



**A parent's guide**

# NSPCC

**Tips and advice for keeping children safe on Pokémon Go**

Pokémon Go is a game where you collect and trade cute creatures called Pokémon (Pocket Monsters).

It's one of the first popular games to use "augmented reality" - a kind of cross between real life and an online world. The game makes it look like Pokémon appear in real life places by using the GPS and camera on your phone.

It's already become a craze in Australia and America, and has made its way into the news across the world. Here, we'll take you through what you need to know about the game and how you can help keep children using the app safe.

### **Pokémon Go explained**

**Pokémon** - Pokémon (Pocket Monsters) are little creatures that can be captured by Pokémon Trainers using a small spherical device called a Poké Ball. There are different types of Pokémon, with different moves, abilities and stats. The aim of the game is to capture as many Pokémon and to win as many 'gyms' as you can to become the Pokémon Master.

**Pokémon Gyms** - Pokémon Gyms are buildings located throughout the world where Pokémon Trainers can train and compete. Pokémon Gyms are usually located in public meeting spots, like parks or churches and memorials. This is done using a Google-style in-game map that shows you where the Pokémon and locations 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.

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

### **The risks**

There are loads of good things about the game, and there's a reason it's become so popular. But it's important to learn the risks involved:

- **Meeting people they don't know face-to-face**  
The game is designed to bring people together. Usually strangers. So you never know who they might meet.
- **There's a physical risk**  
It's easy to forget to look where you're going with this game, but they need to be careful of where they end up. There are already stories of people being lured to places that aren't safe for children.
- **It can cost a lot of money**  
There are in-app purchases and other incentives which can cost up to £79.99 (14,500 Pokécoins). Make sure the app's set up without payment options.

- **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. Parents have the right to contact the creators to stop them from using their personal information.

### **Top tips for staying safe**

**Explore together** - With younger children, you might want to play the game together, and explore how it works. Older children may want to play alone but it's important to let them know the risks.

**Set some ground rules** - Talk to your children about the risks of meeting strangers and ending up in areas they don't know. Set some boundaries such as:

- take a battery pack, the game drains phone battery and this will avoid them getting lost without a phone
- stay with friends
- watch out for others - people can get competitive!
- establish where they'll be playing.

**Turn off in-app purchasing** - To avoid unexpected bills, check that your child's app permissions are set correctly.

- **Apple products:** Set up Family Sharing and Ask to Buy, which allows your child to request to purchase before it comes to you for approval.

Find this on: Settings > iCloud > Family and tap your family member's name, before tapping Ask to Buy.

- **Android:** Set up a family group which includes adding a payment method with your chosen payee.

Find this on: Subscribe > Family > Set up family > Get started

**Protect your child's personal data** - In order to sign up, your child has to enter their date of birth and their email address. However, parents can request that these details are kept safe. Details on how to do this are on their privacy policy.