community Guidelines)

Twitch

Twitch has created a [guide for caregivers and educators](#) on safely using the platform.

Twitch is aimed at people aged 13 and over and is not suitable for anyone under this age. There are various safeguards to help keep young people safe on the platform.

- Chat Filters

- Stream Moderation

- Content Classification Labels (CCL)

- Content Display Preferences

Twitch

Content preferences allow users to choose to hide content they do not want to see on Twitch in their search results and or blur the content thumbnail.

See screenshot image taken from Twitch's guide which shows gambling can be hidden from search results.
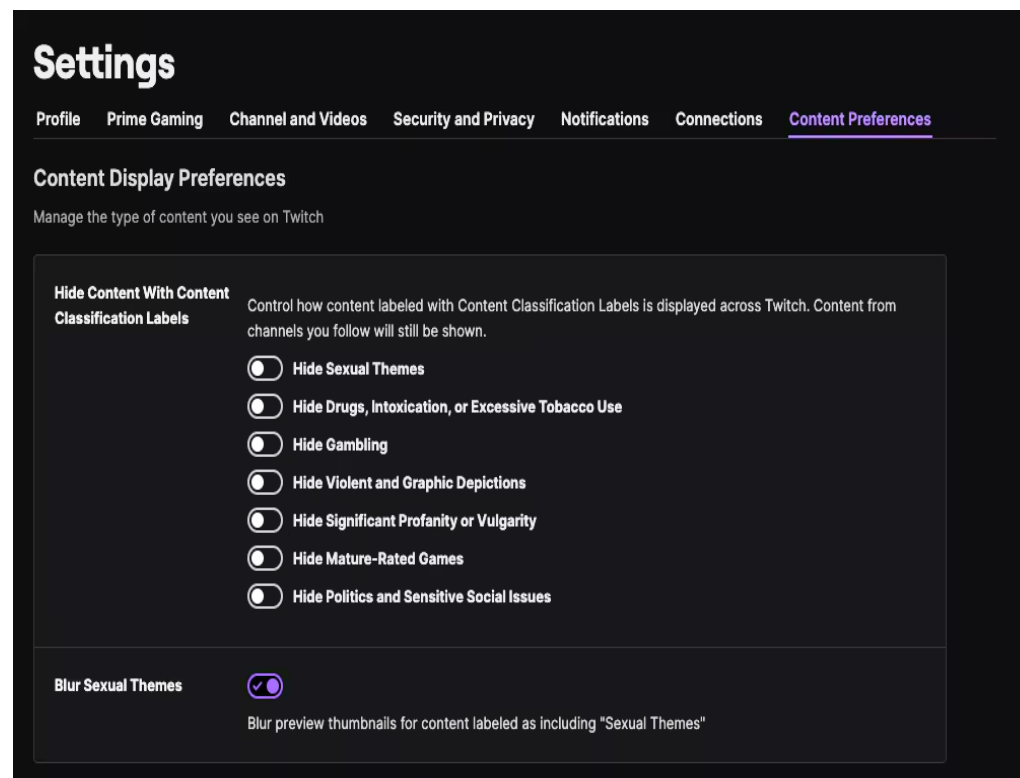
Twitch

This guide also goes in-depth into other areas which are linked to gambling and financials which are important to raise.

One such area is Donation Scams (taken from the guide), "Streamers who are not Affiliates or Partners do not have a built-in way of accepting donations, but anyone can enable donations through a third party such as PayPal.

Scammers may try to trick new streamers with fake donations by using the /me command, which makes text in chat italicised, and typing things such as "donated $100!" in chat".

If you have donations set up through a third-party service, look for the donation message in chat from the bot associated with the service. Be mindful that bogus donations can also take the form of in-game currency, such as Robux or V-Bucks.

It's a good idea to ignore these fake donations, and if the user persists, time out or ban them from the channel. You can also report this behaviour to Twitch.

Twitch

The platform also has a [Crisis Prevention page](#) which provides advice, links to support services and other resources for users who may be in distress or want to support someone else experiencing distress.

Help services can be filtered by location or using search bars (see screenshot).
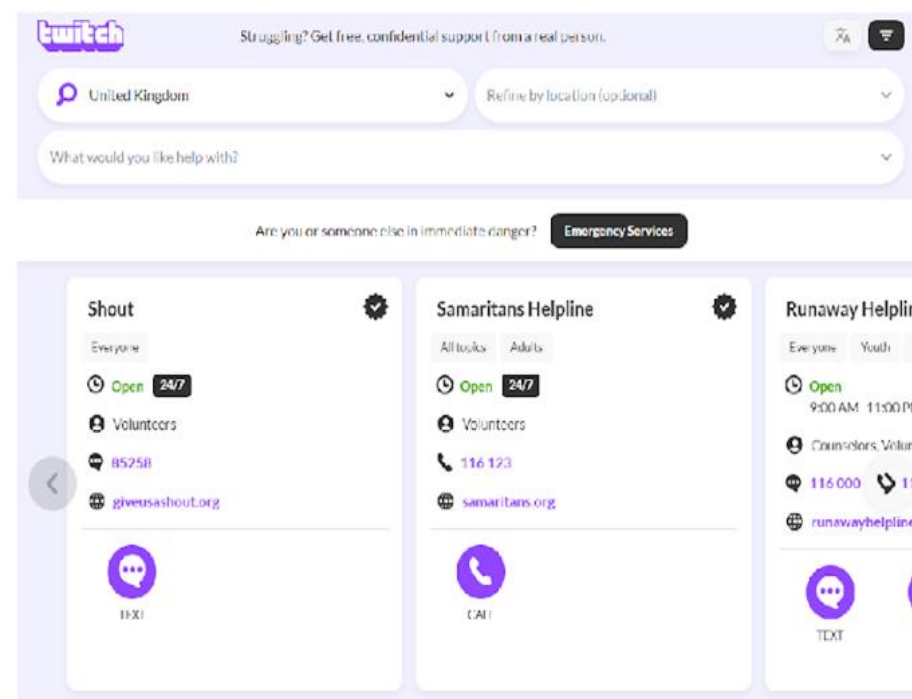
Twitch

To help reduce risks and harms for playing Twitch, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Chat Filtering
- Reporting a Streamer
- Report and or Block a User
- How to Change a Chat settings
- Change Mature Content Settings
- Change Moderation Settings
- Block Terms and Phrases

Image credit and source

If you wish to learn more about Twitch, then please follow the link here:
What is Twitch? What parents need to know | Internet Matters

YouTube

YouTube is an online social media and video sharing platform where users can engage with, create or watch videos online.

The platform is owned by Google and requires a Google account to sign in.

[Image credit and source](#)

YouTube

In recent years YouTube has limited gambling to its viewers through many different initiatives.

In 2020, the platform let users mute both gambling and alcohol adverts.

The Vice President of YouTube said, "We're launching a new control in ad settings, enabling people to see fewer alcohol ads, with gambling as an additional option".

The report noted that countries that already restrict adverts related to both gambling and or alcohol will see no change.

(BBC, 2020)

YouTube

However, the platform has come under scrutiny for not respecting countries laws on gambling advertisements.

In 2023, YouTube was fined €2.5 million for violating Italy's rules on gambling adverts. These fines were issued after an extensive investigation of more than 20,000 videos across 80 YouTube channels promoting Gambling.

These videos contained content about slot machines, sports betting and scratch cards.

(Next.io, 2023)

YouTube

The Gambling Commission has produced a **step-by-step guide** on how to opt out of seeing gambling-related ads on YouTube.

1. Ensure you are logged in to your Google account.

2. Visit the Google Ad settings (opens in new tab) in a web browser on your computer, phone, or tablet.

3. At the top of this page is an "Ad Personalization" heading with a toggle switch. You can switch the toggle to 'Off' to disable ad personalization completely. However, in order to maintain a level of control over the types of ads you will see, you need to ensure that "Ad Personalization" is switched 'On'.

4. Below this, you will see the 'How your ads are personalized section'. Here you will see a list of your 'interests'.

YouTube

4. Scroll down past this to the "Ad Categories on YouTube" section.

5. You will see two categories here; "Alcohol" and "Gambling." Click "See Fewer" next to the types of ads you no longer want to see.

6. A pop-up message will ask you to confirm. Click "Continue."

7. You'll notice that under the category (or categories) you selected, it now says, "We'll try not to show ads from this category." Google won't guarantee that you won't see any ads from the categories you selected. However, you should see less of them in the future.

8. You may still see gambling ads if you search for one of those topics or if you watch a video related to these topics.

Whilst following these steps may not prevent you from seeing all gambling ads completely, it should limit them as much as possible.

Sourced from: How to opt out of seeing gambling-related ads on YouTube

YouTube

Recently, YouTube has updated their policy guidelines regarding gambling.

This came into effect on March 19th, 2025, when the platform announced it will be banning certain types of gambling content. The platform states, "strengthening our existing policies related to online gambling content in order to protect viewers from potentially harmful content".

(Mashable, 2025; CNN, 2025)

Image credit and source

YouTube

The new updates to the policies includes:

1. Under our existing policies relating to illegal or regulated goods or services, we don't allow any method of directing viewers to gambling sites or applications that are not certified by Google. This now includes URLs, links embedded in images or text, visual displays (incl. logos) or verbal references. Please note that content promising guaranteed returns may be removed regardless of whether the online gambling site or application has been approved by Google.

2. Content that does not violate our Community Guidelines but still features depictions or promotions of online casino sites or apps may be age-restricted. This means that online gambling content (excluding online sports betting and depictions of in-person gambling) won't be viewable to signed-out users or users under 18.

YouTube

A detailed breakdown of this new policy was written up by <u>Birches Health (2025)</u> which expands upon what the YouTube policy states and its impact on creators and viewers accessing the platform.

The reason for this new policy has been attributed to the rise in streamers and content creators on the platform that are promoting or directing or selling gambling content. This is unregulated content that may pose a risk to children, youth and young adults.

Key Points of this New Policy

- Creators cannot include links, logos, or verbal mentions directing users to unapproved gambling sites. Online casino content will also be age-restricted.

- The new policy will enforce a ban of misleading language around "guaranteed returns".

- YouTube also now explicitly prohibits content promising guaranteed gambling profits, strengthening its stance against misleading marketing.

- Gambling-focused YouTubers risk demonetization or channel termination, advertisers must comply with stricter rules, and underage users will have limited access to gambling content.

(Source: Birches Health, 2025)

YouTube

Additional features of the policy will also include the following:

1. Online gambling will no longer be viewable by users who are signed out on the platform.

2. Online gambling will no longer be viewed by users who are under the age of 18.

(Source: Fast Company, 2025)

YouTube

ADPH North East

To help reduce risks and harms for viewing on YouTube, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set up a Supervised Account

- Where to update Parental Controls

- Monitor YouTube Activity

- How to turn on Restricted Mode

- Change Delete a YouTube Channel

Image credit and source

If you wish to learn more about YouTube Kids, then please follow the link here: YouTube Kids parental controls guide | Internet Matters

YouTube Kids

ADPH North East

To help reduce risks and harms for viewing on YouTube, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features when using YouTube Kids:

1. How to set up access to YouTube Kids

2. How to Create a New Profile

3. How to set up a Passcode

4. How to Manage Screen Time

5. Other Account Settings

Image credit and source

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North East

Part 8: Mobile Phones, Computers and Tablet Devices

Apple Devices

Apple devices include portable and home hardware such as the iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, Apple Watch, Mac, and Apple TV.

Apple's **Family Sharing** makes it easy for you and up to five family to share App Store purchases, photo albums, calendars and other Apple Services. To participate in Family Sharing, all family members must have their own Apple ID. A parent or guardian can set up an Apple ID account for a child under 13 years of age.

You can use Family Sharing on iPhone, iPad or iPod touch with iOS 8 or later, or Mac with OS X Yosemite or later.

Image credit and source

Twitter - @ADPHNE

Apple Devices

To help reduce risks and harms when using Apple devices, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

• Prevent app store purchases
• Prevent installation or deletion of apps from device
• Restrict the use of built-in apps or features
• Prevent access to apps with explicit content and content ratings
• Allow or restrict changes to privacy settings
• Allow or restrict changes to other settings

More information and instructions can be found at Use parental controls on your child's iPhone or iPad – Apple Support (UK)

Image credit and source

Twitter - @ADPHNE

Google Devices

Google devices include smartphones, tablets, laptops, smart home devices and activity trackers.

Devices can be managed via **Google Family Link**. You will need a Google account for each family member, which you can also create during setup.

Please note: Google Family Link cannot restrict content within non-Google products. You will need to explore in-app parental controls for specific apps if you wish to do this.

Image credit and source

Google Devices

To help reduce risks and harms when using Google devices, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Restrict explicit or inappropriate content

- Limit device screen time

- Limit screen time for specific apps

- Track the location of devices

More information can be found at Parental guide to Google Play - Google Play Help

Image credit and source

Samsung Devices

Samsung Galaxy devices are a series of Android-based phones and tablets (meaning they are powered by Google's Android operating system) created by Samsung Electronics.

Samsung Galaxy smartphones have parental controls available in the **Samsung Family Group** settings and through **Google's Family Link** app.

Caregivers can also turn on **Samsung Kids** to create a customised profile for their child, with access only to specific apps and content, and with parental controls for monitoring activity and setting time limits.

Image credit and source

Samsung Devices

To help reduce risks and harms when using Samsung devices, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

• Set daily time limits

• Restrict access to specific apps, websites or features

• Use location sharing

More information, videos and full guides for setting up Samsung Kids and Galaxy for Families can be found at Online Safety | Samsung UK

Image credit and source

Android Devices

Android devices include smartphones and tablets that run on the Android operating system (meaning they are powered by Google's Android operating system).

To help reduce risks and harms when using Android devices, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Create restricted profiles that limit access content

Setting up a restricted user means you can select apps that you want restricted access to, such as internet browsers. A password will be required to log in as an unrestricted user.

Image credit and source

Windows 11 Devices

Windows 11 is a Microsoft operating system available on PC's, laptops, tablets, mobile devices, and Xbox.

You will need access to your child's device with Windows 11 installed. You should also have your own Microsoft account before creating one for your child.

Once you have created an account for your child, you can install the Microsoft Family app to manage safety across devices, including Xbox. The app is free unless you want additional features like location and driving alerts.

Image credit and source

Windows 11 Devices

To help reduce risks and harms when using the Windows 11 operating system, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- Monitor activity across devices
- Restrict access to inappropriate content and content ratings
- Block access to specific sites, apps and games
- Limit screen time.

More information can be found at Getting started with Microsoft Family Safety - Microsoft Support

Image credit and source

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Part 9: Discord and Other Information

Discord

This section will cover other apps and devices that are popular among the video game communities that may include gambling and or gambling-related elements.

Information includes the popular social media/video game networking platform known as Discord. This is to help caregivers and educators with how to put blocks and limit access to potentially harmful content.

Discord

Discord is a free communication platform popular with the video gaming community. Discord can be used for voice, video and or text channels.
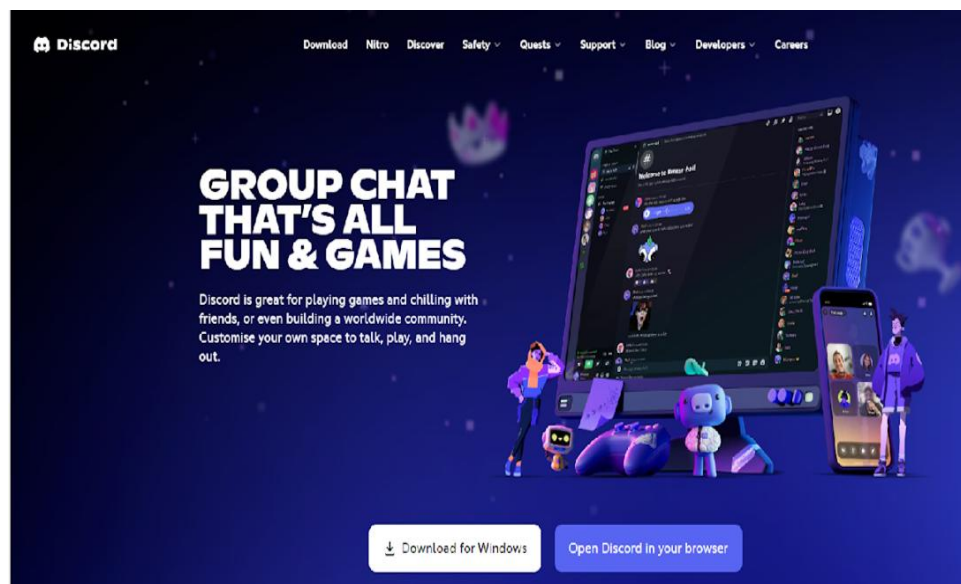
Image credit and source

Discord

Discord revised their community guidelines on the 15th of March 2024.

These guidelines form 27 rules to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their users on their platform.

Two of these rules pertain to gambling and finances:

21. Do not use or attempt to use Discord to promote, coordinate or execute financial scams. A financial scam is any intentionally deceptive act taken with the intent to receive an illegal, unethical or otherwise dishonest gain. (See the Deceptive Practices Policy Explainer for more.)

26. Do not coordinate or participate in illegal gambling. Users are responsible for complying with applicable gambling laws and regulation. (See the Gambling Policy Explainer for more.)

Discord

Discord have their own Gambling Policy

This policy states:

"*Users may not use Discord to coordinate or participate in illegal gambling. Users are responsible for complying with relevant gambling laws and regulation* ".

Image credit and source

Discord

Discord has classified how their gambling policy could be violated:

1. There is a payment or wager of real-world value to participate (this includes betting or entry fees)

   Real-world value is defined as any tangible or intangible asset with a monetary or exchangeable value in the real world. This includes virtual currency or virtual goods that have a real-world market value or can be exchanged for real-world currency or goods

2. Prizes of real-world value are awarded

3. The outcome of the game is *predominantly* determined by chance

4. The activity is prohibited by applicable gaming laws or regulations

Taken from: Gambling Policy Explainer | Discord

Discord

Discord states you may not post, share, or engage in:

- Organizing, coordinating, facilitating, or engaging in illegal or illicit gambling activities or services

- Coordinating a community dedicated to facilitating illegal gambling operations

  - This includes coordinating logistics, payments, or community management of users to facilitate or encourage illegal gambling activities

- Sharing third-party links to illegal or illicit gambling sites

Taken from: Gambling Policy Explainer | Discord

Discord

Finally, they outline how to report violations of gambling on their platform:

- Reporting safety violations is critically important to keeping you and the broader Discord community safe. All Discord users can report policy violations in the app by following the instructions here.
  For more information on this policy, please reference our Community Guidelines #26.

Taken from: Gambling Policy Explainer | Discord

Discord

To help protect users on the platform, Discord has a safety centre which covers a range of different topic that users and caregivers have access to. These include:

- Safety Library
- Privacy Hub
- Parent Hub
- Transparency Hub
- Safety News Hub
- Policy Hub

Images credit and source

Discord

NationalPTA, ConnectSafely and Thorn collaborated with Discord to form multiple parental guides for using Discord.

These can be found below:

- Build Up and Belong - PTA Connected - Programs | National PTA
- Be Your Kid's Safety Net - Thorn for Parents
- Parent's Guide to Discord – ConnectSafely

Discord

Discord also have a guide for caregivers and educators when to help young people to navigate the platform safely. This includes topics such as:

- Sensitive Media

- Direct Messaging Spam Filter

- Direct Messaging Settings

- Friend Request Settings

- Blocking

- Deleting an Account

Taken from: Tips for Parents on Helping Your Teen Stay Safe on Discord

Image credit and source

Discord

To help reduce risks and harms for viewing and engagement, Internet Matters has produced a **step-by-step guide with images** that provides details for caregivers and educators for setting and adjusting the following features:

- How to set data Privacy Controls

- Choose who can direct Message You

- Choose if you want Direct Messages from server Members

- Choose who can send Friend Requests

- Block a User

- Enable a Two-Factor Authentication

- Tap Enable Two-Factor Authentication

Image credit and source

Other Information to Help Caregivers and Educators

- Parental controls and privacy settings guides | Internet Matters

- Digital Wellbeing screen time tool guide | Internet Matters

- Parental controls for games consoles – Ofcom

- A Parent's Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and online Safety.pdf

- Harmful Gambling and Gaming for Parents - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership

- Activity and Parental Control – Firewalla

- Online gaming safety advice | A parents' guide - Internet Matters

Other Information to Help Caregivers and Educators

There are two CPD courses which are free for anyone to access and complete regarding gambling and safeguarding in esports.

1. Duty to Care in Esports, from the Coach Development Framework – Safeguarding Esports led by British Esports and co-produced with the NSPCC and UNICEF UK

2. FairPlay Academy – Shaping the Future of Esports with Ethical Foundations – Anti-Corruption Tutorial from the Esports Integrity Commission (ESIC)

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Part 10: Additional Support Services in the North East and Online Blocking Tools

Free treatment services in the North East

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There is a treatment offer for gambling harms in the North East which is free and confidential. The NHS Northern Gambling Service and NECA work across the whole NE region. You can self-refer directly into these services or a professional can make a referral for you.

The NHS Northern Gambling Clinic

Website: NHS Northern Gambling Service

Referral Link: Referrals - NHS Northern Gambling Service

NECA

Website: NECA

Referral Link: Referrals – NECA

Support services for those experiencing gambling harms

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National Gambling Helpline 0808 8020 133 GamCare.org.uk	NHS Northern Gambling Service	necA	GA GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS	For everyone affected by gambling CHAPTER ONE
The National Gambling Helpline for 24/7 support	Support for family and friends, as well as therapy and treatment for gambling harms.	Gambling support, advice and treatment for gamblers and affected others.	Local support group services that uses the 12-step approach to recovery.	Provides information and support for everyone affected by gambling harms.
GamLEARN Lived Experience And Recovery Network	EPIC RESTART FOUNDATION	GamCare	Gamble Aware	GORDON MOODY
A lived experience network for those impacted directly and indirectly by gambling harms.	Lived experience led recovery programme to rebuild lives after gambling harm.	Information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms.	National gambling support network service.	Residential gambling harms support outside of the North East.

Support services for affected others

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The National Gambling Helpline for 24/7 support	Support for family and friends, as well as therapy and treatment for gambling harms.	Gambling support, advice and treatment for gamblers and affected others.	Gambling with Lives support people bereaved by gambling-related suicide.	Provides information and support for everyone affected by gambling harms.
A lived experience network for those impacted directly and indirectly by gambling harms.	Charity for affected others offering support through GRA5P, a 5-stage peer support programme.	Information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms.	Gam-Anon meetings are for anyone has been affected by a loved one's gambling.	Thivin' Together is a safe space for UK women impacted by gambling, led by women with lived experience.

What are gambling blocks?
Can I block on behalf of someone else?

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Gambling blocks are free and prevent access to online gambling websites. There are tools to 'self-exclude' from land-based gambling premises.

You cannot self-exclude on behalf of someone else, even with their permission.

GAMSTOP	Gamban	MULTI OPERATOR SELF EXCLUSION SCHEME FOR BETTING SHOPS	SENSE SELF-ENROLMENT NATIONAL SELF-EXCLUSION	What is a bank gambling block?
GAMSTOP is free and blocks gambling websites and apps run for a period of your choosing.	Gamban blocks online gambling including websites and apps. It is free to UK residents via TalkBanStop.	MOSES is a self-exclusion tool to be excluded from betting shops.	To self exclude from casinos, join the SENSE scheme via the self-exclusion form.	Most banks provide the option to block gambling activity on an account or card.

What other support is available for the impacts of gambling harms?

There are a scope of gambling harms for those who have faced harmful levels of gambling and for affected others. Therefore, people may need additional support in areas such as employment, housing, finances and cost of living.

The MECC Gateway has an array of topic areas with support available in the North East.
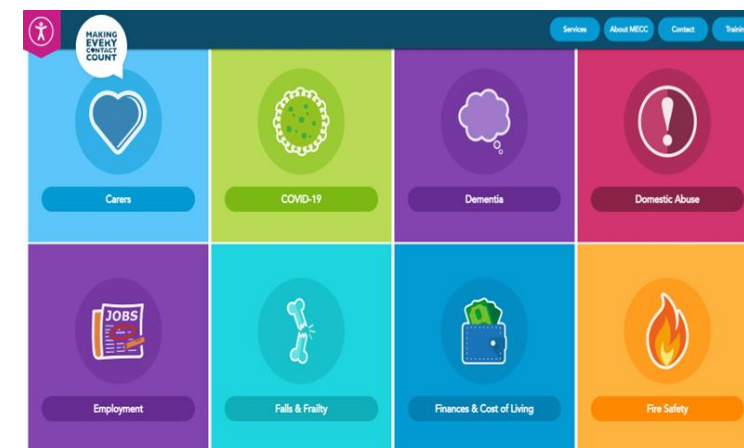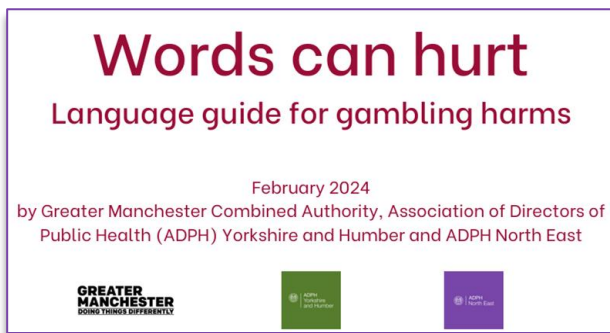
Find out more at: www.meccgateway.co.uk/nenc

Image credit and source

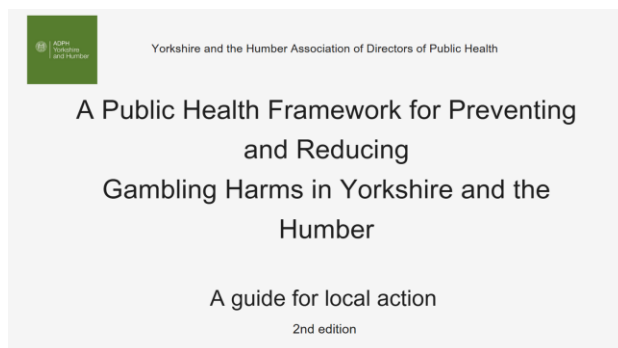# Tools to support gambling-related harm conversations & interventions
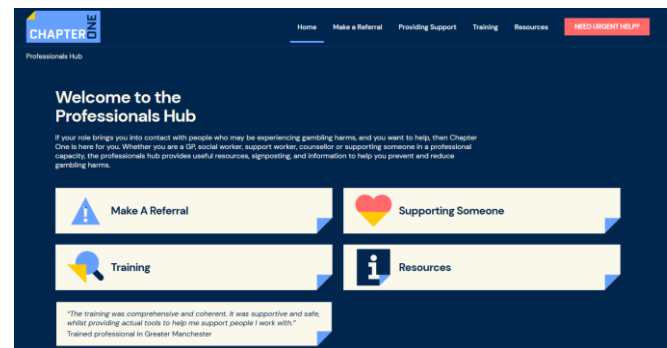

ADPH Language Guide

King's College London Guide

ADPH Y&H: PH Framework

Chapter One Professionals Hub

Conclusion

General Guidance

- Gambling elements feature in many games and there are risks of harm associated with gambling – not just financial but also health, wellbeing and social consequences.

- Learn about what games your child is playing and what devices they are using.

- Explore parental control options and consider setting screen time limits, age restrictions, and password and pin protection for payments.

- Review additional tools and resources, as well as support and treatment services, for addressing gambling harms in gaming and esports.

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Part 11: Supporting Evidence and Appendices

Links to ADPH NE Additional Material

- GRH Slide Deck

- GRH Language Guide

- Statement of Funding from ADPH

- Newsletter

- Academic Slide Deck on GRH

- Esport and Video Game Academic Slide Deck

- Regional Health Needs Assessment

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- Parent's Guide to Discord - ConnectSafely

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