



RJ/DE

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Online Safety – Tik Tok and general social media**

I am writing to remind families of the importance of keeping children safe online, particularly in relation to social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube.

#### **Age Restrictions and Legal Requirements**

Most social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube, have a minimum age requirement of 13 years. This is in place to help protect children from content and interactions that are not suitable for younger users.

**No pupil at Tatsfield Primary School should have their own TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat accounts.**

While many children say “everyone else has it”, research and safeguarding evidence show that early, unsupervised access to social media can lead to:

- Exposure to inappropriate or disturbing content
- Contact with strangers and online grooming risks
- Increased anxiety, pressure and comparison
- Difficulties managing screen time and sleep
- Online arguments, unkind messages or bullying

We strongly advise that Year 6 children do not use TikTok or other social media platforms, including unrestricted YouTube accounts.

If you do want your child to access YouTube, we recommend that:

- It is supervised
- Privacy settings should be checked carefully
- Commenting and uploading videos should be disabled
- Screen time should be limited and monitored

More information (What Parents Need to Know) about Tik Tok is on page 3 of this letter and on the [Year 6 class page](#) of the school website.

We encourage parents to:

- Keep devices out of bedrooms at night
- Regularly talk to children about what they are watching or playing
- Regularly check children's devices – including internet browsing history, photos and deleted items
- Reassure children that they can report anything that worries them
- Say “no” with confidence – keep boundaries and expectations clear

If you would like support with parental controls, privacy settings or talking to your child about online safety, the following websites offer practical advice:

- [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- [www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

If you have concerns about your child's online activity or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Ward, Mrs Knock or me.

Best wishes



**Rachel Jewitt**  
Headteacher



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

## BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

## IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.8 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

## MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

## ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

## Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



See full reference list on our website

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