



**Guillemont Junior School**  
Sandy Lane, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 9ES  
01252 666846/7

12<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dear Parents / Carers

### **GAMESMART**

As you are aware, at Guillemont Junior School, we regard safeguarding our children as paramount and it is with this in mind that I wanted to write to you about keeping your children 'Gamesmart.'

The internet and, in particular, video games can offer a range of opportunities for fun, learning and development. Video games can range from simple puzzles and games on mobile phones to games designed for virtual gaming in a fantasy world.

However, recent enquiries, led by a Government review, show that there are concerns over potentially inappropriate material and the effects these games have on children's behaviour. The report commented that:

- *"some parents are unaware of the content of the games their children are playing."*
- *"These games present violence as casual and inconsequential; killing is the point."*

The concerns are that children mimic behaviour they see as 'grown up' - they are building their life experiences and the characters in these games can be seen as role models. Up to the age of 13, a child's brain undergoes various stages of development; they adopt and copy behaviours. Exposing children to graphic violence at this stage in their development can set a pattern for what they consider 'normal' behaviour. As adults, we are able to put these games into a context as we have more life experiences; children are not.

In the same way we would teach children how to cross the road safely, we also need to empower children with the ability to keep themselves safe when playing online or choosing games to play. Video gaming can offer a range of exciting and interactive experiences with children and we need to ensure we get the most out of video games that build on these positive experiences; children can play together, take turns and interact with each other.

If you would like to read more about gaming, the link below offers a forum for parents to share their thoughts and concerns about age appropriate gaming. I have also enclosed the Get Gamesmart agreement to give you and your children tips.

<http://news.teamxbox.com/xbox/18562/Microsoft-Launches-Get-Game-Smart-Campaign/>

Yours sincerely

Amanda Matheson  
ICT leader