

THINGS PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

What IS TikTok???



TikTok is a Chinese video and music based social media app that allows users to create and share short videos with special effects.

Jokes, clips and footage dominate the platform, along with memes and videos in which youngsters, some inappropriately dressed, lip-sync and dance to popular music (including those containing adult lyrics).

It is a video-only interface, which makes it less elaborate, less detailed and much easier to use than platforms such as Facebook or Twitter.

The popular social network app is most popular among children under 16 and becoming more popular with our children in Primary Schools - with some as young as nine years old. You are supposed to be at least 13+ (and have parental consent) in order to register for TikTok.

A report done by the BBC found the video-sharing app failed to remove online predators who were sending sexual messages to teenagers and children.

Over three months, the investigation collected hundreds of sexual comments posted on videos uploaded by teenagers and children.

While the company deleted the majority of these comments, the users who posted them were able to remain on the platform.

The BBC was also able to identify a number of users who, again and again, approached teenage girls online to post sexually explicit messages on their videos.

All comments found by the BBC were reported to TikTok using the same tools available to any user of the app.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE TikTok SOCIAL MEDIA APP

- ✓ By default all accounts are public meaning that anyone can view the videos that your children upload.
- ✓ If your child's account is public, they may be receiving messages from complete strangers

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- ✓ TikTok is mostly based on music and video - so profanity and suggestive clothing/dancing are the most obvious sources of adult content.
- ✓ But the app also encourages some themes that are much more mature than their 16+ rating would suggest.
- ✓ Strangers can send private messages - so if your child's account remains public, they may be receiving messages from complete strangers.
- ✓ People who send direct messages can access data, such as where the recipient lives.
- ✓ But one of the app's positives is the ability to turn on the 'digital wellbeing' setting. Once turned on, the setting will set time limits on app use, which can help your child moderate the time they spend on their phone.

This setting also allows a parent to put restrictions on their child's account - but not all material is flagged by the filter and some content may slip through the net.

- ✓ You can set an account to be private so that all videos can only be seen by the creator and no one else on the platform. With a private account, you can approve or deny users and limit incoming messages to followers only.

Please note that even with a private account, your child's profile photo, username, and bio are still visible to all users on the platform. You can manage who can comment, duet and direct message your child on the app.

- ✓ TikTok's new Family Safety Mode, is an in-app feature designed for parents to help keep their kids safe whilst using TikTok. This allows the parent to link their TikTok app to up to three kids to manage screen time, turn on restricted mode which prevents kids viewing inappropriate content and lastly, parents can set restrictions on who can engage with children's comments.

