PARENT FACTSHEET – JANUARY 2021

Keep your child safe on TikTok

What is it?

A video-sharing app that's huge with children and teenagers right now. You lip-sync to music or do comedy sketches, and can add effects to your videos. You can also gain followers (or 'fans') and watch other people's videos.

The age recommendation is **13 and above**, but it's easy for younger children to sign up too.

What are the main things to watch out for?

- User profiles talking about 'trading' or swapping pictures or videos
- Emojis that are seen as sexually suggestive, like the aubergine
- Hashtags, like #tradefortrade, which suggest the user is looking to trade illicit content
- Sexual lyrics and swearing in songs
- Content about eating disorders (known as 'pro-ana')

Under-16s can't send or receive private messages. But once users have made contact, like through comments on videos, they could still switch to another app like Snapchat to chat privately and swap images and videos.

7 steps to keep your child safe

1. Use family pairing (also known as family safety mode)

This feature lets parents control some settings on their child's account from their own phone (there's more on which features below).

You'll need to download TikTok and link your account to your child's. Once you've created a profile, go to your profile > tap the '…' icon in the top right to open settings > Family Pairing > 'Parent'. Follow the same steps on your child's phone but choose 'Teen', then scan the QR code with your camera to link your accounts.

2. Keep account set to private and limit profile information

Accounts for users aged 13 to 15 are set to private by default. This means that only 'followers' that your child has approved can see your child's videos.

But even with a private account, anyone can still search for and find your child's profile. Tell them not to share personal information publicly, like their full name or where they go to school. Plus, encourage your child to only accept 'follower' requests from people they know and trust.

To check that your child's account is private, on their phone, simply go to your child's profile > … > Privacy > check 'Private Account' is turned on.

If you have family pairing set up, you can check this using family pairing.

3. Set age limits so your child doesn't see inappropriate content

You can do this through the family pairing settings. You can also use family pairing to turn off search on your child's account.

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If you're not using family pairing, on your child's phone go to Settings > Digital wellbeing > Restricted mode > follow the steps in the app.

4. Consider setting a time limit on use

TikTok can be hard to put down – help your child rein in their use with a time limit. You can do this through the family pairing settings, or on your child's phone. Go to the Digital wellbeing section > Screen time management > follow the steps in the app.

5. Restrict in-app purchases to block spending

On **iPhones**, if you already have Screen Time turned on, go to Settings > Content and Privacy Restrictions > enter your passcode if asked > turn on Content and Privacy > tap iTunes and App Store Purchases > In-app Purchases > set to Don't Allow.

If you don't already have Screen Time turned on, go to Settings > Screen Time > tap to turn it on > choose whether it's your device or your child's device > follow the steps to set up a passcode. Then just follow the steps above to block in-app purchases.

On **Android**, open Play Store, tap the menu button in the top left > scroll to Settings > Require Authentication for purchases > Select 'For all purchases through Google Play on this device'.

Keep an eye on your bank statements to check your child isn't getting round the controls.

6. Check settings on interactions like duets, direct messages and comments

Duets are where users reply to one person's video with another, and then share it all. The videos appear together, side by side. This feature has now been turned off for users under 16, and set to followers only by default for users aged 16 to 17.

You can change the settings for who can comment on your child's videos via the Privacy section. Users aged 13 to 15 can choose between 'friends' or 'no one' – only users aged 16 and over can allow everyone to comment. The direct messaging feature is also restricted to users 16 and over.

If you have family pairing set up, you can do the same through the family pairing settings.

7. Make sure your child knows how to report content and users

Filters aren't perfect, so make sure your child knows how to report harmful or upsetting content or users. Make sure you both know the rules too – TikTok bans sexually explicit content, bullying, graphic content, "pro-anorexia" content, and hate speech.

To **report a user**, go to their profile > tap … > Report > follow the steps in the app.

To **delete a follower**, your child should go to their own Profile > Followers > tap the follower they want to remove > … > tap 'Remove this follower'.

To **block users** altogether, go to their profile > … > Block > follow the steps in the app.

You report specific content through the video, comment or message itself. To **report a video or message**: open it, tap … > Report > follow the steps in the app. To **report a comment**: long press the comment > Report > follow the steps in the app.

Sources

This factsheet was produced by Safeguarding Training Centre from The Key**: www.thekeysupport.com/safeguarding**

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