



How League of Legends is Teaching Young People the Values of Sportsmanship

Ivan Davies of Riot Games has one of the coolest job descriptions ever.

“My job is to try and make a difference to the League of Legends player and wider community,” he says. “I work in a publishing office in Oceania, where I’m not told what to do by my Manager. I’m simply entrusted to make a difference; it’s then up to the local team to decide what direction we should take.”

For Ivan and his team, making a difference means tackling one of the biggest issues facing the gaming world today: How do you educate young players about good online behavior?

Following the Summoner’s Code

Riot Games has long been a proponent of sportsmanship. With [100 million monthly players](#) across the globe, League of Legends is one of the most popular games in the industry. Because of its intensely competitive nature, it has become known for its sometimes heated atmosphere. Players are expected to abide by the [Summoner’s Code](#), a comprehensive guide to being a good team player.



In 2016, Ivan and his team started to wonder what they could do outside of the in-game experience to positively shape player behavior. They realized that it’s actually a collective responsibility between the gaming industry, the education sector, and parents. Young people would benefit greatly from this collaborative support.

It’s all about sportsmanship

In 2016 Ivan and his team created [League of Legends High School Clubs](#) — an initiative that is now spreading across Australia and New Zealand. Like other after-school clubs (think AV, drama, or Model UN), League of Legends clubs are led by a dedicated teacher. Under the teacher’s supervision, students play League of Legends in groups at school and even participate in championship tournaments against other schools.

To help students understand and follow the Summoner’s Code, Ivan and his team have outlined [six aspects of sportsmanship](#), which teachers and students discuss before, during, and after a game.



Six aspects of sportsmanship: Team-oriented mindset, respect, discipline, responsibility, resilience, and a positive attitude

“A League of Legends High School Club is intended to promote authentic, relatable learning experiences,” Ivan says. “We’ve chosen to focus on sportsmanship and have provided a code of acceptable behavior for players to abide by in their pursuit of fair play.”

Helping teachers and students

Ivan and his team have built a remarkable set of [learning materials](#) structured around the “[Assessment for Learning](#)” framework. Learning materials include lesson plans, discussion papers, and teaching guides.

This connection to the tenets of education is no accident — it’s a particularly brilliant choice on the part of Ivan and his team. As he says, “The resources align with the national curriculum and [Positive Behavior for Learning](#), an initiative in Oceania which many schools are looking to roll out. League of Legends High School Clubs is one way of implementing these initiatives.”

Online changes, offline improvements

The exciting news is that the clubs have a real effect on kids — and not just on their online behavior.

“Not only have Teachers seen students adopting sportsmanlike characteristics, which has led to outcomes like effective communication and leadership,” Ivan says, “but some Teachers are now starting to see this transfer out of the League of Legends High School clubs and into the wider school curriculum.”

Why early digital education is crucial

“This is the place to teach online behaviour,” Ivan says of high school. “I’ve always seen the education sector as a critical evolution point for young people. As teens begin to explore and experiment with the online world, we must think about how we can best support them on this journey.”

It’s clear that the time for early education is now. A 2017 [Pew Research Center study](#) reports that 40% of Americans have experienced online harassment, while 62% consider harassment a major problem. As Ivan points out, these numbers highlight just how serious the problem is. The clubs are only the first step.

The future is now

“We, as adults, educators, and teachers have to be prepared to act,” Ivan says. **“Our children and our students look to us to set expectations of what good behavior looks like, and if we can’t find the courage, time or dedication to step up and make a difference — what hope does the next generation have?”**

“We need to meet students where they are,” he continues. “And the more the education sector supports what we’re doing, the more likely we can collectively make a difference.”

[Read an expanded version of this article on the Two Hat blog](#)



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