



Hampshire
County Council

Improvement and
Advisory Service

HIAS MOODLE OPEN RESOURCE

HIAS esports guidance

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Overview

In this guidance document, we will talk about the following entities.

- **School esports league:** a group of schools, pupils and teachers who take part in inter-school esports.
- **League controller:** a person or group who co-ordinates the esports league, arranges fixtures, writes a policy and adjudicates in cases of disagreement or breach of policy.
- **League school:** a school that has agreed to take part in the league, observing its rules and safety procedures.
- **League host:** an organisation or school that hosts face-to-face esports meets, such as a semifinal or final.

HIAS esports guidance

Benefits of esports participation

HIAS recognises that esports is a growing industry worldwide, contributing significantly to the UK economy. It also recognises that team gaming can develop communication skills, perseverance and team spirit. We also understand that obsessive gaming can become addictive for a small number of students and that schools will want to balance esports participation with studies and off-screen activities.

Age to participate in school esports

We recommend that students be aged at least 13 before joining a league. Under UK GDPR, teenagers can give consent for websites and online tools to use. They can give consent for their image and data to be used. Although pupils have greater responsibilities at this age, we strongly recommend that parental consent is still obtained for all school esports participation.

Consent

HIAS strongly recommends that schools obtain written parental consent for all pupils participating in the programme. We recommend that consent forms include the number of matches a year, game titles, and the gaming platform that will be used. Additionally, we recommend that league schools explain how participants will be kept safe during online matches and face-to-face competitions.

Code of Conduct

All pupils should sign a consent form separately from their parents. HIAS recommends the following, as outlined in the [British Esports Code of Conduct](#).

- Play by the rules of the platform, the games and the competitions or events.
- Be a good sport, whether I win or lose.
- Treat others as I like to be treated myself.
- Be kind and fair and recognise that everyone has different levels of skill and ability.
- Know that people online are real people, and my words can affect them.
- Set a positive example with my behaviour.
- Support and encourage my teammates and others.
- Speak out against those who bully, hurt, harass or abuse others.
- Stop, listen, and reconsider if I'm told that my words or actions are harmful.
- Respect others, even if their views are different from mine.
- Report any incidents of bullying, misbehaviour, cheating or concerns I have about the behaviour of anyone else during events or competitions.
- In-game, I should not display disrespectful actions that could harm others, as well as exploit in-game bug features.
- Not collude nor coerce with other teams to force a specific outcome.

Whilst HIAS believes that some of these may not be necessary in school esports due to higher levels of control, it is beneficial to instill good habits in players who may wish to continue esports in college or as adults.

Game ratings

HIAS recommends that the league controller select games with a Pan European Game Information (PEGI) rating of 12 or lower to minimise the risk of age-inappropriate materials that could bring the league schools into disrepute, as well as potentially influence pupils with vulnerability. HIAS reminds schools that some pupils with additional needs are more susceptible to the influence of screens. To remain inclusive, it encourages schools to adhere to the PEGI 12 rating, even for older pupils.

Game titles

HIAS also advises that the league risk-assesses any new titles before using them, considering factors such as violence, sexism, language, criminal or risky behaviour, as well as the specifications required to run the title, to ensure as many schools as possible can participate. It is advised that league controllers consult websites such as Common Sense Media, which review games from a parental and pupil perspective.

All matches

HIAS recommends that matches between different schools:

- are supervised by at least two members of staff in each school, both of whom have successfully completed Keeping Children Safe in Education training
- each league school is responsible for making sure that participants behave in a sporting manner
- match duration is limited to a set time, such as an hour, followed by a cooldown and debrief away from the screen
- no pupil is allowed to photograph, video or sound record any aspect of the game.

Online matches

HIAS recommends that online matches additionally observe the following:

- that pupils only use gaming credential logons kept just for e-sport use, with non-identifying names to protect pupils from identification outside school.
- no external communication method, such as Discord, is permitted
- communication between opposing teams is kept to a minimum or restricted altogether to reduce the possibility of inappropriate comments made in the heat of the game.

Face-to-face matches in a school

- The non-host school carries out a risk assessment in the same manner as planning any school visit **face-to-face matches using an external provider**.
- The league controller verifies that pupil data will be protected in line with GDPR requirements and that if the external host intends to use promotional materials, these are only sourced from pupils who have given their consent in advance.
- No external communication method is permitted without prior consent.
- Each participating school completes their own risk assessment.
- Any streaming of an event, such as the final, has received the permission of every pupil participating, if pupils' faces and voices can be identified.

School equipment and setup

Each league school is responsible for ensuring that all matches are played using school-managed devices with appropriate filtering and monitoring software. Firewalls and DNS filtering must be active to prevent access to non-game-related or inappropriate content. Appropriate ports will need to be opened as advised by the league controller. League schools are responsible for ensuring that these games/ports are unavailable to students outside of authorised esports sessions.

Computing

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