

Knowsley Central School

Online Safety Newsletter: Sept 2016



Pokémon Go

Pokémon Go is the latest craze attracting a significant amount of media attention during the summer. While there are some risks, there are also some significant benefits to the game. Given its popularity among children we have produced a special Online Safety Newsletter to provide parents with an insight into the world of Pokémon Go.

What is it?

Pokémon Go is an 'Augmented Reality' App. It's not the first of its type but it's certainly the most popular with 100 million downloads since launching in July 2016. The app is simple, Pokémon characters are placed within real-life views and can be seen via the Pokémon app which uses the camera on a phone. To capture a Pokémon, users use a Poke Ball. Once captured they can be trained in Pokémon gyms and then they can compete for control of the gym.

What are the benefits?

The most obvious benefit of this app is that it gets users moving. In order to capture Pokémon characters children have to walk around their local area – which brings several health benefits. Similarly, in order to hatch eggs (which are collected in the game) children have to walk 5k. There are also some educational benefits to this app with children developing their critical thinking skills and mental mathematical skills. Players are also able to join teams which will encourage collaborative working skills and teamwork.

What are the risks?

- *Meeting people your children don't know* - the game is designed to bring people together but sometimes this will be people they don't know.
- *Physical risk* – it is easy to forget where you're going with this game and children need to be careful not to go too far or go somewhere they are not familiar with. Players need to remember to pay attention to what's happening around them and concentrate particularly when crossing roads.
- *In-app purchases* – make sure the app is set up without payment options, they can cost up to £79.99.
- *Access to personal data* - Pokémon Go asks for personal information like date of birth and email address. Parents have the right to contact the creators to stop them from using their child's personal information.
- *Theft* - Police have reported an increase in the theft of mobiles phones. Players should be vigilant of their surroundings and remember to take sensible precautions including avoiding isolated locations.

The single most expensive in-app purchase on Pokémon Go is £79.99