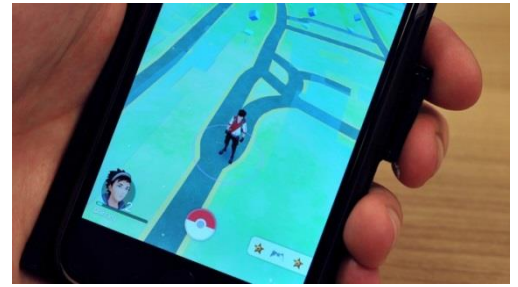


20.07.16

Dear Parents/Carers

The dangers of Pokémon GO to children



As part of our commitment to safeguarding both within and beyond school I am writing to highlight some concerns associated with a new social media/gaming app.

You may already be aware of the game that has the potential to become summer craze of 2016- Pokémon Go. The app uses Geo Location enabled through the phone to identify the users' location. A map is then provided which shows any nearby Pokémon.

The game encourages the player to walk or ride towards the Pokémon in order to capture it and increase your game status.

There are lots of good things about the game including that it gets online gamers engaging in the real world and exercising.

However, it is important for parents to consider the suitability of the game for younger children and ensure the risks are known and shared in order to keep safe. The risks include:

- **Watch where you are walking-** There's a physical risk associated with moving around whilst focused on a screen. In particular, for our pupils this could include stepping into roads without due consideration of traffic which they may not hear.
- **Getting lost-** It's easy to forget to look where you're going with this game and players need to be careful of where they end up. Some children have been found trespassing as it is possible to become disorientated and lost.
- **Be aware of strangers-**The game is designed to bring people together. So you never know who you might meet face to face rather than just online. There are already stories of people being lured to places that aren't safe for children. Stay with your group.
- **Phone snatchers-** keep a close eye on anyone trying to steal your phone.
- **Hidden costs for parents-** There are in-app purchases and other incentives which can cost up to £79.99 (14,500 Pokécoins).
- **Access to personal data** – it requires players to share dates of birth and email addresses. To avoid this some parents have opened a separate gmail account just for the purpose of Pokémon.
- **Parental settings** – Keep parental settings on high and always talk to your child about what they are playing online.

Parents have the right to contact the creators to stop them from using their personal information. Parental settings should also be able to stop or restrict in-app purchases. Due to batteries being drained by the app it is also considered sensible to carry charging devices so calls can still be made in emergencies.

For further information, please view <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/pokemon-go-parents-guide/> and on the school website www.longwill.bham.sch.uk

Yours Sincerely

Alison Jackson

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