

What Parents & Guardians should Know about TikTok



TikTok is a free platform where others create, share, stream and watch others content ranging from 15 second videos and up to 10 minutes. This platforms content is popular among ages 12 to 17, with most of these users being under the age of 16. As of 2022 this platform was reported by Ofcom as the most-used social media platform (Page, 2022).

1 Why is TikTok Dangerous?

Content within TikTok may or may not be censored. While TikTok creates an algorithm based off the videos you watch, there could be videos under "For You" that maybe unsuitable. While TikTok may have strict guidelines put into place regarding the sharing of illegal/inappropriate content this is not guaranteed that a random video may not slide into your child's feed that is inappropriate for them (Page, 2022).

2 Stranger Danger!

As one of the most used apps world wide, with approximately 1.1 billion users from around the world, the likelihood of a stranger reaching out on this platform is very likely. While TikTok is only to be used by those who are ages 13 and older, many children falsify their ages, allowing them to utilize the app. Profiles of all ages are automatically set to "public" rather than "private". This then enables other users, anonymous or friends to comment or download their video's and share them across other platforms (Page, 2022).

3 Challenges, Money & Greed.

Many users who follow "influencers" on TikTok have been known to be easily impressionable, allowing them to be put up to "challenges". Many of these challenges involve self-injurious behaviors, engaging in criminal acts and at times deadly. One of the most memorable challenges to date is known as the "blackout". This lead to two families filing lawsuits over the sudden loss of their children. While TikTok is free, users have the option to purchase "coins", and send them to others, but appear as "emojis" when being sent. While policy states you must be 18+ to purchase, you are able to bypass this by providing a false birthday. These "coins" are purchased as bundles, and hold their value (Page, 2022).

4 Addiction

Like other social media platforms, we can find ourselves easily lost in the world of "scrolling our feeds". Children who have TikTok spend an average of 102 minutes/day on the app, versus 53 minutes/day on YouTube. The repetitious movement has been reported to interfere with sleep patterns. Resulting in increased irritability & any physical activities (Page, 2022).

5 "TikTok Now" & Tips

Late 2022, TikTok began offering "Push notifications" also known as "TikTok Now", allowing users to synchronize their videos or photos to be posted at the same time as their friends, within a 3 minute period. This has lead many users to accidentally sharing confidential information such as their current location and potential addresses etc. which is shared to not only their friends but throughout TikTok if their profile is not set to Private (Page, 2022).