Quick guide to in-game chat

Talking in games

Online games are social activities, and there are different ways that players can talk to each other:

- **Built in chat functions** let you talk through voice (via a headset) or text (by typing on a keyboard) with other people in the game.

- **Quick chat functions** have set phrases, so you can send short automatic messages to a team mate or player.

- **External chat or messaging apps** can be used to talk to each other during the game, for example, Discord, Twitch or WhatsApp.

What are the risks?

- **Chatting with people they don't know**. Gaming is different to social networks, as players often play against people they don't know. This may include adults.

- **Inappropriate or unmoderated chat**. In some games swearing and insults are common, especially when a player hasn't performed very well. Mean comments or insults can hurt, and competitive criticism might feel like bullying for some children.

- **Requests to chat in private**. Once a child moves to private chat, it may not be monitored by the game. They might share personal information or feel pressured to do something that they don't want to do.

- **Offering gifts or trades.** Some people may offer to trade – or give – your child in-game items or currencies to earn their trust and persuade them to have a separate conversation outside of the game.

Keeping your child safe

1. **Play with them .** Play, or watch your children play, online games to understand how they talk online, who they talk to online and what you're comfortable with. Look at the privacy settings together.

2. **Talk to them.** With older children, who may not want you to play with them, have regular chats about the games they play, who they talk to and how.

3. **Use family controls.** Use family controls and in-game settings to manage, limit or turn off in-game chat to make sure that you're confident interactions are right for your children.

4. **Encourage reporting.** To catch potential problems early, encourage your children to report inappropriate chat in game and to tell you if anything in the game makes them feel worried or uncomfortable.

For more information visit

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/in-game-chat

Parents and carers