

TikTok

Parent / Carer Advice



What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app where users share short video clips of 15 seconds duration. It started out as an app named 'Musically' and was used to share videos of dancing and lip-syncing to music. Much of the content on TikTok still reflects these origins, but popular videos now also include pets, makeup, magic tricks, fashion, art, people reacting to situations, etc. According to OSA research, TikTok is now as widely used by 11-14 year olds as SnapChat and Instagram.

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Safety Tips

- ⚠️ **As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use TikTok and any issues they have encountered.**
- ⚠️ **Discuss whether it would be best to change your child's account to private to avoid interactions with non-friends. If you agree to keep the account public you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users.**
- ⚠️ **Help your child to spring clean their account from time to time by removing videos you agree to be inappropriate.**
- ⚠️ **Ensure your child knows not to post videos in their school uniform. Also discuss how recording videos at school might break school rules and what the consequences could be.**
- ⚠️ **The TikTok settings allow you to set a time limit for how long each day you want your child to be able to use the app. This can be password protected to ensure they stick to the limit.**



Reasons for concern

- ⚠️ **TikTok has a minimum age rating of 13 and anybody under 18 should have parental permission to use the app. However, new users simply enter a date of birth to indicate their age and there are no verification steps. As such, children of any age can create an account by using a false date of birth.**
- ⚠️ **New users will be shown a range of video clips the app feels may be of interest. Many of these will quickly expose users to offensive language which will be inappropriate for children.**
- ⚠️ **The clothing worn and the type of dancing in some videos could be deemed sexualised and therefore something that might be inappropriate for younger users to be exposed to.**
- ⚠️ **The default privacy settings in the app are concerning. Although only friends can send users direct messages, the videos posted by users can be seen by anybody and anybody can like / comment on the videos. New users are also available for anybody to perform a musical duet with. Such default settings can leave children vulnerable to unwanted communication from others.**
- ⚠️ **Many children in the UK are posting videos to TikTok where they are wearing their school uniform, making it possible for strangers to identify their location.**
- ⚠️ **The nature of videos children are posting to TikTok (singing, dancing, etc) can leave them vulnerable to receiving negative comments which can have an impact on mental health.**
- ⚠️ **The company that owns TikTok is facing legal issues and stands accused of illegally collecting data on children (when it was Musically) and the app has been deemed a 'potential security risk by the FBI'.**