![Hatton Academies Trust logo]

Make your interest clear

Ask to see your child's favourite games and apps which will help you spot issues

Be open, honest, and appropriate to their age

When answering questions about puberty, relationships, etc.

Remind your child they can always talk to you

Even when they view harmful content, talking about it openly will help

Discuss that not everything we see online is real

Use examples from your own online world, like posts that show perfect houses

Try to remain calm

Your initial reaction could stop a child from speaking openly about what they've seen

Create a family agreement

About device use including when to use devices, parental controls and why it's good to talk

Keep talking

Online Safety Newsletter December 2024

The TikTok Edition!

TikTok is free to use (but has in-app purchases) that lets people watch and share short videos within its online community of 1bn worldwide users. The app can be very addictive and has a number of hidden dangers including private messaging and live video options.

![TikTok logo]

What are the risks?

In-app spending

Users pay for emojis that they can use to show appreciation for other people's videos. These range in price from £9.99 to £99! Ensure that your child's account does not allow for in-app spending – especially if you are paying the phone bill each month!

Addiction

Like most social media apps, TikTok is cleverly designed to get us scrolling for longer. This can quickly get out of hand. It is sensible to set limits on screen time for social media platforms. Ensure your child's profile has their correct age this also turns off some of the riskier elements of the app by default.

Going Live

Users can 'livestream' – where they upload video in real time which can be risky if the broadcast is public as anyone in the world can watch the video. We have recently had some female students join live videos with adult males which also raises concerns about possible grooming. Further risks include being encouraged to do inappropriate activities on camera or exposure to indecent language from those watching the broadcast. We would always advise setting children's accounts to private and linking your account to theirs so that you can remotely control their privacy settings and access to age-restricted content.

My child wants TikTok – should I let them download it?

We would always recommend following the age-ratings for any platforms, but also ensuring that your child has signed up using their correct age (some children use fake dates of birth as these aren't checked by the app and allows them to bypass age-restricted features designed to keep your child safe), and talking to your child about the risks. Here are some prompt questions for you to discuss with your child before they get the app:

- Why do you want to download TikTok? How do you plan to use it?
- How are your friends using the platform currently?
- How will having this app affect your social interactions online and offline?
- Do you know what the dangers of using TikTok are?
- How can you keep yourself safe on the app?
- How many minutes per day will you use it for? Shall we agree a limit?
- If you see graphic content on TikTok what would you do?
- Why do people spend lots of money on emoji packages on TikTok? Would you do this?

Review the decision a few weeks later. Here are some conversation prompts to use with your child:

- How have you engaged with TikTok? What have been the positives and negatives?
- Have you encountered any graphic/inappropriate content? How did you react?
- What would have to happen for you to decide that you no longer wanted to use TikTok?
- Has anybody encouraged or pressured you to use TikTok in an inappropriate way? How did you react?
- How much time do you spend on TikTok each day/week? Check this on the screen time function on their phone to see how much time they are actually spending – they may surprise themselves!
- Which of your friends have more followers than you and how are your friends trying to gain followers? What do you think about this? Do you want more followers? What if these followers are not known to you?

Starting a conversation about life online

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Be positive and open-minded about the internet

Talk early and often
Make conversations about the internet part of your daily routine

Create a safe space for conversations
Talking face to face can sometimes be difficult, so talking while walking alongside or while in a car might be easier. Make sure there are no distractions

Keep it relevant
The way your child uses the internet will change as they grow older. So, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have to get a feel of the challenges and experiences they face online

Be proactive
Create an agreement together on how the internet will be used, including time spend online, who your child can communicate with, appropriate apps and games and safety tools to report and block harmful content

How to make TikTok safer for your child:

Enable Family Pairing

This allows you to pair your TikTok with your child's and control the settings remotely. This means that you can turn on restricted mode allowing you to reduce the chances of them seeing inappropriate content. You can also limit who they can message and set screen-time limits.

Limit In-App Spending

If your child is using the App on an Android or iPhone you can change the settings to turn off in-app spending. We would highly recommend this as otherwise they can spend a considerable amount of money without realizing it – they do not need to spend any money to enjoy the app.

Make Accounts Private
Accounts for children will normally be set to private by default but if your child wants to they can easily bypass this. Use parental controls to ensure that their accounts are private. This protects your child as it means that their videos can't be viewed by strangers and nor can they communicate via direct messages with anybody who is not on their friends list.

How do I make all these changes to keep my child safe?
Please see the guidance available here courtesy of SWGFL by clicking on this link: Tiktok_checklist_final_AW