Staying safe online

Gaming is meant to be fun, and we want to make sure you have all the info you need to have a great time gaming, streaming and fundraising, and that you stay safe while doing it. So here are our top tips for safe gaming:

1.

Check your privacy settings

Most streaming and gaming platforms allow you to control who sees your profile and who can talk to you.

2.

Keep your personal info safe

Remember that people may not really be who they represent themselves to be online. If you don't know someone in real life, don't give them information like your full name, address, phone number or personal photos. Be very cautious about meeting up in real life with anyone you've met online.

3.

Choose games that are right for you

Make sure you're playing games that are appropriate for your age and personal comfort level. Games have a ratings system just like films do and you can use these to find out what kind of content is in a game. Look at the PEGI site for more details. And of course, if you're under 18, check with a parent or guardian first.

4.

Be aware of your sensitivities

When watching a live stream or streaming yourself, things can happen which you may not expect. Some games feature bright lights, loud sounds, or other sensory stimuli that may be challenging for some people. If unexpected changes make you anxious or if you have sensory sensitivities, please take this into account before live-streaming or watching a live stream.

5.

Taking breaks is important!

It's always important to take regular breaks – but especially during long stream-a-thons. Stepping away from the keyboard to get snacks, stay hydrated, use the toilet, stretch, and interact with other people in real life – these will all make your gaming better and make sure you stay healthy! Aim to take a break at least once an hour.

6.

Bullying is NOT okay

Most games and platforms have a way to block or report people if they are making you feel uncomfortable. Bullying may include insults with words or images, excluding you from play, ganging up on your character in a nasty way, cheating, sharing your personal information, or hacking your account. Don't be afraid to use the block and report functions and take back control. Games are meant to be fun, and bullying is never okay.

7.

Be careful about in-app purchases and donations

Some games give the option of buying things or donating within the game using real money. Be sure you are aware of what you're spending before clicking on a 'Buy' or 'Donate' button. If the game is linked to someone else's credit card, make sure you have their permission before spending any money in-game.

8.

And finally, know when to put down the controller

If your gaming is getting in the way of your regular routine, if it's keeping you away from spending time with friends and family, if it's causing you to neglect your responsibilities, or if you struggle to think about anything apart from the game, you may need to seek professional support. Start by talking to your GP or a counsellor.