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**‘Pokémon Go’**

**Safeguarding Guidance**

**What is Pokémon Go?**

Pokémon Go is a mobile and tablet app game which lets players find Pokémon (Animated creatures, which players have to catch, train and battle with). The game takes place in augmented reality (meaning the game combines real life action with virtual gaming) by using GPS as you walk around towns, cities and other locations to find the Pokémon. The game has been an overnight sensation with millions playing it around the world.

**Why does your church need to know?**Your church might be a ‘PokéStop’ - real life buildings and landmarks that players have to visit to get certain items they need to play the game. Your church could also be a ‘Gym’ where players can battle their Pokémon. (Being Gym means people spend significantly more time battling Pokémon.)

Pokémon Go is therefore giving churches around the country a great opportunity to meet people from their area who might not normally come to church. However, we all need to be aware that this game means that children under the age of 18 may come into contact with people who may present a risk. The NSPCC report that within days of Pokémon Go launch, there have been numerous accounts of children being placed in dangerous situations because of the geo-location feature – in one instance it is reported that armed robbers lured teenagers to a particular spot using Pokemon Go and in another that players are taken to a sex shop.

**Safeguarding Guidance**

With regard to Pokémon Go our first priority as a church should be to provide a safe place for children and vulnerable adults, whose welfare is paramount. It is important for all of us in church congregations, but especially parents, those in a leadership position, and those who work with children and young people, to be aware that the app allows for engagement with others. This means that children and young people may be meeting strangers in circumstances where the church is responsible, be that on church premises or any other place.

(i) To obtain the Pokemon Go app it is necessary to provide a date of birth and email address. Parents will need to be aware of this and can set up a privacy policy within the agreement. (see NSPCC website)

(ii) Remind children and young people to stay in groups for safety and to watch out for others

(iii) As the app drains mobile phones which may leave a child or young person vulnerable if they have no battery life left, consider phone charging stations within church premises, if possible.

(iv) Be clear where children for whom you are responsible are and will be, if using Pokemon Go.

(v) Where you see children and young people using their phones in relation to Pokemon Go, engage with them where appropriate. They may identify issues that need to be acted upon.

(vi) If attention is drawn to any individuals or groups that cause concern contact the Police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Do not approach the individual or group unless it is necessary to prevent serious harm or injury. Make a note of:

* + date, time and venue of incident / concerns
	+ the description of the individual / group
	+ what the concerns / incident was about
	+ notify the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor and email the details

Please make sure you read the advice on the NSPCC’s website here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/pokemon-go-parents-guide/>

If you have any concerns in relation to those playing Pokémon GO, please contact **Beverly Huff**, **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** on 01733 887040 or e- mail at:

bev.huff@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Beverly Huff, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

BH/GKJ

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