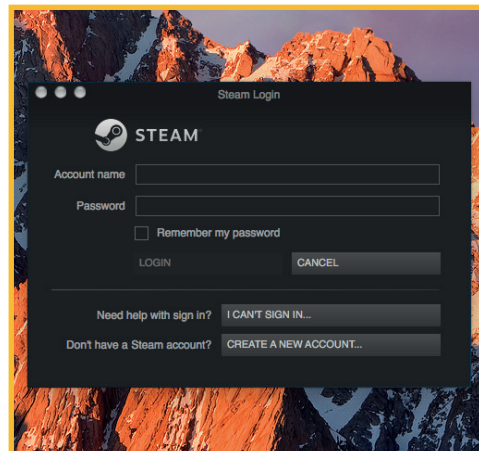




What is Steam?

Steam is a gaming and entertainment platform combined with a social network. You can buy and play games through Steam, chat with other players and share videos. While not specifically designed for children, Steam has parental controls which can be used too.

What does it look like?



Main Concerns for Parents



STEAM®



Age-restricted games

Just like DVDs, video games are age-rated nowadays. And just as there are videos suitable for older audiences, there are plenty of games that are not suitable for younger children or that some parents would be unhappy for their children to access. It's important to be aware that there are age-ratings in place, but also that the rating system may not necessarily be in line with what you feel is suitable for your child.

Chatting

Gaming is far from being something that's restricted to an activity for children and this means your child will encounter not only people of their own age, but also adults. Just as on social networks, such as Facebook, it's important to keep an eye on who your child is chatting with and to ensure that they are aware of the importance of keeping personal information private.

Game purchases

Steam is more than just a gaming and social platform, it also provides the means to buy games. Whether children are using their own financial source, or they have access to your funds, you need to take care to ensure they don't spend too much. This can be achieved through a combination of education and placing restrictions on an account to avoid unwanted purchases.



Enable Family View

You can give your child access to Steam without them needing their own account. Family View essentially enables you to place restrictions on an account so you know what it can be used for. If you head to your account, you'll find a section called Family Settings, and you can enable Family View here. Once enabled you can block access to certain games, disable chatting, shopping, and put other restrictions in place. Here's a full list of what you can do:

- Restrict access to game titles
- Block access to the Steam store, chat and other community features
- Prevent changes from being made to your account
- Require a PIN to access certain content

Check what your child is up to

Your Steam account gives you access to a history of activity. From a personal point of view your gaming history is a means of jogging your memory, but it's also a handy way to see what your child has been doing. Log into your account and select the Activity option.

Block people

You can use your account settings to block users who have been sending inappropriate messages to your child, and in some cases - depending on the content - you might want to consider reporting users to Steam. To do this, click on the user's profile and then click More followed by Report Violation.

Monitor interaction with friends

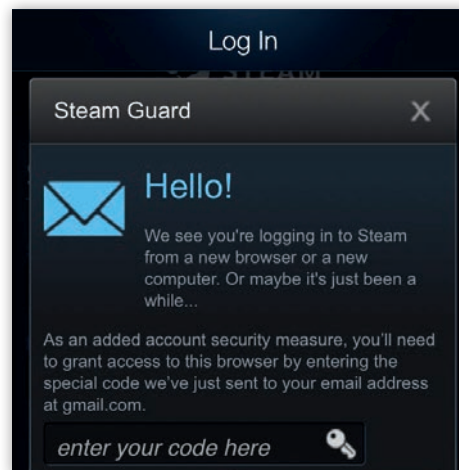
It is important to know who your child is communicating with on Steam. You should talk to your child about the sort of communication which is inappropriate and encourage them to let you know when they encounter anything that makes them uncomfortable or worried.

Do not share personal information

You almost certainly understand the importance of not sharing information online that could be used to identify you or could be used against you in a phishing scam or something similar - and it's important that your child understands this too. While there is no need to terrify your child with scare stories, you'll need to convey to them the importance of keeping private information to themselves. They should also be aware - as should you - that it can often be hard to tell whether someone you're chatting to is a child or an adult.

Enable Steam Guard two-factor authentication

Protecting your account with two-factor authentication means you'll be sent an alert to your phone or email whenever someone tries to log into your account from an unrecognised computer or other device. The Steam Mobile app is available for iOS, Android and Windows Phone, and from within this you can enable Steam Guard.



Watch out for trading scams

In addition to buying games, it is also possible to trade game items with other Steam users. It is important that any such trades take place within Steam's trade window as this means you're protected in case anything goes wrong. Do not be fooled into handing over an item you have agreed to trade in return for nothing. In other words, do not be tempted to complete a one-sided first trade with the promise that your goods will be delivered in a subsequent deal. In reality, it's best if children avoid trading altogether.

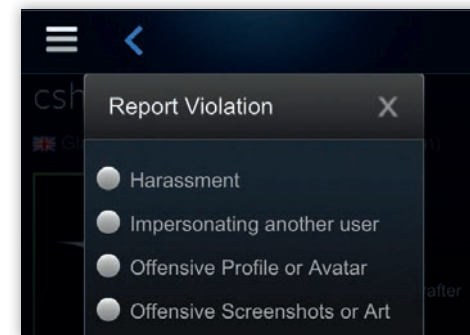
Limit spending

It would be madness to give your child unfettered access to funds that they can spend on whatever games they like. Not only might they buy games you do not approve of, they could very easily spend a huge amount of money. The best option is to add funds to the Steam Wallet your child has access to on an as-and-when basis. Do not be tempted to leave credit sitting in the account - just add what's needed when it's needed.

Know what to report

There are a number of reasons for wanting to report someone, including:

- Posting illegal content
- Sending harassing messages
- Asking for personal information
- Posting sexual content



Check the content of games

While age ratings and descriptions can give you a general idea of what to expect from a particular game, it's still a good idea to try out titles for yourself so you know what your child is getting involved with. You might not be interested in playing a game that your child has been pestering you about but take a little time to check it out for a while, so you can determine if it is suitable. Ultimately, this is a decision only you can take, regardless of the age rating assigned to a particular game.

Sources: <https://help.steampowered.com/en/>