

# **TikTok**

## Guide for Parents and Carers



## What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app set to reach 1.5 billion users across 155 different countries, where users can create, share, and watch short videos. The app contains a variety of music and special effect features that allow users to express themselves in creative ways. This includes singing, viral dance trends, lip-syncing, performing comedy sketches and online challenges.

## How do you get it?

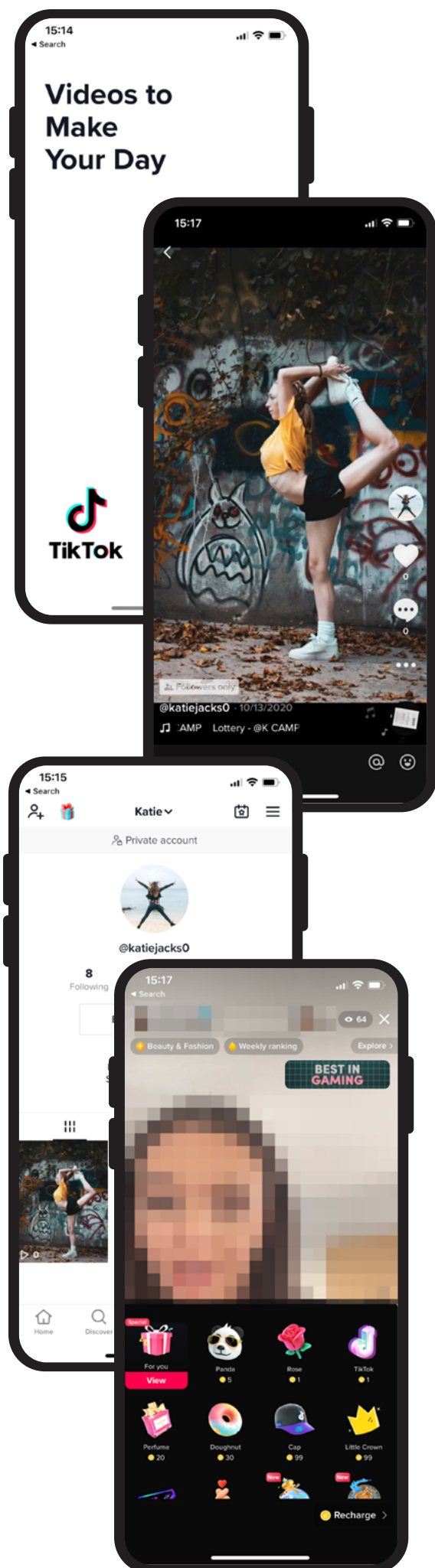
The TikTok app is free to download on Android and iOS devices, and it can also be accessed on web browsers and some smart TVs. However, if a user has a direct link to a specific TikTok video, they can click the link to watch it and do not need to have the app installed on their device. It is only if the user wants to like, comment, or create their own video content that they will be asked to sign up for a free account.

## Creating an account

Accounts can be created using a phone number or email, or by connecting the TikTok account to a Facebook, Twitter, or Google account. If 'Use phone or email' is selected, the user will be asked to enter their date of birth, create a password and given the option to verify their contact details.

## How does it work?

Once signed up and logged in, users can search for categories and topics that may interest them, follow celebrities, influencers and creators, or find people they know via their phone's contact list. Users can also upload, comment and like videos using a variety of the inbuilt tools and features.



## Potential Risks



### Age Verification 🧒

TikTok requires users to be at least 13 years old, however, there is no strict age-verification in place and there is nothing to stop users from claiming to be older than they are.

### Stranger Danger 🧐

Not only can users input a fake age, but they can also create an entirely fake profile (name, location, bio details). Other people may also be able to contact the user directly through the app, depending on the user's privacy settings. Once contact is made between users, they can then move to another social media platform such as Instagram or Snapchat.

### Explicit Content 🚫

Explicit and/or sexual language may be heard in the music/audio features within the app, and users may also use suggestive emojis or hashtags to discuss explicit content that would not be suitable for young audiences.

### External Links 🔗

Users can click on external links found on profiles, meaning they may be signposted to inappropriate or explicit content found in profiles on other platforms e.g., Twitter, Instagram or OnlyFans.

### In-app purchases 💰

Users can buy digital goods on the platform and gift these to others, young people may be asked to gift or be encouraged to send gifts for a 'shout out'.

### Payment Links 💵

Users can share links to their PayPal meaning other users can send them money – this can create risk as money can be used to coerce young people.



### Persuasive Design 🔥

The platform is based on 'vertical/portrait videos' and a series of repetitive actions and behaviours which include swiping through infinite videos and double tapping to like a video.

### Powerful Algorithm 📈

TikTok delivers its content using a powerful algorithm that learns from users and shows them content they are most likely to engage with. If they like content related to mental health they may see more of the same.

### Video Downloads 📺

Videos can be downloaded and saved without permission. These can also be shared on other external apps and platforms.

### Social Pressure 😞

Young people may feel pressure to take risks on video in the hope they will gain a larger following, more likes and shares. They may also be pressured into 'trading' or 'swapping' intimate videos or pictures.



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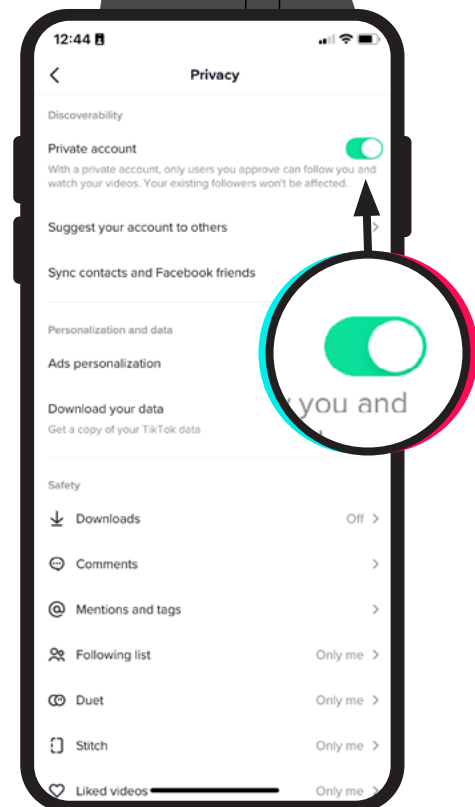
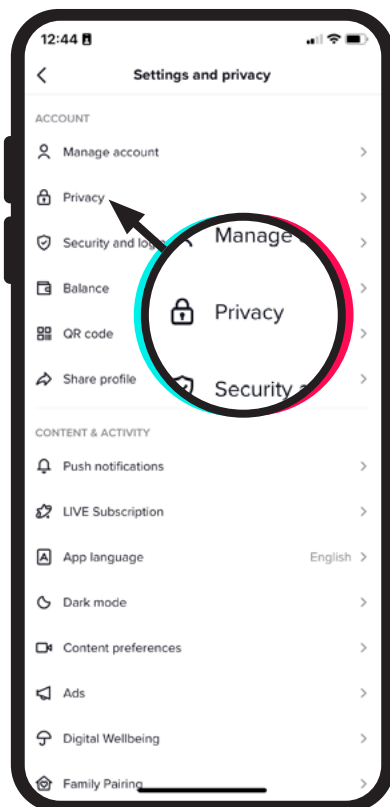
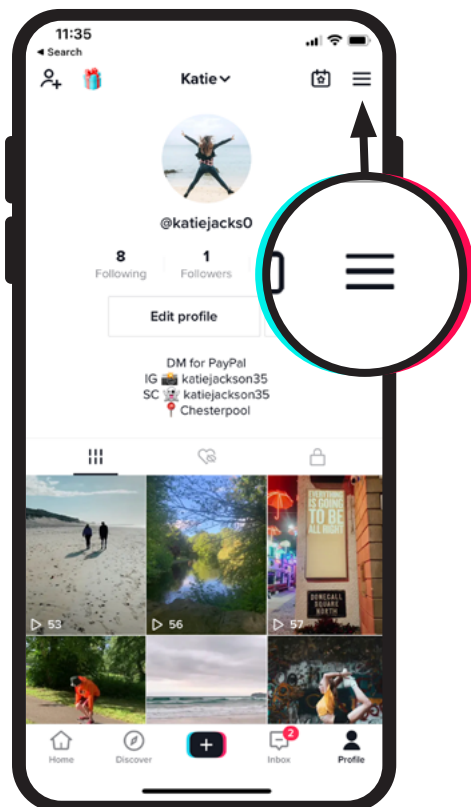
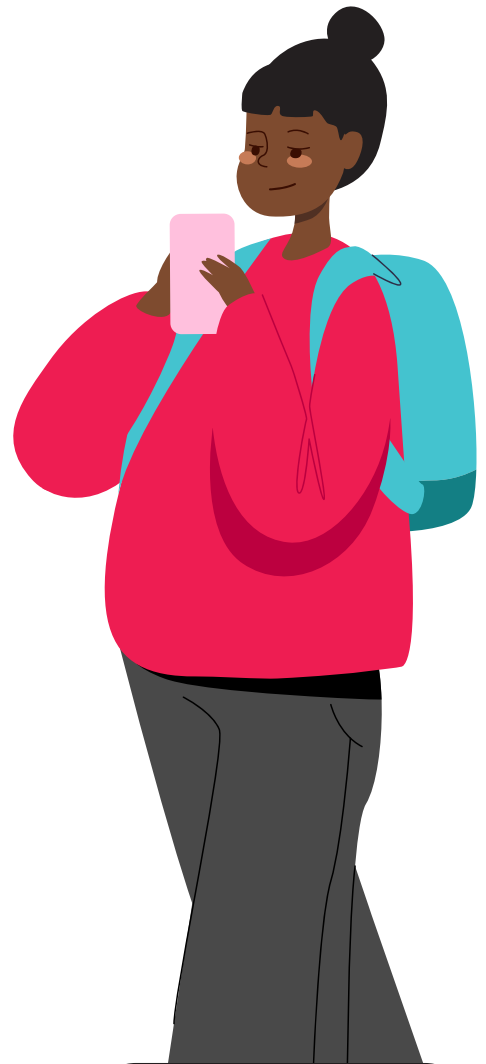


### Safety options

Direct Messaging on the platform is not available for users registered as under 16 years old. All TikTok accounts for 13–15-year-olds are private by default. However, it is recommended that all accounts are kept private with only 'friends' authorised to interact with the content. This will help strengthen the privacy of the user's account.

To make an account private:

- Tap the three-lines in the top right of the profile.
- Select 'Settings & Privacy'.
- Ensure the 'Private account' toggle is moved to 'on'.





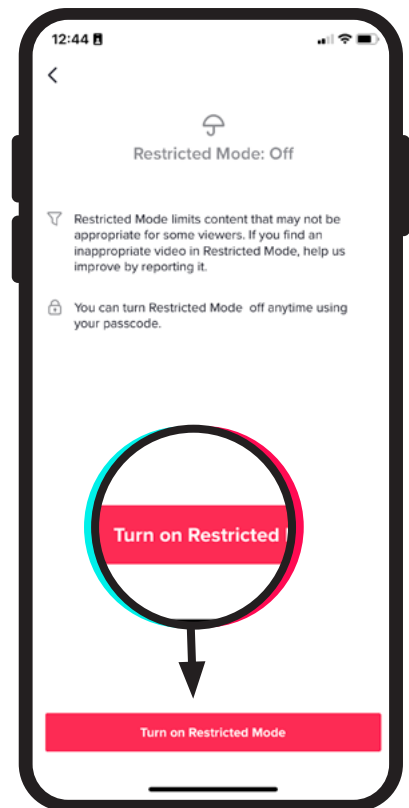
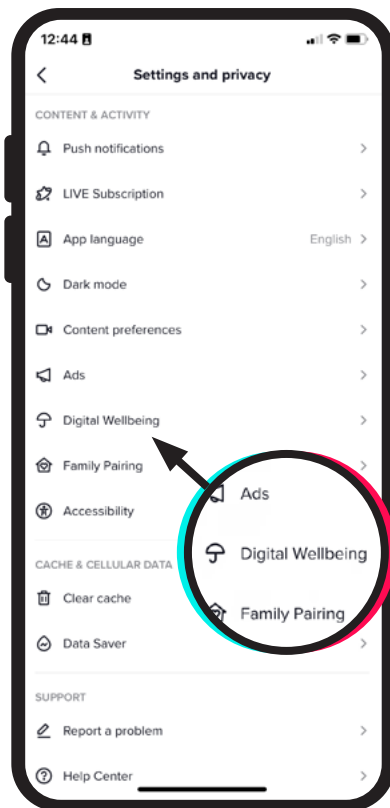
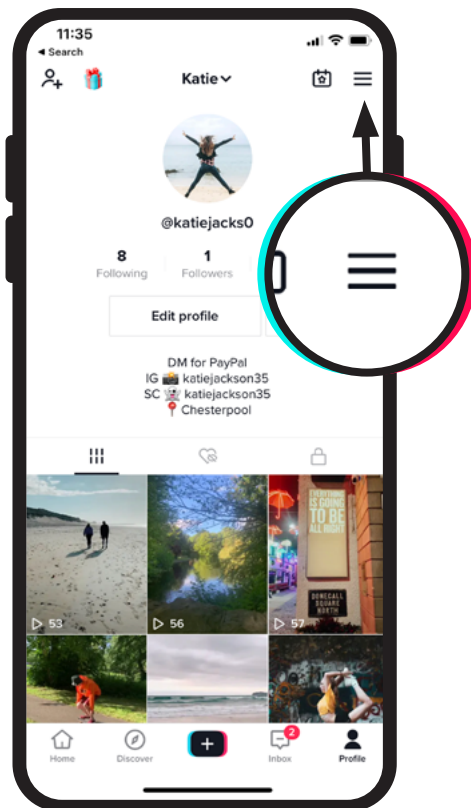
## Restricted Mode

TikTok is moderated and content that does not adhere to its guidelines is regularly removed. However, it is recommended that 'Restricted Mode' is enabled as this will help to "limit the appearance of content that may not be appropriate for some audiences".

**TikTok encourages its users to report any content they find inappropriate whilst in Restricted Mode to ensure users see less inappropriate content.**

You can enable restricted mode by the following steps:

- Tap the three-lines in the top right of the profile.
- Under 'Content & Activity' settings select 'Digital Wellbeing'.
- Go to 'Restricted Mode' and then tap 'Turn on'.
- Enter a passcode which you will need to enter to disable it again.



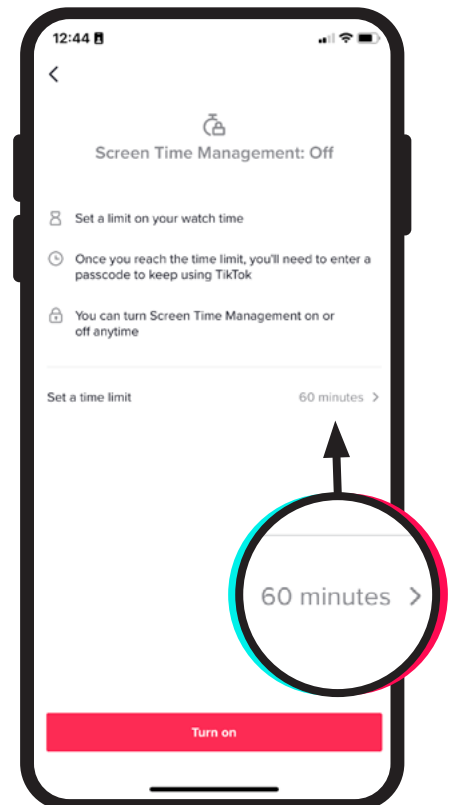
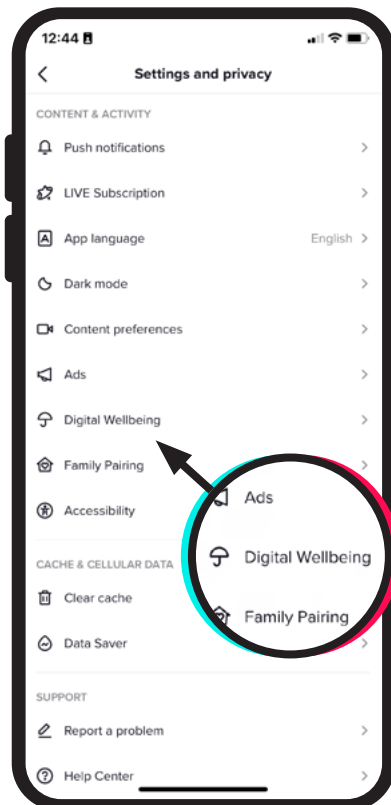
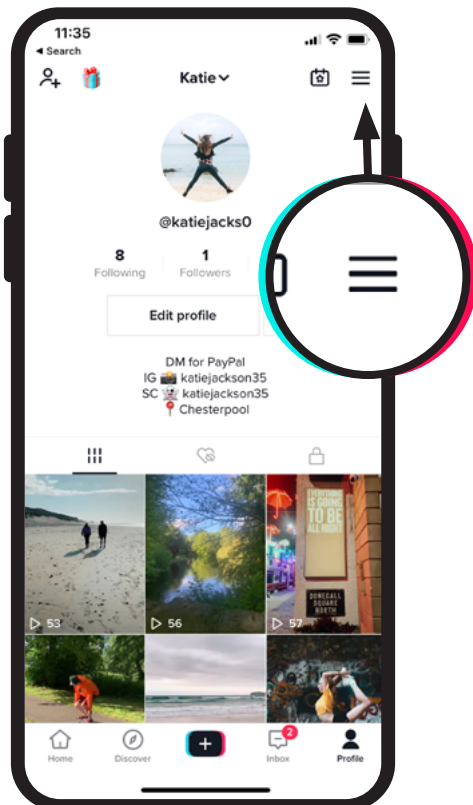


## Screen Time Management

The Digital Wellbeing feature allows the configuration of screen time limits.

To enable this feature:

- Tap the three-lines in the top-right corner of the screen.
- Under 'Digital Wellbeing' select 'Screen Time Management'.
- Tap 'Turn on'.
- Set a passcode which will be needed to disable it again.
- If 'Restricted Mode' is enabled, it will be the same passcode.







## Family Pairing

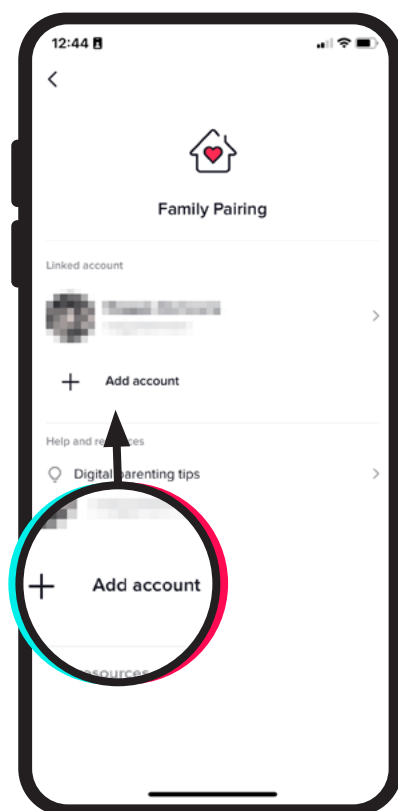
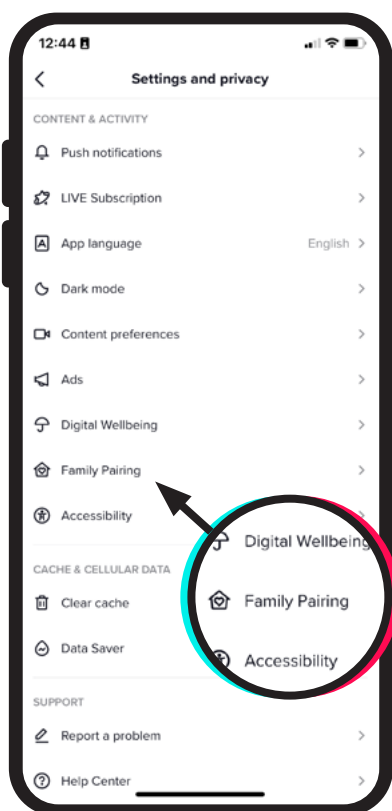
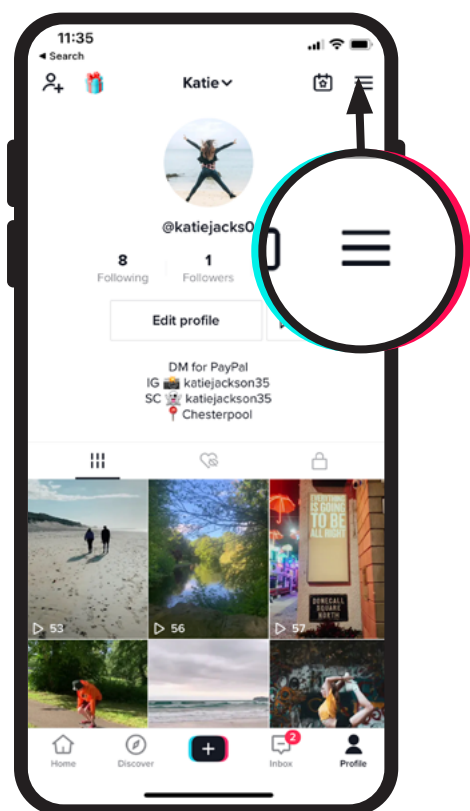
Family Pairing allows parents and teens to customise safety and privacy settings based on their needs. It is an extra safety feature for parents to manage their child or young person's use of TikTok.

In this feature a parent can set:

- restricted mode,
- screen time limits,
- messaging restrictions,
- profile and video visibility.

The parent will need to create a TikTok account, and the pairing facility will also need to be connected and approved on the young person's phone. However, it can only be removed on the parent's phone.

- Tap the three-lines in the top-right corner of the profile.
- Select 'Family pairing' then 'Add account'.
- Follow the steps as advised.

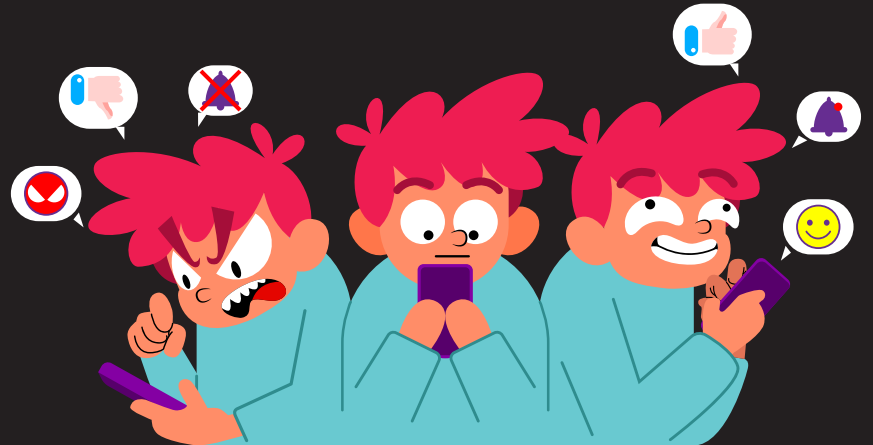
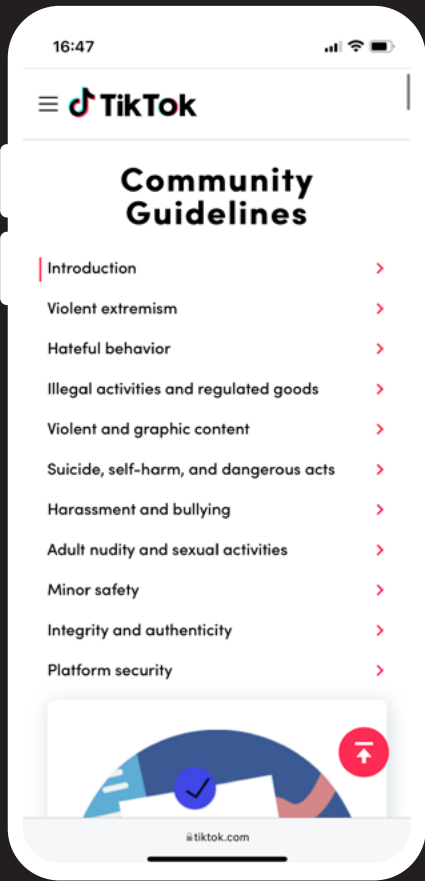


## Guidance for Inappropriate Content

### TikTok's Community Guidelines




TikTok provides guidance on what is and not allowed on the platform and state that they will remove any content that violates these guidelines. This covers areas such as violent extremism, hateful behaviour, and illegal activities.

More information can be found in TikTok's Community Guidelines at [\*\*tiktok.com/community-guidelines\*\*](https://www.tiktok.com/community-guidelines).



## Reporting and blocking

If you become aware of inappropriate content, you may wish to report a video or report/block a user.

-  **Reporting a video** will refer the individual video to TikTok for examination and they may take action if it goes against the Community Guidelines.
-  **Reporting a user** refers the account, including their video content, to TikTok. The platform should then take action if the account goes against the Community Guidelines.
-  **Blocking a user** prevents them from viewing your videos or engaging with you through direct messages, comments, follows or likes.

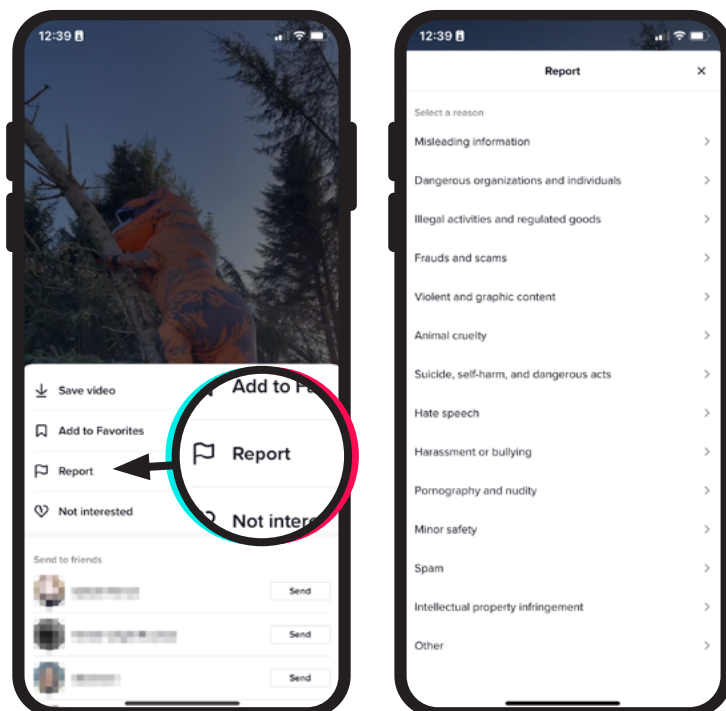




The reporting process is entirely anonymous and the user will not be made aware as to who has reported them. Posts may need to be reported multiple times if removal is unsuccessful.

## How to report a video

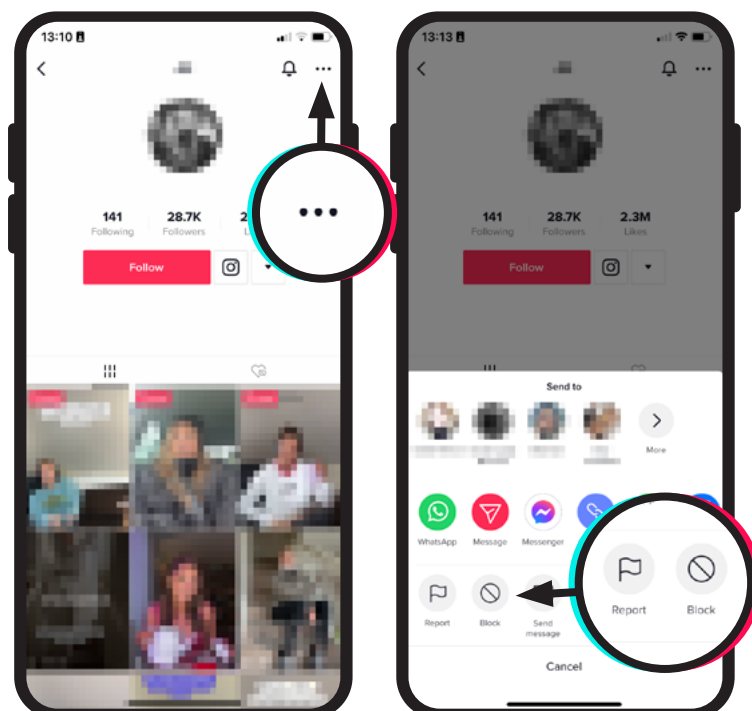
- Hold your finger on the video until the menu pops up along the bottom of the screen or alternatively tap on the arrow alongside the right-hand side of the video.
- Tap 'Report' and select a reason for the report from the list of options.
- Select more specific reason details as requested by the app.
- On the final screen tap the 'Submit' button.



## How to report and block an account

To report or block an account, users will need to create their own TikTok account. Once logged in:

- Go to the profile of the user you wish to report or block and tap the three-dots in the top-right corner.
- Click either 'Report' or 'Block' from the menu that will appear at the bottom of the screen.
- When reporting an account, you will be asked to submit a reason from a list of options.
- Blocking can be done without submitting a reason.
- More information on reporting users and content can be found in TikTok's safety section on their website at [support.tiktok.com](https://support.tiktok.com).

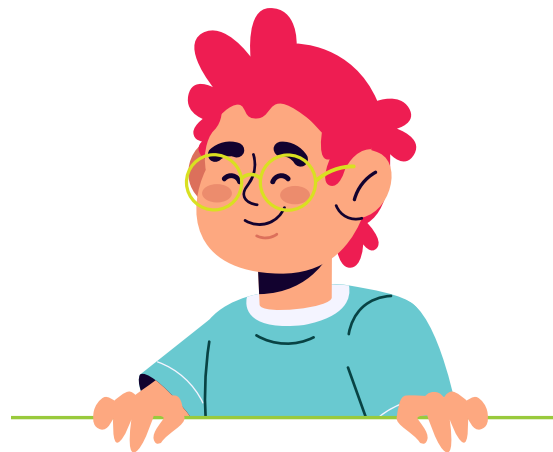


## Underage users

TikTok has an online reporting form which can be used to report accounts where it is suspected that the account holder is younger than 13 years of age.

For more details visit their website at [support.tiktok.com](https://support.tiktok.com).

*If a child in your care has your permission to use TikTok despite being underage, it is important that they correct their age once they turn 13. This is to ensure the platform knows their true age and processes their data appropriately.*



FAT!

HATE!

### Warning for pupils regarding inappropriate content

The Education Authority and Department of Education are treating the misuse of TikTok and other digital media applications as a serious issue. Pupils who are found to be posting inappropriate content will be subject to their school's disciplinary procedures, which may result in suspension or expulsion. Schools have also been informed to report extreme cases of misuse to the PSNI. This can amount to a serious "communications" offence or indeed criminal harassment.



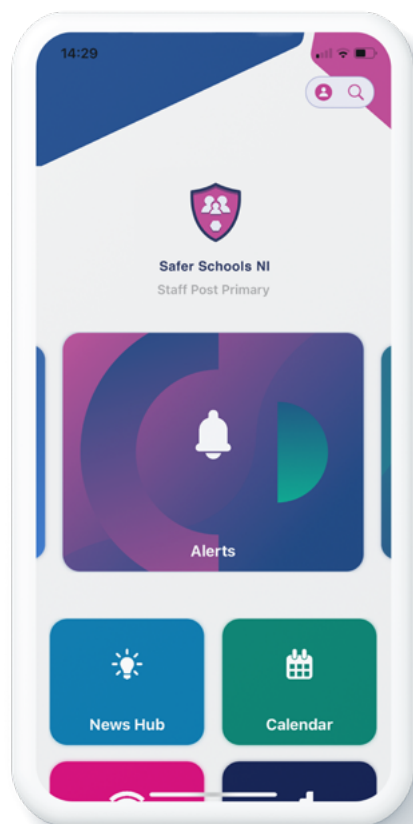
STUPID



**If you have immediate concerns about the safety of a child call 999 (emergency number)**



# Useful Resources



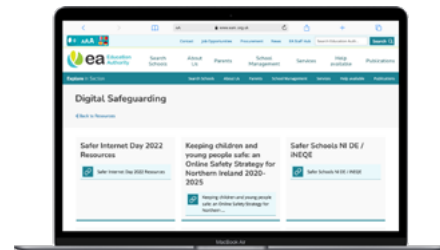
Safer Schools NI App

[safer.schoolsni.co.uk/  
parent-carer/](https://safer.schoolsni.co.uk/parent-carer/)



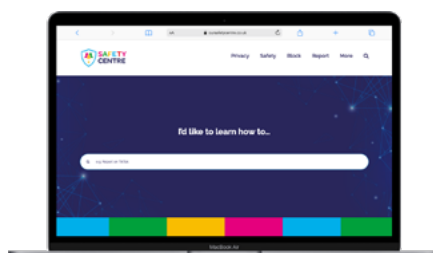
Home Learning Hub

[safer.schoolsni.co.uk/  
home-learning-hub/](https://safer.schoolsni.co.uk/home-learning-hub/)



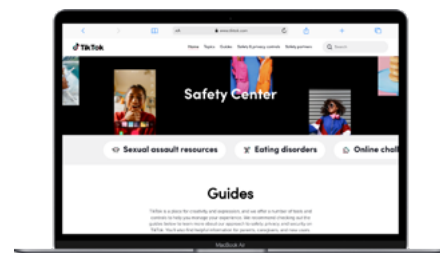
EA: Digital Safeguarding

[bit.ly/educationauthority](https://bit.ly/educationauthority)



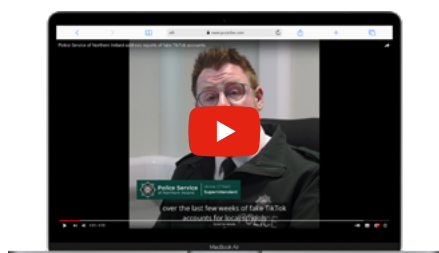
Our Safety Centre

[oursafetycentre.co.uk](https://oursafetycentre.co.uk)



TikTok Safety Center

[bit.ly/tiktoksafetycenter](https://bit.ly/tiktoksafetycenter)



PSNI Video

[bit.ly/PSNIvideo](https://bit.ly/PSNIvideo)



UK Gov Education Hub

[bit.ly/EDUCATIONHUB](https://bit.ly/EDUCATIONHUB)



TikTok Safety Audit

[bit.ly/tiktokauditssni](https://bit.ly/tiktokauditssni)



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As a parent and carer, your Safer Schools NI App will help you to navigate the digital world that your children and young people live in every day. It will help by giving you the tools to protect the children and young people in your care online.

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- You will find out about fake news, influencers, harmful content and more.
- It gives you prompts, updates and warnings about online trends and threats, helping you to stay in the loop with the digital world.
- Get to grips with social media and all the various gaming platforms.
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- Advice and signposting
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