



WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM



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- If you have any concerns about your child or another student at Harington you can email safeguarding@haringtonschool.com and a member of the team will be in touch.



UPCOMING EVENTS

As a large number of Year 12 students have started driving lessons and a few have passed their test - congratulations. Now seems a good time to discuss the topic of being a safe motorist.

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) are coming in to our School to talk to the Year 12 students about road safety. They will be focussing on the "The Fatal Four" which are the four main causes of KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) on our roads. <https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/road-safety/the-fatal-four/>

The Fatal Four are

- Driving and using a mobile phone (or device)
- Driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs
- Driving whilst not wearing a seatbelt
- Driving whilst speeding

The visit will include the opportunity for students to experience a fully immersive 360 degree Virtual Reality experience to raise awareness about the Fatal Four <https://youtu.be/QgutXi4JlMM>

EXAM STRESS

All Harington students have exams coming up. Year 12 will be sitting their mock exams and Year 13 their A levels. As well as help with revision some students will need support with their anxiety and stress levels both before and after the exams. Some young people feel much better when exams are over, but that's not the case for all young people. Get help if your child's anxiety or low mood is severe, persists and interferes with their everyday life. You should encourage them to speak with a member of staff. For example their Form Tutor or Mrs Tomson, Student Support Advisor. Alternatively, a GP would be able to assess the situation and suggest if next steps are required.

WITH YOU IN MIND

The With You in Mind strategy looks at what we can all do to promote positive mental wellbeing by promoting good practice as recommended by the NHS, within School and at home. It focuses on five key areas:

- Making connections
- Being physically active
- Learning new skills
- Giving to others
- Paying attention to the moment

It also contains a list of useful supportive external links. A copy of the booklet can be found by [clicking here](#)



IS TIKTOK SAFE? (NSPCC)

A recent report by Ofcom highlighted that over half of 3-17-year-olds are using TikTok. Here's everything you need to know about the popular video-sharing app.

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a video-sharing platform where you can watch and create videos, and livestream. The app has an age-rating of 13+. Users can browse different videos on TikTok via a personalised feed known as the 'For You Page'. You can also search for content using topics or hashtags.

How does the TikTok algorithm work?

The platform uses algorithms to show users different video content based on their interests and other videos they watch. This means that not everyone's 'For You Page' is the same. Sometimes platforms test out different types of content with similar themes to see how we interact, so it knows what to show us in the future.

What types of videos are on TikTok?

Anyone with an account can upload a video to the platform. This means that there's a whole range of videos that feature different topics, challenges or ideas. Some might include:

- dancing or lip-synching
- clips from TV shows or films
- sports
- comedy sketches or funny videos
- recipes
- fitness
- news or world events.

Is TikTok safe for young adults?

TikTok can be a creative outlet for young people as it allows them to learn about video editing and discover new interests. However, it can be easy for them to come across inappropriate content or upsetting videos because TikTok uses algorithms to show users new content. The platform also has communication features that allow users to privately message each other which could put your young person at risk of being contacted by someone they don't know.

More Information can be found by going to TikTok's own Guardian's Guide https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/?enter_method=left_navigation or their own user guide https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/new-user-guide/?enter_method=left_navigation .

There is also a guide that shows you what data TikTok collects https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/privacy-highlights-for-teens/?enter_method=left_navigation .

The NSPCC have their own guide on using Tiktok safely <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/child-safe-settings-tiktok/> which is worth looking at in conjunction with your young person.



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

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

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-16 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18

CENSORED

DAINGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact with strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £3.99 to an eye-watering £89; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

TikTok can be addictive, especially for young people: compulsive repeated use can interfere with sleep patterns and be a distraction from other activities. The platform recently introduced default usage time limits of 60 and 100 minutes for new members under 18 (in the UK, children with TikTok average 102 minutes per day on the app), but these restrictions can easily be removed in the settings.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-16s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are falling to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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