



NZ ESPORTS

**HOW TO
START
AN**

**ESPORTS
CLUB**

**THE
ULTIMATE
GUIDE**

For more information visit our website at nzsports.org.nz or email us at schools@esf.nz

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **Ultimate Guide on Starting (and Running!) an Esports Club.**

Esports has officially arrived in New Zealand schools and has proven to foster connection and engagement in a way we've never seen before in school sport.

Whether you aim to offer a fun and engaging extracurricular activity or win the National School Esports Championships, this guide is your roadmap to establishing a thriving esports club.

From understanding the vast world of competitive gaming to organising your very first school tournament, we'll walk you through every step necessary to create a successful club.

Did you know?
In 2020, Sport NZ officially recognised esports as a sport



THIS GUIDE IS INTERACTIVE.

Whenever you encounter underlined text or rounded buttons, simply click on them to navigate around this guide, access websites and resources.

Click start to begin

[START](#)



HELP! WHERE DO I START?

DO YOU HAVE AN ESPORTS CLUB?

YES

ADVANCED LEVEL

NO

BEGINNER LEVEL



You might want to check out these sections:

Secure Resources

- Equipment, Venue & Funding
- Recruitment

Build Community & Awareness

- Information Sessions
- Collaborate

Or if you're curious, head to the next page. We won't judge.

You might want to check out these sections:

Research & Planning

- Understand Esports | Current Titles | Set Goals | Identify Interest

Guidelines & Policies

- Guidelines & Policy Resources | Inclusivity

Organise Club Activities & Events

- Competitions | Practice Sessions | Host Events



BEGINNER

START AN ESPORTS CLUB

Includes: [Research & Planning](#) | [Guidelines & Polies](#) |
[Organise Club Activities & Events](#)



SECTION 1

RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Includes: Understand Esports | Current Titles |
Set Goals | Identify Interest

UNDERSTAND ESPORTS

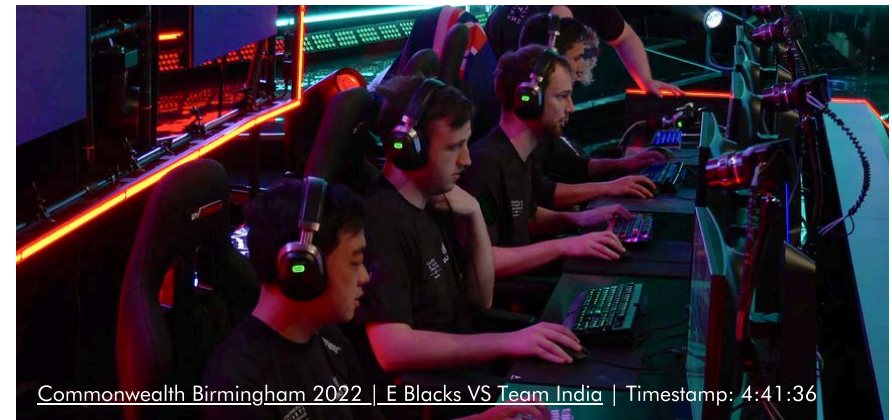
Gaming is the new social gathering place and esports is the sports field where students go to show off and compete.

Gathering with friends to play video games has evolved into an industry so massive it fills entire stadiums and online streams with millions of fans. Some games, like League of Legends have over 180 million monthly players. If that was a country, it would be the 8th largest country in the world (Bigger than Russia!).



Esports in New Zealand is defined as 'Digitally Enabled Competition' which goes beyond gaming into a competitive, disciplined environment.

Just like traditional sports have football or basketball teams, esports has teams that specialise in different games, from strategic battles to fast-paced racing. There is truly something for everyone.



Just like any sport, it has its superstars, its underdogs, and its passionate fans. It's a digital-age competition that blends skill, strategy, and teamwork, creating an inclusive community that's as much about the love of gaming as it is about the thrill of the win.

CURRENT TITLES

Below are some esports titles that cater to diverse gaming communities:

VALORANT

The most popular school esports in 2023, its a 5v5 fantasy sci-fi first person shooter (FPS) with a high skill cap.

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

A veteran esports title, 5v5 battle arena where teams attempt to outwit and outplay each other in a fantasy world.

FORTNITE

This battle royale remains hugely popular, with constant updates and a creative play environment.

COUNTER-STRIKE 2

Counter Strike is arguably the worlds most famous FPS, but due to it's realistic elements is not recommended for school competition.

TEKKEN

A 1v1 martial arts game, known for its deep combat mechanics and character diversity.



When joining a league, always look for the approved NZ School Esports badge



JUST DANCE

A rhythm game where players mimic dance moves shown on-screen, suitable for individuals or groups, celebrated for its energetic and physical gameplay.

ROCKET LEAGUE

Combines cars and soccer in a 3v3 (or 1v1!) format, known for its fast-paced, acrobatic gameplay. Great for social and competitive play.

iRACING

A simulation racing game that offers a realistic driving experience, with pathways to international competition.

NBA2K

A 5v5 basketball simulation, blends strategic team play with real-life basketball strategy and dynamics.

These are just a few of the many esports on offer. To find out a full list of esports available for your school visit our [NZ Esports secondary school page](#).



SET GOALS

Goals help provide a sense of purpose and unity.

Define the objectives of the club, whether it's to engage students, build connection, compete in national tournaments, or foster teamwork and leadership skills.



Below are examples of esports club goals:

- **Develop Leadership and Teamwork:**
 - Encourage students to lead teams, organise events, and collaborate effectively within the club.
- **Balance Gaming and Academics:**
 - Promote responsible gaming habits and time management skills to support academic success.
- **Promote Online Safety and Citizenship:**
 - Educate students about digital etiquette and responsible gaming practices to ensure a safe online environment.
- **Support Skill Development and Career Exploration:**
 - Provide opportunities for students to improve their gaming skills and explore potential career pathways in the esports industry.
- **Build a Inclusive Community:**
 - Create a welcoming and inclusive community where students feel valued and supported in pursuing their gaming interests.



NZ Esports and Netsafe have partnered up to ensure esports is a safe space for all.

IDENTIFY INTEREST

Over 75% of Kiwis play video games, so chances are the large majority of your students game already. Recruiting them to participate in esports is a great way to teach them about healthy digital habits and focus their passion for gaming positively.

However, if you asked your students if they wanted to join a sports club, they would say “Maybe, which sport is it?”. Treat esports the same way, and find out which esports games they are interested in.

You can do this with a simple question at an assembly, but a survey will provide structured insights into student interest, availability, and preferences. This data will help tailor the club’s offerings to match the needs and interests of the students, ensuring a higher participation rate and more engaged members.

We have made a simple template for you to work from as a base. Feel free to edit this to suit your club and goals.

[Survey Template](#)

FREE TO USE TOOLS:

There are several free and user-friendly online platforms available:

[Microsoft Forms](#)

[Google Forms](#)

[SurveyMonkey](#)

[Jotform](#)



SECTION 2

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Includes: [Guidelines & Policy Resources](#) | [Inclusivity](#)

GUIDELINES & POLICY RESOURCES

Code of Conduct:

Adopt our Code of Conduct below, or develop one that reflects your school values outlining expected behaviour, sportsmanship, and consequences for violations.

Parental Consent:

Obtain consent from parents or guardians for students to participate in the club, especially if it involves gaming outside school hours (form included in safeguarding policy).

Luckily, we have these resources for you:

[Guidelines](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[Child Safeguarding Policy](#)



[Back](#)

It's important to keep everyone safe & accountable in the digital ecosystem.

INCLUSIVITY

The magic of esports is that it is an environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all students, regardless of their backgrounds, skill levels, or interests.

You can help keep it this way by actively promoting diversity within the club and ensuring that activities and communications are accessible to everyone. It's important to cater to a range of skill levels, from beginners to advanced players, and to support various interests within the gaming spectrum, whether competitive or casual.

By doing so, you'll foster a community that values respect and camaraderie, making the club a positive space for all participants to enjoy and grow in their gaming abilities.

‘Foster a community that values respect & camaraderie’

Submitting a complaint:

If you believe you've experienced cheating, bullying, racial slurs, or any form of misconduct, please submit your complaint today. We are committed to maintaining an inclusive and safe esports environment for everyone.

[Submit Complaint](#)





SECTION 3

ORGANISE CLUB ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Includes: [Types of Activities](#) | [Competitions](#) |
[Practice Sessions](#) | [Host Events](#)

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES



Your school and students will have their own reasons for participating in an esports club and there are many ways to support that.



Below are three examples of how to engage using esports:

1

Competitions

Participate in regional school, or online tournaments by simply signing up online through [approved academic tournament](#) organisers.

2

Practice Sessions

Schedule regular practice sessions where members can improve their skills, strategise, and bond as a team.

3

Host Events

Invite other schools to friendly matches, LAN parties, or plan a charity fundraisers to engage the broader school community and raise awareness of the club's activities.



COMPETITIONS



Look out for the Academic Accredited Tournament Organiser (AATO) Badge

NZ Esports awards this badge to school competition organisers who have proven to provide a safe environment, fostering a culture of safety, fairness, and respect.

You can easily find tournaments for your students to compete in by following the link below. Simply choose an operator that offers games your students are interested in and register your team.

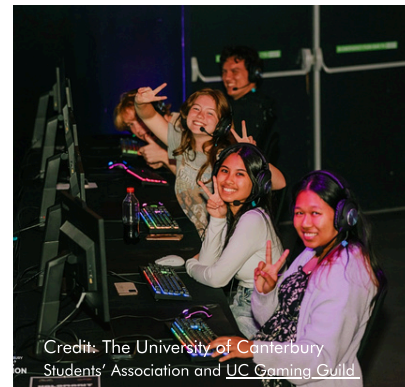
[View AATO Tournament Page](#)



NZ Esports Hyperfibre League 2023 | Rocket League



NZEHL 2022 | Auckland



Credit: The University of Canterbury Students' Association and UC Gaming Guild



NZ Esports Hyperfibre League 2022 | Auckland

PRACTICE SESSIONS

We have created a sample esports practice schedule template that can be adapted for various game and skill levels.

The sample is designed to run outside of school hours for students aged 10-18, ranging from beginners to advanced players, transitioning them from casual to competitive play.

The schedule includes a warm-up phase, skill-specific practices, strategy sessions, and cool-down activities.

[Download Schedule Template](#)



CONSIDERATIONS:

Flexibility:

While practicing together at school is ideal, sometimes schedules don't allow it. So being flexible and emphasising the importance of intentional practice during their regular gaming time is key.

Drill The Basics:

Just like any sport, encourage players to drill repetitive skills they use in real-game environments. Finding a way to enter practice modes to continuously repeat core skills will accelerate development.

Game Choice:

While the template is generic, please adapt the specifics of each activity to fit the game being played.

HOST EVENTS

Bake sales are a thing of the past. Esports and LAN parties will put the **FUN** back into fundraising.

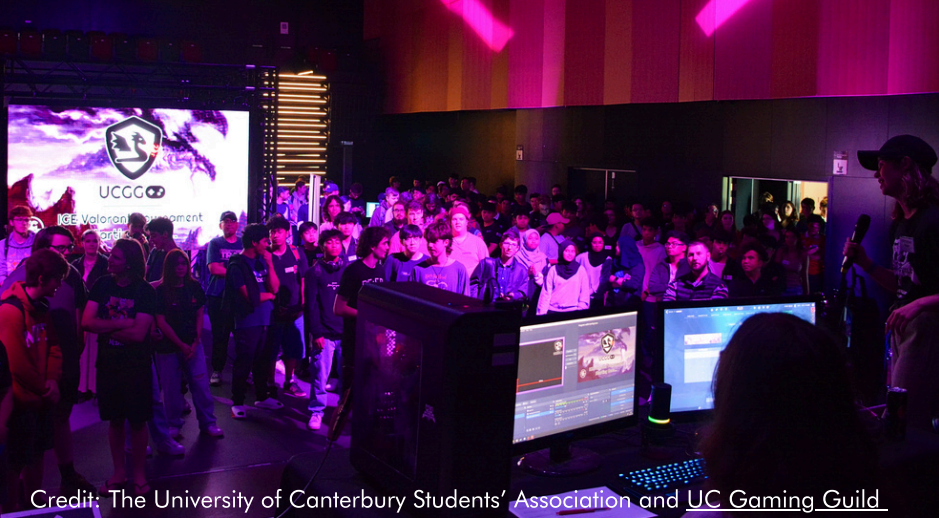
Whether it's to raise money for a new console or team uniforms, organising gaming events, LAN parties, or charity fundraisers is an easy and fantastic way to engage the wider school community, get parents involved and increase visibility for your club's efforts. These activities not only provide entertainment but also foster teamwork and community spirit.

Talk to your students for ideas, but it could be as simple as an arcade model where they pay to try set a high score, or try to win against your students.

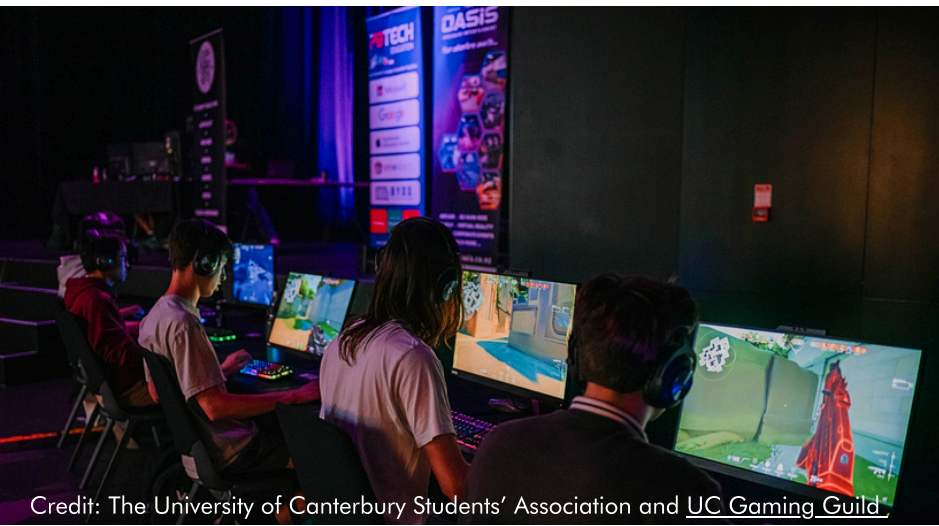
[View Resource](#)



[NZ Esports Hyperfibre League 2023 | Rocket League](#)



Credit: The University of Canterbury Students' Association and UC Gaming Guild



Credit: The University of Canterbury Students' Association and UC Gaming Guild



Credits: University of Waikato Esports Club



[Back](#)

Live esports events do more than entertain; they forge connections

Credits: University of Auckland Esports Club



ADVANCED

ESTABLISHED ESPORTS CLUB

Includes: [Secure Resources](#) | [Build Community & Awareness](#)



SECTION 4

SECURE RESOURCES

Includes: Equipment, Venue & Funding | Recruitment

EQUIPMENT, VENUE & FUNDING



Most students are already gaming using their own devices and so you don't need any financial setup to get started. They have their own little part of the esports field at home.

However, nothing is quite as exciting and engaging as being physically together while playing digitally. As your club develops, you may choose to invest in dedicated esports equipment.

EQUIPMENT

Identify which equipment you need for the games your students are interested in. It will likely be a PC, console or mobile. Explore options already within the school such as in Computer or Design labs that already have high-spec PCs that can double as an esports space. While high-end equipment is beneficial, it's not essential to establish a club. Many students likely already own suitable devices that can be used for club activities.

VENUE

School PC labs or libraries are a great place to start within the school for club meetings and practice sessions. Anywhere equipped with high-speed internet access.

FUNDING

Explore funding sources like school budgets, grants, sponsorships, or donations to cover costs for equipment, tournament fees, and other expenses, similar to traditional sports programs.

Investing in esports equipment is often not just an investment in esports. An esports space is also a digital creative space, an innovative classroom, a maker space and can be used for educational outcomes.



RECRUITMENT

COACHES OR MENTORS

Some students love and study various esports, but aren't expert players. Enlist passionate gamers to coach and mentor other students.



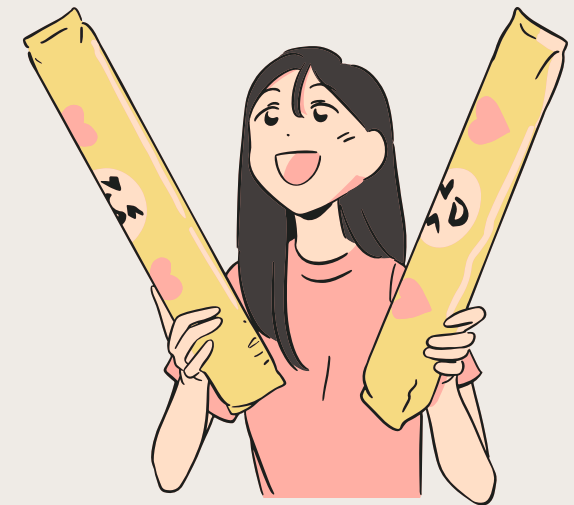
STUDENTS

Advertise the club through announcements, notices, posters and school newsletters to attract interested students.



ADVISOR

The experts are all around you! Recruit a willing student to serve as the club advisor, providing guidance, supervision, and support.





SECTION 5

BUILD COMMUNITY & AWARENESS

Includes: [Information Sessions](#) | [Collaborate](#)

INFORMATION SESSIONS

HOST A SESSION

Organise an information session to familiarise students and parents with the exciting world of esports and the objectives of your club.

If you're ready to share your passion and knowledge with students and teachers, we encourage you to take the lead in presenting.

Interested in hosting a session at your school? Please email us to request a presentation and get started!

[Request School Esports Presentation](#)

JOIN A SESSION

Let NZ Esports enhance your school's extracurricular activities by sharing the exciting world of esports.

In our school presentation, we discuss how esports complements traditional sports, promotes a balanced play-life, and guides on moderating screen time and maintaining health.

Our team will also explain how to start an esports club at your school.

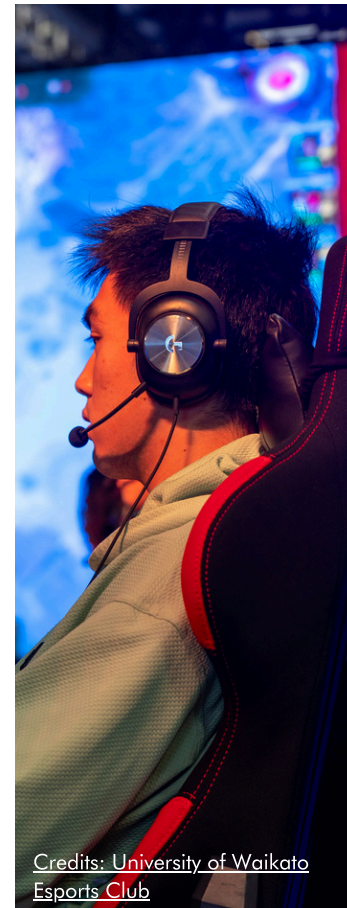
[Book School Esports Presentation](#)

COLLABORATE

Forge partnerships with other school clubs, local esports organisations, or industry professionals to exchange resources, expertise, and networking opportunities.

A great way to stay connected and informed is by subscribing to our newsletter for the latest esports news and updates.

[Newsletter Sign Up](#)



Credits: University of Waikato Esports Club



[Back](#)

Credits: University of Waikato Esports Club



Credits: Respawn Esports Centre



NZ ESPORTS

THANKS FOR TUNING IN

For more information visit our website at nzsports.org.nz or email us at schools@esf.nz