

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Digital Schoolhouse launches third national esports tournament**

**16 October, London:** Digital Schoolhouse powered by PlayStation returns with the third edition of its national esports tournament this October. Following last year's successful event—which saw more than 2,000 students participate as either teams or as part of a school's event management, social media, press and community team—the competition will once again feature the popular game Overwatch® by Blizzard Entertainment. For the first time ever, registrations will be available to schools and colleges who are non-Digital Schoolhouse members from the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

The Overwatch Digital Schoolhouse Esports Tournament is an immersive careers education experience. This year's wider scope for entry could see participation numbers reaching higher than ever. Digital Schoolhouse's report, Esports: Engaging Education, saw that taking part in esports not only improved skills and confidence, but sparked students' interest in subjects, job roles and opportunities in the video games industry. Furthermore, 82 percent of players said they were more likely to participate in other team sports, as a result of taking part in Digital Schoolhouse's esports tournament.

The initial school heats will begin 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and registration will not close until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Following, the Regional Qualifiers will be hosted by Staffordshire University and Belong by GAME. Gfinity will be hosting the Grand Final Event, which will coincide with the London Games Festival in April 2019.

At the school heats, students will take the mantle of live hosts and shoutcasters to guide participants and audience members through the competition and the day's agenda. At the knockout stages and live events, pros will take the stage to deliver engaging events, which will also include inspirational talks by industry professionals and 'mingle with the pros' opportunities for students and industry guests to speak one-to-one about careers.

Schools and colleges that register for the tournament will get a launch pack, including lesson plans to help familiarise students with esports and video games industry careers, and of course, the chance to win 1st prize at the Grand Final.

Edge Esports will be providing the technology platform necessary to host and organise this rapidly growing and successful tournament. This platform enables Digital Schoolhouse to support school and student registration with team and tournament management capabilities as a fully GDPR compliant set of products.

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**Shahneila Saeed, programme director for Digital Schoolhouse, said:** “We’re excited to see how this tournament progresses over the next few months. With the expansion of our registrations to schools and colleges, we aim to reach more students than ever. Our ultimate goal is to empower students with events like this to network, improve their teambuilding and problem-solving skills and ultimately have exposure to a wealth of careers available to them. They can’t aspire to roles they don’t know exist.”

A large number of industry professionals from across video games and esports have volunteered to be paired with a school and work as its dedicated esports coach. They will be supporting students with expert knowledge of gaming and esports and providing them with hints, tips, strategies and tactical advice. Every school will have access to their esports coach’s guidance throughout the competition, between December and March, either online or through a school visit. Additional support and coaching for students and schools will be on offer from several industry volunteers, including support from esports gaming magazine, ESL, who will be involved in the delivery of the tournament with a range of support.

The event is run by Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation, a programme delivered by games industry trade body Ukie as a way of creating a bridge between the education and technology sector. There are no other leading esports tournaments in the UK for schools, so Digital Schoolhouse included additional stages to the competition this year after the pilot year, last year, resulted in extra demand.

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag: #DSHesports

For more information about the next esports tournament, visit [www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk](http://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk).

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### **About Digital Schoolhouse**

The not-for-profit Digital Schoolhouse programme, powered by PlayStation®, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the new Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is delivered by the UK games industry trade body Ukie, and was originally seed funded by the Mayor of London’s London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF).

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Each Digital Schoolhouse is based in a school, college or university environment, and aims to work with a growing network of local primary and secondary teachers to deliver creative and cross-curricular computing lessons using play-based learning. Through this, it supports the new Computing programme of study for the national curriculum in a way that leaves pupils and teachers feeling inspired about, and engaged with, computing and the wider creative digital industries.

The workshops put theory into practice and help teachers embed it with ongoing personalised support and continuing professional development (CPD). The programme has been accurately described as a 'bridge between education and industry' – and a good one at that.

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