

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD.....

As a parent, you remain one of the most important role models in terms of shaping how your child/ren behave. Knowing how to talk to them about gaming can be daunting but follow these simple rules and remember:-

## No one expects you to be an expert

- ✓ **Right time, right place** – Start the conversation while doing an activity and avoid one-offs to create an environment where they feel comfortable coming to you. Have the conversation when you're side by side rather than face to face, such as going for a walk, doing the dishes or driving.
- ✓ **Be sensitive and self-aware** – be genuinely interested in creating a dialogue rather than just a chance to ram home what YOU think the issue is.
- ✓ **Focus on the behaviour** – make it clear that the behaviour is the problem, not the child
- ✓ **Explain why it's okay** – help them understand the impact of their actions. For example, the impact their mood swings when coming off gaming has on others
- ✓ **Be curious and empathetic** – don't judge, focus on listening and trying to understand things from their perspective. Reassure them that you want to help them manage the situation
- ✓ **Get involved** – find out what games your child enjoys and make sure their age appropriate. Play together with your child and keep the technology in share family spaces rather than bedrooms
- ✓ **Stay safe** – be clear what information is and isn't appropriate to share, particularly personal details; share how to set privacy settings and how to block or report an issue
- ✓ **Talk finance** – discuss the costs of the games and in-game purchases and agree spending limits
- ✓ **Set boundaries** – agree how long is appropriate to play in one session and how many sessions in a day. Then set up these restrictions in parental settings with your child.
- ✓ **Be honest about your own mistakes/poor role modelling** – own up to your own issues with gaming/poor time keeping on devices etc and state what you will do differently next time. And ask for their advice to help you.

If you have a teenager or mature pre-teenager, you could turn the tables on them by asking:

“If you were a parent, what rules would you set for screens?”. Children are often naturally far more sensible than the parent expects they're going to be. Often, your child has actually taken more from what you've been telling them than you might have realised. Parents tend to underestimate the influence they have on their teenagers.

Try not to give solutions to teenagers – they need to build their own toolkit for life.