ONLINE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

TIKTOK – What parents need to know

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.

Age-inappropriate content

Whilst most videos are light-hearted and fun, some clips feature drugs and alcohol, themes of suicide and self-harm and sexualised content.

Explicit songs

TikTok revolves around videos of dancing and lip-syncing and some of the songs contain explicit language and suggestive lyrics.

Visibility to the public

Connecting with others is very simple with commenting and reacting to videos. The majority of the interactions are harmless however there is always the risk of predators contacting young people

Advice for parents & carers

Maintain privacy settings

The default setting for under 16s is private. Keeping it that way is the safest solution. This means only approved friends can view their videos

Enable 'Family Pairing'

This allows you to link your account to theirs. Through your phone you can control the safety settings remotely

Reporting and Blocking

Make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content. You can also block users through their profiles.

USEFUL LINKS

CEOP · UK Safer Internet Centre www.saferinternet.org.uk · IWF Internet Watch Foundation · internet matters.org

Emoji Slang - A Guide for Parents

You're probably aware of some of the slang terms you child uses whilst texting but you may be completely baffled by the emoji slang.
Below we've unpacked some of the most common emoji's and their hidden meaning...

For many parents, this will be new and some maybe offended. We want to ensure that parents are as informed as the children so that all children can be safe online.

Warning! Some of these phrases are inappropriate for children to view
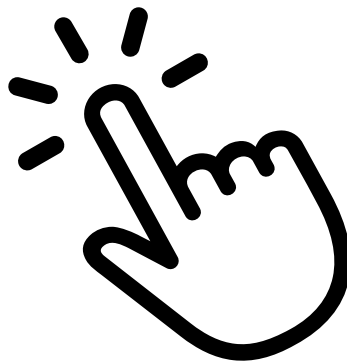
Screen-time advice

We're often asked how long children should spend on their devices each day.

Childnet have created a blog discussing why it is difficult to specify a limit and what you should consider.

You can read it here:
https://www.childnet.com/blog/
screen-time-guidance-for-
parents-and-carers/

Effect on behaviour
Constant use of a device and features like auto-play on platforms can be habit forming and encourage children be spend longer on screens

Effect on sleep
Blue light from phones can trick the brain into thinking it's still daylight making it difficult to sleep

Effect on the brain
Screens can have a drug-like effect on the children's brains which can make them more anxious

It can make children more forgetful as they rely on things like Google, GPS and calendar alerts to look up information

What are the benefits?

• Gives children access to a **wealth of information** to build their knowledge
• Technology **takes away physical barriers** to social connections to make children less isolated
• Exposure to tech has proven to **improve children's learning** and development
• Online games and activities **enhance teamwork and creativity**