



25th February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Supporting your child with mental health and sleep**

I am writing to share some guidance around screen time and online gaming as well as the importance of healthy sleep habits for post 16 students.

Online gaming is a popular and enjoyable activity for many young people aged 16–18. It can provide opportunities for social connection, teamwork, strategic thinking and stress relief, particularly as students balance academic pressures, part-time work and social commitments.

However, extended gaming sessions, especially late in the evening, can affect sleep, mood, focus and overall wellbeing. At this stage, students are managing increased academic demands, exams, coursework and future planning. Consistent, good-quality sleep is essential to support memory, concentration, emotional regulation and physical health.

Gaming late at night, exposure to bright screens, and the stimulation of competitive or social online environments can make it difficult for teenagers to switch off and fall asleep. Over time, poor sleep can impact attendance, punctuality, academic performance and mental wellbeing.

While older teenagers value independence, parental guidance and agreed boundaries continue to play an important role.

You may find the following approaches helpful:

- Agree clear expectations around gaming times and screen time particularly on school nights.
- Encourage devices to be switched off and, where possible, kept out of bedrooms overnight.
- Support your teenager in setting their own screen-time limits to promote independence and self-regulation.
- Encourage a wind-down routine 30–60 minutes before bedtime (e.g. reading, listening to music, or preparing for the next day).
- Maintain open conversations about the games they are playing, who they are interacting with online, and how gaming fits alongside study, work and other responsibilities.

Our aim is not to discourage gaming, but to help students develop healthy habits that support both their wellbeing and their academic success. We appreciate your continued support in reinforcing these messages at home.





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There are also several trusted organisations that provide practical advice for families:

- NSPCC – Guidance on online safety and talking to children about gaming - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>
- Internet Matters – Step-by-step guides to setting parental controls on devices and gaming consoles - <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/>
- NHS – Information about sleep needs for children and teenagers - <https://cambspborochildrenshealth.nhs.uk/sleep/>
- Young minds - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/sleep-problems/>
- Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/sleep-and-mental-health/>

By working together, we can help students develop healthy digital habits while still enjoying the benefits of technology.

Yours faithfully

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