

Pokémon Go Parental Guidance

Pokémon Go is a game where you collect and trade cute creatures called Pokémon or pocket monsters.

Using the GPS and camera on your phone, the game makes it look like Pokémon appear in real places. This kind of gaming is known as Augmented Reality and is really popular in schools already, with many teachers using apps to make fairy tale creatures and dinosaurs appear in the classroom.

Below is some information about the game, and some guidance on how to keep children safe when playing Pokémon Go.

Pokémon

Pokémon (Pocket Monsters) are little creatures that can be captured by Pokémon Trainers using a small spherical device called a Poké Ball. Different Pokémon have different playing stats, moves and abilities. The aim of the game is to become a Pokémon Master, by capturing as many Pokemons you can and winning as many 'gyms' as you can.

Pokémon Trainer

A Pokémon Trainer is a person who catches, trains, cares for and battles with Pokémon. The majority of people within the known Pokémon world are Trainers.

Pokémon Gyms

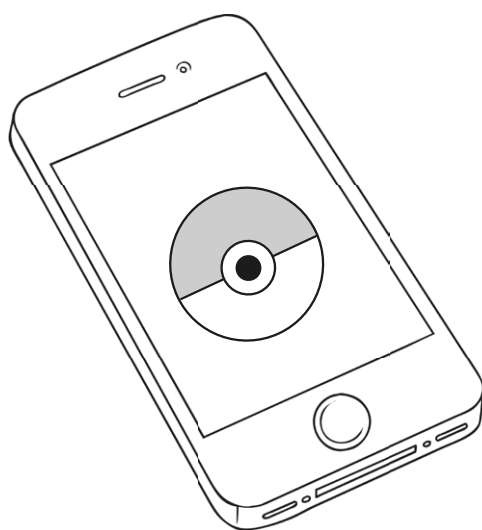
Pokémon Gyms are buildings located where Pokémon Trainers can train and compete. Pokémon Gyms are usually in public meeting spots, like parks, churches or memorials. Locating these gyms is done through the in-game map, which shows you whereabouts they are in your real-life location.

Poké Ball

The Poké Ball is a spherical device used to capture Pokémon. The Poké Ball is thrown at Pokémon and when it hits them, the Pokémon are sucked inside. In Pokémon Go, a player only receives a limited number of Poké Balls to use. More can be collected at PokéStops (a physical place to visit) or can be purchased in the app.

Pokédex

Pokédex is an electronic device which stores the data of Pokémon once they have been captured. The Pokémon Trainer must attempt to fill the Pokédex by capturing the different types of Pokémon.



Pokémon Go The Risks

For a game to become so popular, it must be lots of fun! And indeed there are plenty of fantastic things about the game which will no doubt make it a firm favourite with children young and old. But as with every online game, there are risks.

Meeting strangers face-to-face

The game is designed to bring people together. Make sure that your child doesn't arrange to meet strangers from their gaming community. Talk to them about the risks of chatting with someone that they don't know in real life.

Data plan

There is a possibility that the children may use up all of their data when going on their searches, and may roll over to extended data packages which may be expensive. Check their data regularly to ensure that they don't build up a large bill.

Battery life

The camera function can be heavy on battery life so make sure that children charge up their phone before they leave the house.

Physical danger

The game brings players together by placing Pokémon in locations in real life, so there is a very real danger of children and young people being lured into places where they would not normally go. Ensure that you know where your children are at all times and encourage them to play in pairs or in groups and ask that they stay together. Remind children to look where they are going and not to focus on their screen whilst walking.

Private property

Remind your child that some areas may be on private property and they need to be aware of trespassing laws, and being courteous to property owners such as shopkeepers.

Walking long distances

Trainers are expected to walk at least 5000 steps before they can hatch an egg, so children may set off wanting to complete this task. It may be worth reminding your child to take a water bottle and sunscreen with them for their adventure.

It can cost a lot of money

There are in-app purchases and other incentives which can cost a lot of money (disguised as Pokécoins). Ensure you set the app up without payment options or in-app purchase options.

Naming Pokémon

If you win a gym, then you have the opportunity to name your Pokémon. This is then displayed publicly in the gym, so you need to tell your child to give their Pokémon an appropriate name which will not cause offence or give away personal details.

Access to personal data

Pokémon Go asks for personal information like your child's birth date and email address, which they're asked to enter or receive through social media accounts. Always be wary of providing personal information like this over the Internet. Parents have the right to contact the creators to stop them from using their personal information.