

Your child's mental health and wellbeing:

TikTok Guide

What is TikTok and who is it for?

TikTok age restriction is 13+

TikTok is a free video-sharing and social media platform. It lets users create content, share videos and watch short clips from people all over the world. Users must be aged 13+ to hold a TikTok account, TikTok is responsible for banning users who they believe to be under 13.

In addition to this, TikTok is responsible for restricting certain content to over 18s. More about this can be found in their [Community Guidelines](#), this restricted content includes content about disordered eating, dangerous activities and challenges, nudity, and sexual content.

It is very important that you monitor your child's social media use to ensure that they are using their correct date of birth, in order that they do not have access to restricted and potentially harmful content.

TikTok and emotional wellbeing

As with all forms of social media, there can be both positive and negative aspects of TikTok.

Young people whose brains are still developing may find it hard to navigate the negative aspects of the platform. Parents and carers should be aware of the potential risks, some which are listed over the page.

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Addictive Nature: TikTok relies on users wanting more. It quickly creates a user's For You Page (FYP) based on their searches and **content that they have previously viewed**. On average UK TikTok users under the age of 18 use the app for 102 minutes per day.

Mental Health Content: TikTok is vast and includes a lot of content around the subject of mental health. However, in May 2025 a Guardian newspaper investigation found that over half of the top 100 trending videos offering mental health advice contained misinformation. This included false claims, misuse of clinical language and quick-fix solutions, which are not supported by medical evidence.

Harmful content: TikTok automatically loads content for viewing and therefore users may be shown content which they would not have chosen to watch.

Dangerous challenges: The addictive nature of TikTok may mean that children and young people are tempted to participate in trending challenges on TikTok. Some of these can be fun and harmless, such as dances, however others can be harmful.

Understanding hashtags

Hashtags # are a way to label and search for content. They can be a useful way to find content that interests you. For example, some young people have used the **#studywithme** to post content of themselves studying to encourage others to revise alongside them.

TikTok has a list of banned hashtags which have been shown to be associated with harmful content. However, users invent hashtags which are used as code to secretly highlight certain types of content. Unfortunately, it is difficult to keep track of secret hashtags however hashtags can be used to share content around self-harm or suicidal feelings and behaviours.

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Safety precautions

Family Pairing: This allows parents/carers to customise safety settings. By linking your teenager's account to your own account, you can set limits such as screentime, blocking keywords, and time away (which blocks the app entirely on certain days and times). For more info see: [Family Pairing](#)

Set accounts to private: Under 16 accounts are automatically set to private, however this can be changed in the settings. Check your child's account is still set to private.

Talk: Having open and curious conversations with your child about what they see and post on social media is key. Don't shy away from difficult conversations. Making these conversations a normal part of family life is key, rather than sitting down for a one-off "big talk".

Keep informed: Use trusted sources of information to keep up to date about the ever-changing world of social media. [Internet Matters](#) is an excellent site.

For more support and advice, please visit our Thriving in Education [website](#) or scan the QR code.

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