



# Parents Online Safety Newsletter



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Welcome to the latest edition of the Parents Online Safety Newsletter.

## Help for parents: Internet Matters



InternetMatters.org are a not-for-profit organisation that has a simple purpose – to help keep children safe in the digital world. They are backed by some prominent internet industry players, e.g. BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media, and supported by leading child online safety experts. It is a site aimed at parents looking to help them make the right decisions for themselves and their families.

The website is split into sections covering issues, advice and controls and the approach is to help parents to have relevant conversations with their children in order to:

- Encourage them to behave safely online
- Help them identify potential risks
- Help limit the risks they may face online
- Know what to do and where to go if they need help.

They have some useful videos and checklists and plenty of links to other useful sources of information.

The material is appropriate for parents of pre-school children through to teenagers and includes how to research issues, have conversations with children and set up devices.

## NSPCC Helplines

The NSPCC have a dedicated helpline for parents who are concerned about online safety issues.



In addition, if you are concerned about radicalisation or extremism you can call the NSPCC's general helpline.



## Report inappropriate content to ParentPort

ParentPort is run by the UK's media regulators. They set and enforce standards across the media to protect children from inappropriate material including programmes on TV or online, films, adverts, video games or magazines. At the ParentPort website you can find out about the standards set for the media, make a complaint or share your views.



<http://www.parentport.org.uk/>

## Top tips for being a good online role model

Children will model what they see family and friends doing: this applies just as much online as elsewhere in life. It is important that parents and carers show

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See more at <https://www.dorset.police.uk/neighbourhood-policing/safe-schools-team/>

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children and young people how to behave safely and responsibly.

- Limit the time that you spend online: make sure there is some family time where you are not all plugged in
- Be careful what you post: for example many parents post pictures of their children in school uniform – this is putting your children at risk
- If your child can see your social media postings, are you sure everything you and your contacts are writing is suitable for your child – sometimes there are better ways to monitor.

For more tips go to

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/expert-opinion/5-keys-to-parenting-in-the-digital-world/>

### What is Pokémon Go?

Pokémon Go was released in the UK just before the summer holidays and has been phenomenally popular. It uses 'augmented reality' where the camera on a smartphone is used to show the landscape layered onto mapping software so it looks like Pokémon creatures are in the environment. Pokémon are 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' for your team as you can and become a Pokémon Master. The Pokédex is an electronic device which stores data from Pokémon once they're captured. One of the other goals of the player is to attempt to fill their Pokédex by capturing all of the different types of Pokémon. Furthermore there are Poké Gyms, which are buildings located throughout the world where Pokémon Trainers can train, and Poké Stops where you can collect Poké Balls and other items. These are usually located in places of interest, like parks, art installations, churches and other public buildings. This can encourage congregation of people at these places.

This is undoubtedly a novel way to play games as the player has to walk around outside rather than sit at their console but there have been concerns over safety. As a parent or carer you need to consider the following.

It is likely that your child will meet other people while playing the game. It is essential that they understand who it is safe to interact with: this will depend to some extent on the age and maturity of your child.

Players may be so involved in the game they may forget about their 'real life' surroundings. While walking with one of my children in town over the summer I noticed two teenagers playing Pokémon Go on their bikes and one crashed into the other as he was trying to catch something exciting. Other issues such as walking out into traffic without looking or going into areas that may not be suitable are also concerns.

The game does contain in-app purchases so make sure these are passworded so your child does not run up a large bill. In addition, the game will use quite a lot of battery and data from the 3G/4G signal so ensure that you child understands the limits of this.

One of the best ways to keep children safe playing this game is to go with them – I certainly went down some streets I had never seen before and learnt some history of my town playing the game with my children and we did it on a shopping day to break the day up. For older children and young people who will not want your company, you still need to have conversations with them before they go: find out what routes they will be using, agree when they will be back and it is better if they go with friends rather than on their own.



There are also some parental controls available to limit game play time.

For more information see

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/pokemon-go-parents-guide/>

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