

Online Safety 4 Schools

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Tik Tok:

Parents - everything you need to know about the music – video - chat service

What is the TikTok app?

TikTok is a make-your-own music video app that is now the most requested downloaded app in the world. It is wildly popular among UK children and young adults who enjoy watching and creating short online videos. TikTok released new parental controls in April 2020 that all parents should be aware of. Online predators can watch students sing and dance on the app, if parents do not take some proactive steps to keep their kids safe.

- TikTok is a social media app that allows users to watch and create videos that are 15 to 60 seconds
- The app was formerly known as Musical.ly
- Lip-syncing, dancing, and acting out comedy sketches are some of the most popular types of videos on TikTok
- Built-in editing tools make it easy for users to add filters, songs, effects, and sound bites to their videos without any additional apps
- The app boasts an “endless stream” of content for users to watch, which can promote addictive behaviour in students

How do Tik Tok users interact ?

- Like many social media platforms, TikTok users earn likes and comments on their posts
- TikTok incentivises collaboration by allowing users to “duet” with each other, which encourages audience reactions
- Users can follow others on the app without posting their own content, but there is no way to browse content on the app without setting up an account
- The app offers Direct Messages. The app automatically disables this feature for younger users (April 2020)

Are there any age restrictions? & Where is it Available ?

- Apple App Store Rating: 12+
- Google Play Rating: T (for teen)

Why should parents care?



Unfortunately, there are many reports highlighting the negative impact of TikTok on younger users – from predatorial concerns to collecting data on children without parental consent.

- TikTok Challenges Range from Funny to Dangerous

- TikTok had 800 million monthly active users in April 2020
- 41% of TikTok users are between the ages of 16 and 24
- It is easy for users to view mature content or content promoting self-harm or eating disorders
- TikTok challenges can range from funny and innocent to dangerous or illegal
- Users can find ways to prevent content from being 'flagged' and bypass TikTok's content filters by using creative hashtags and deliberately spelling words incorrectly
- Some TikTok cyberbullies are making "Cringe Compilations" on YouTube. They edit together TikTok videos that they deem 'cringeworthy'. Some Cringe Compilations have gone viral with millions of views

How to make a TikTok account private:

- Go to your Profile tab
- Tap the Settings icon in the top right corner
- Tap Privacy and Safety
- Turn on Private account
- Even on a private account, profile information (including profile photo, username, and bio) will be visible to all users

Parents must create their own TikTok account to use TikTok's Family Pairing

- Once your (parent) TikTok account is set up, you must link it to your child's account:
 - Open TikTok on your child's device and click the profile icon in the bottom right. Click the menu button in the top right corner. Scroll down to select Digital Wellbeing. Click Family Pairing and select the Teen button
 - Open TikTok on your phone and go to the same screen. Click on Parent
 - Use your teen's phone to scan the QR code on your device
 - Go to the next screen and click Link Accounts
- TikTok's Family Pairing feature controls include:
 - **Screen Time Management:** Parents can set limits for how long students can spend on TikTok each day. Students can also watch short videos, that appear in the app, to encourage them to balance their screen time with offline activities
 - **Restricted Mode:** Parents can filter mature content. Also, set up passwords to lock the settings.
 - **Direct Messages:** Parents can turn off direct messaging completely or limit who their students can message. The app automatically disables Direct Messages for registered users under the age of 16 (April 2020)

What else can parents do?

- Learn how to block individual users, report physical danger
- Before giving your child access to TikTok, download it, spend some time using it, then determine if it is safe for your family
- Teach your children to come talk to you, or a trusted adult, if they are ever contacted by a stranger on social media.
- Remind them to never respond to a stranger's message, befriend them, or share personal info
- Ensure that your child is only TikTok friends with people they know in real life ('True Friends')
- Remind your children that their online activity, even under a fake username, can impact their reputation

What is the Silhouette Challenge ?

- Users record a video of themselves, often dancing, with a TikTok red filter applied that makes them look like a dark silhouette
- The challenge started as a way to promote positive body image. If users are filming their silhouette challenge videos partially naked or nude, their images are not completely safe and other users can see the original video

Why should parents care about the Silhouette challenge?

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What can parents do about the Silhouette Challenge?

- Talk with your child about positive body image and appropriate clothing for public viewing, regardless of what they think others can see
- Ask your child if they have participated in the silhouette challenge and if they have, ask them what they were wearing behind the filter
- Discuss the loss of control over your images and videos when posting them to any social media site

Conclusion

Tik Tok users can have a ton of fun expressing their creativity on TikTok. The videos your children are watching or creating might be harmless, but due to widely reported safety and security dangers, it is important for parents to be aware of exactly what their children are doing on TikTok.

If a Parent/Carer decides to allow their Un 13 Child to use Tik Tok (NOT ADVISABLE)

- If you and your Un 13 child decide to use Tik Tok, 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 use of Tik Tok, their contacts and closed groups.
- Create the profile together and keep the log in details secret. Social Media, Gaming and App usage is not a right it is a privilege, so children (especially those under 13) should earn the right to spend time with their parents using Tik Tok, stay in control and share the experience.