Parental Handbook: Esports in Schools

What is esports?

Esports refers to organised, competitive video gaming. In schools, esports is a structured, purposeful activity aligning closely with educational objectives – not just "playing games". It enhances digital skills, collaboration, and social connection.

The benefits for your child

Improved cognitive skills

Playing games like Minecraft or Rocket League can improve attention, memory, multitasking skills and develop creative thinking. (Psychology Today, 2015).

Enhanced creativity and problem-solving

Playing video games notably enhances creativity, problem-solving capabilities, spatial awareness, and multitasking skills, vital for academic and real-world success (Granic et al., 2014; Feng et al., 2007).

Social confidence and friendships

Esports brings young people together. Many pupils make new friends and gain confidence as part of their team. Structured esports activities foster improved social skills, empathy, and positive relationships. Prosocial gaming has been positively linked with maintaining friendships and enhanced empathy, cooperation, and sharing (Harrington & O'Connell, 2016; Johannes et al., 2021).

Inclusivity and belonging

Esports provides a positive space for all pupils, including those who may feel excluded from traditional team sports. Esports promotes inclusive environments, allowing students of diverse abilities and social backgrounds to engage positively, fostering friendship, confidence, and a sense of belonging within their school communities (COBIS x DAIGON Case Study, 2024).

Screen time – what do we mean?

We understand concerns about screen time. DAIGON makes a clear distinction between passive screen use and structured goal-oriented screen activity (ParentZone). Our esports sessions are planned and purposeful, with clear time limits and objectives. We help pupils understand balance and self-regulation.

James Luxford, Esports Co-ordinator, Queen Ethelburga's - has to say:

Having students be a part of the school's esports team comes with responsibilities. These include

keeping up with all schoolwork and maintaining excellent attendance. We have seen significant success at Queen Ethelburga's with improving student engagement in lessons when they know their continued place on the esports team is dependent on their modelling excellent behaviours in all aspects of their school life.

Safety and safeguarding

- **Secure platform:** Children should only access esports via school-managed accounts where platforms are private and monitored. DAIGON ensures the safety and privacy of students through secure and private platforms. Access is provided exclusively through school-managed accounts, and esports activities involve only students within DAIGON's carefully monitored, closed network.
- **Age-appropriate games:** All games follow PEGI guidelines and are carefully chosen for educational value. DAIGON's esports programmes are carefully curated using the PEGI ratings, ensuring they are appropriate for various age groups and aligned with developmental stages.
- **Online safety:** The NSPCC has some helpful guidance on [keeping children safe online](). DAIGON's esports sessions include online safety discussions and expectations, helping children build good habits for life.

The path to future opportunities

Esports is not just a hobby, it can open doors. The global gaming industry exceeds $365 billion, offering career routes in coding, design, broadcasting, marketing, business, and more. Many universities, especially in the USA and UK, now offer esports scholarships or competitive teams. The University of Warwick, for instance, has been named UK Esports University of the Year five years in a row.

Institutions like the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge actively integrate competitive gaming into their student offerings. The annual Oxbridge Esports Varsity Tournament is now in its 11th year.

Case Studies:

Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate

Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate started their esports programme in September 2023. Since then, Esports has become one of the biggest and best parts of the whole school. Students who otherwise have lacked a positive relationship with school have come alive in esports. Several students have described the feeling of playing for the team for the first time as being like coming home.

COBIS x DAIGON

The Council of British International Schools competition, involving 90+ teams from 31 international schools, highlighted how esports enhances digital collaboration, engagement, and global citizenship. This initiative helped students improve behaviour, foster friendships, and gain

confidence, demonstrating esports' broad educational benefits. [Read the full COBIS case study](#)

British School in Tokyo

DAIGON's esports programme at The British School in Tokyo notably 'increased student confidence, strengthened friendships, and improved team dynamics and global citizenship awareness. Participants significantly enhanced their social skills and academic engagement, evidencing esports' positive impact on school life.' This information was shared with DAIGION by the lead teacher at BST.

Additional resources for parents

- [DAIGON Level UP: Parental Guide to Esports and Video Games](#)
- [DAIGON Esports Official Website](#)
- [PEGI Age Ratings Guide](#)
- [ParentZone Resources on Screen Use](#)
- [Psychology Today: Cognitive Benefits of Video Games](#)
- [Evolutionary Functions of Play](#)
- [Prosocial Video Game Study](#)