Online Safety Newsletter   TikTok

TikTok

TikTok has now been downloaded over 2 billion times on the Google Play Store and the App Store *(source: techcrunch.com (03.05.20))* **and we seem to be seeing lots more TikTok videos during lockdown from doctors and nurses to Dame Judi Dench! It can be a fun app to use but it is important that appropriate privacy settings are used and you are aware of what TikTok is.**

What is TikTok?
You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok.

Users can watch musical clips, record 60 second clips (it include lots of lip synching and dancing), edit them and add special effects.

Why should I be concerned?
You need to be aware that some of the songs used in this app may contain explicit language and sexual imagery, which may not be suitable for your child to view.
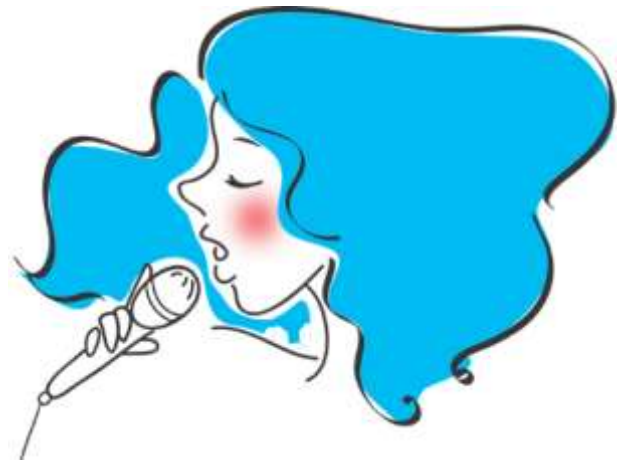
Privacy settings
If your child is using TikTok then we recommend setting the account as private. Even with a private account, your child's profile information such as their photo and bio is still visible so ensure your child understands the importance of not adding personal information (e.g. address, age and phone numbers) to this area.

Family safety mode
TikTok have created Family Pairing to help you keep your child safe whilst using TikTok. Family Pairing allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's account. This will allow you to control:

- **Screen Time Management:** Control how long they can spend on TikTok each day.
- **Restricted Mode:** Limit the appearance of inappropriate content.
- **Direct Messages:** Restrict who can send messages to them (e.g. only approved followers) or turn off direct messaging completely. TikTok now automatically disables Direct Messages for registered accounts under the age of 16.

Challenges and Trends

You can find challenges which trend on TikTok (along with other apps), lots of them are fun and not harmful but sometimes they can be risky. Talk to your child about challenges as a whole that may appear on the internet and making sure they know that they can talk to you about what they see online. Talk to them about the potential risks that may arise from participating in certain challenges.

Blocking and Reporting

As with similar apps, there is the ability to report (https://support.tiktok.com/en/privacy-safety/report-inappropriate-content-en) and block other users (https://support.tiktok.com/en/privacy-safety/block-accounts-default) so ensure your child knows how to use the reporting features within this app and is able to block other users if necessary.

TikTok have produced a number of "You're in Control" videos to show users how to use TikTok more safely. These are available here: https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/youre-in-control-video-series-stars-tiktok-creators-to-educate-users-about-safety-features

Talk to your child

Why does your child use it? What do they like about it? Do they know their followers? What do they like watching on it? Have they ever seen anything that has worried them? Talk to your child about what they share on TikTok, they must understand the importance of not sharing personal information and to think carefully about what they do share online.

Further information

- https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok-everything-you-need-know-about-video-production-app
- https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/tiktok/
- https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides/tiktok

TikTok support for parents: http://support.tiktok.com/?ht_kb=for-parents

New online safety guidance published by the Government

The government has published new advice to help people, particularly children, stay safe online during the coronavirus outbreak including making use of parental controls and the tools available to help manage screen time. Full guidance available here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online