

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### February

**Tue 6<sup>th</sup>** – Safer Internet Day

Young Voices Concert for the Choir

**Tue 13<sup>th</sup>** – 3:15pm Y4 London Parent's Meeting

**Wed 14<sup>th</sup>** – Y6 to The College to watch Matilda!

**Fri 16<sup>th</sup>** – Break up for Half-term

**Mon 26<sup>th</sup>** – INSET DAY – School closed to pupils but we would welcome support from parents and the community to clear an extra space in our grounds!

**Tue 27<sup>th</sup>** – ALL pupils back for Spring Term 2

### March

**Thurs 7<sup>th</sup>** – World Book Day, come dressed as a character from a book or comic (no charge)

**Fri 8<sup>th</sup>** – NO Rec / KSI Assembly as Reception

Mother's Day Cream Tea event at 9am!

**Tue 12<sup>th</sup> & Wed 13<sup>th</sup>** – Parents' Evenings for Reception & Y6 only (reports for Years 1-5)

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup>** – Dress Down for bottle or choc donation

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup>** – Evening: PTA Easter Family Bingo

Residentials: please put these dates in your diary:

Year 4 Residential to London: 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

*(Deadline for payment in full: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024)*

Year 2 Residential to Tattenhall: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

*(Deadline for payment in full: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024)*

Year 6 Residential to Min-y-Don: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

*(Deadline for payment in full: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024)*

## FOOTBALL TEAM

Well done to our Year 5 football team, who came 3<sup>rd</sup> last night in a local inter-school competition. They had been ready, respectful and safe in school and were therefore chosen to represent #TeamAcorns and they made us very proud. Well done, boys!

## ASK ME ABOUT...

Education is most effective when schools and parents work in partnership. So, this week;

Caterpillars: *Elmer's colours*

Butterflies: *Flora being determined*

Reception: *'longer' and 'shorter'*

1Mc: *oceanic islands*

1/2T: *the names of the 5 oceans*

2M: *multiples of 10*

3U: *how many ways?*

3/4T: *how to 'block' in hockey*

4G: *adjusting + & – numbers so calculating is easier*

5I: *the function of the heart*

5/6K: *what Fenrir did to the town*

6T: *the RNLI*

## SAFER INTERNET DAY

On 6<sup>th</sup> February it is Safer Internet Day. During the school day each class will be completing some age-appropriate activities about safe use of the internet.

There is an excellent website which parents can refer to when working to keep your children safe on the internet when at home:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2024/parents-and-carers>

With issues stemming from inappropriate gaming and social media use at home becoming something that is seeping into everyday school life, we would like parents and carers to read the poster on Page 2. This aims to support parents with regards to how to engage and guide your children safely with online gaming in the home.

# PARENTING GAMERS



Moving from policing to parenting your gaming kids: how to engage and guide

With concerns about escalating screen-time, the impact of violence, unexpected costs and interloping strangers it can be tempting to lock down video games to limit their negative impact. While some sensible boundaries are helpful, they are only a short term solution for how we guide children towards gaming health. Like other areas of childhood, parents and carers can have a powerful steering presence by engaging and participating in the video games their children play. This not only reduces risks because they are aware of the kinds of activities, interactions and costs involved but makes video games a part of family life. Along with building dens, climbing trees, cooking and family walks, playing games with children enables parents to guide the quality of content being played. This may start with sharing the games children are currently playing, understanding why they love it and celebrating successes. But with a little research, this can grow into suggesting other games to play and higher ambitions for what kids get out of playing long-standing favourites.



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## A New Media For Everyone

Video games are a new kind of media. Because they are new we don't entirely understand their potential yet. They've become hugely popular and commercially successful as blockbuster entertainment for children and teenagers. However, like books, films and music, the real range of video games on offer is much broader than this.

There are games about every topic you could imagine, and aimed at a wide range of ages and perspectives. Whether it's sharing a families heartbreaking story in *That Dragon, Cancer*, stepping into the shoes of a Syrian migrant in *Bury Me, My Love*, or taking the hand of your child and soaring over the clouds in *Sky: Children of Light*, games take us places in unique ways. It's no surprise, then, that Newzoo figures show that in 2018 40% of men and 32% of women play games. And Entertainment Software Association (ESA) data showed that the average age for US gamers is 34 for women and 32 for men.

If you want to turbocharge your care of a child who loves playing video games, the best thing to do is to find games you want to play yourself. This can sound like strange advice until we consider how hard it would be caring for a child who loves books without reading ourselves or guiding a child who loves music without sharing our favourite songs.

## Video Game Diet

Gaining an understanding of what video games are, what they are like to play and the different experiences on offer, enables you to encourage a varied gaming diet. Similar to how we don't worry about plate-time but what's on the plate, we can differentiate between different types of screen experience.

Playing *Fortnite* offers exuberant excitement and connection to friends. Playing *Mario Kart* connects us to the players sitting next to us. *Roblox* can be a place for children to play at having a job or surviving a storm. *Minecraft* can be a tranquil escape from a busy day at school. *Alto's Adventure* can be a way to calm anxiety or jangling nerves.

Parents and carers can expand these experiences. *Kingdoms Two Crowns*, *Reigns* and *Life is Strange* teach players to trust their instincts in game-worlds built to encourage risk and hunch taking. *Florence*, *Abzu*, *Journey* and *Brothers Tale of Two Sons* are a gentle way for children to learn about their own emotional responses to challenging situations as well as appreciating how people experiencing them first hand may feel. *Eco* and *One Hour, One Life* encourage the altruism of building something that other players benefit from.

## Creators Not Consumers

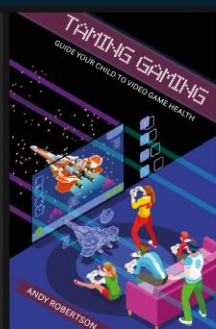
Ambition for their future means parents and carers support activities where children are excelling. While this is familiar territory when a child is brilliant at an instrument or learning a foreign language, it's easy to miss the need for our enthusiasm when it comes to video games. Along with the general connection and good feelings that come from a parent or carer celebrating success in an activity that a child enjoys comes the imperative that they could go further than they realise themselves. The rise in competitive video games can sound peculiar but requires great skill, draws large audiences and comes with high prize money for professional players. Beyond this, parents can guide children towards other careers in video games which need diverse creative, technical and social skills. A simple and effective way to do this is to encourage children to create as well as consume games. This can start as simple customisation of the games that allow you to design maps and characters. Then there are games like *Mario Maker* on Wii U, 3DS and Switch where you can design and share levels for other players. *Dreams* on the PlayStation 4 takes this further with an accessible game creator that's also really powerful.

## Finding Games You Want Children To Play

Parenting rather than policing video games equips children to build good habits and a healthy relationship with digital media for when they leave home and parents aren't around to enforce the rules. One challenge can be finding the kinds of games you want your children to play. There are good resources to help you with this. Many of the examples here come from my upcoming *Taming Gaming* book: <https://unbound.com/books/taming-gaming/>

There are also websites that provide video game suggestions like *AskAboutGames* <https://www.askaboutgames.com>. Also, there are good Twitter accounts that help, like *Wholesome Games* (@\_wholesomegames) and *Non-Violent Game Of The Day* (@NVGOTD).

You can also use the VSC Rating Board (<https://videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/>) website and PEGI app to search for games of different ratings.



## Meet our expert

Andy Robertson is a parent of three children and journalist who writes for national newspapers and broadcast television. His *Taming Gaming* book helps parents guide children to healthy play.