

Online Safety 4 Schools

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Byte App (video platforms)

‘Reboot of Vine or challenge to TikTok’

Byte is a new video looping app from the founders of the App ‘Vine’, which ceased in 2017 (after Vine was purchased by Twitter, and then Twitter shut it down). Vine was the short 6 sec video looping platform, which gave rise to the popularity of Musical.ly and creation of TikTok after Vine shut down.

Byte is the sequel to Vine and a potential competitor to TikTok which launched in Jan 2020. **Byte** had 780,000 downloads in the first 2 days and 1.3 million downloads in the first week. **Byte** did however have some software issues in its first 2 weeks, but **Bytes** marketing department still describes Byte as, “**Byte celebrates life, community and pure creativity**”.



Byte vs Tik Tok

- Interestingly in Jan 2020 Byte stated that financially compensating Byte creators through their new partner program will be used to ‘pay creators’, this is very similar to the You Tube partner scheme which means that it is possible to make revenue via Byte. This monetisation, which is not currently available on TikTok, may see a lot of old Viner’s and current TikTok users change their loyalty back to Byte.
- Byte videos can last up to only 6 seconds (compared to TikTok’s 15 seconds), so editing will be required if it's too long.
- Byte’s camera controls work in an opposite fashion to TikTok’s. In the Byte app, if you lift your finger off the record button, the recording stops. This makes it easier to film stop/start-motion Bytes or animations. In TikTok, tapping the camera starts the recording and tapping the button again stops it.
- TikTok vs. Byte fight comes down to which app works best for the user. TikTok has been around a while longer, but Byte comes directly from , and has the popularity history associated with Vine. So, if you want to publish effects-heavy videos that last up to 15 seconds, TikTok is the best option. However, Vine-purists who are happy with that 6 second video, with the possibility of being financially rewarded for their creations, then Byte is the option that’s been missing. No doubt Byte will soon add more editing options in the future.

What is the Byte app?

- Byte was created by US based Byte, Inc (original founders of Vine)
- The Byte app lets users watch, create and share six second videos
- Byte is rated for 12+ and is free for Apple and Android users

- New users must sign into Byte with either their Google or Apple accounts
- Right now, there's not an option to make a standalone account in the app. You can either choose Sign in with Google or Sign in with Apple if you're using the app on an iOS device.
- Users select a username and can create a profile with a photo and bio
- At the moment all profiles are automatically public (there is no privacy settings)
- You can follow other Bytes profiles, but profiles cannot be shared, and you can't see how many followers someone else has.
- All videos posted to the app are automatically public (MAY CHANGE)
- Users can like or comment on anyone else's video, share it as a 'rebyte' or redistribute it through a text, email or another social media platform
- There is a "flag" button to report inappropriate videos

What Byte users have said about the app

"it brings back the Vine vibe that I dearly missed. I love the 6 second cap again because it urges people and myself to really mix 'smartness' with their content (quality > quantity)"

"with so many options for social media platforms these days its refreshing to have an app that is stripped down to the basics encouraging the users to actually get creative"

"its Twitter meets Vine...."

Why should parents/carers care?

- Whilst the age is 12+ this is only an electronic verification, so anyone under 12 can simply verify (lie) that they are 12+, there is no need to use a date of birth.
- Random strangers can watch, comment on, and share what your child posts on Byte
- Other users' videos could include profanity, sexual content or violence
- Just like Instagram & TikTok there is an endless scroll which means children could spend many hours on the app without realising it.
- To get more likes and views many users film themselves doing very silly sometimes dangerous stunts, just to get noticed and receive online validation by accepting and carrying out online challenges.
- There is the possibility of being bullied and ridiculed within the comment section, due to the lack of privacy and control of followers.

What can parents/carers do?

- Download the Byte app before your child does, and decide if it is appropriate for your child to use, this will allow you to experience the ease of downloading, the ease of creating and using the App
- Stick to the age restriction of 12+, if possible, only allow children 12 and over to use Byte, the restriction is there for a reason so try and stick to it.
- Use Family Sharing on IOs devices and the Family Link App on Android devices to prevent your child downloading Byte without your knowledge. Family sharing can be accessed via the Apple device settings option and uses your apple id which then prevents the user of the other device from downloading new Apps. The Android App needs to be downloaded via Play Store and require each user to have a gmail email, but once set up the user will be prevented from downloading Apps from the Play store without permission.

- If you and your child decide to create a profile on Byte, then make sure you know and always know your child's profile name, password etc. This allows you to have control and allows for periodic checking of your child's account.
- Create the profile together and keep the log in details secret, physically logging in for your child to limit usage. Social Media, Gaming and App usage is not a right it is a privilege, so children (especially those under 12) should earn the right to spend time with their parents using Byte, stay in control and share the experience.
- Talk with your child about the videos and content they may create and view, initially spend time with you child watching videos that may interest them, learn together how to search for appropriate videos before your child decides to create their own. When your child decides to create and post their own, be with them, watch what they do to verify the appropriateness. Then make sure you keep up to date with any comments made, either by your child or by other users commenting on your child's video creation.
- Encourage them to speak to you when something upsets, worries or concerns them. Then 'flag' and report together.

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