



NOTTINGHAM
ACADEMY

ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS





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Social Media

- Research the age restrictions of apps – don't refer to the information given in app stores as it is not always correct.
- Remind young people to set social media accounts to 'private' – apps are set to 'public' by default once downloaded.
- Do your children understand what is 'safe and unsafe' to post online?
- Educate young people on how they can report their concerns online, and who can help.
- Parents ideally need to sit, discuss and walk through social media platforms and instant messenger apps with their children – i.e. you can set up 'family safety mode' within certain apps.
- Support young people in making safe connections online, and building healthy relationships.
- Please don't assume all children use the internet and apps the same the same way. Ask young people regularly where they are going online, and how they are using it.
- Be careful sharing your location. Ideally children and young people should have their location services switched off on their phones, or only share their location with selected family and friends only.
- Support children and young people to have a positive presence online, and remind them that once something is posted online it stays posted.
- Have a conversation about who your children are following, speaking to and/or engaging with online. Ask how these people make your children feel? E.g. does this person you follow make you feel good or bad about yourself?
- Agree on a realistic time limit as a family, for gadgets and use of social media. Encourage young people to come away from technology an hour before bedtime.

USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES TO VISIT...

**internet
matters.org**





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Online Gaming

- Games come with age **ratings**, or a PEGI rating. Do your research before you download the game. Some games may appear child friendly but still promote violence and/or sexual content.
- Make sure young people and children are making **safe connections** online, especially as personal information is often given out accidentally whilst gaming. If they are being asked to provide personal information, photos or videos, or to meet in the real world, make sure they know to speak to a trusted adult and ask for help. Encourage young people to focus only on the game when talking to other players and avoid other topics. It is also important to just have a conversation with your children about what it is they enjoy about the games they play, and how they can keep themselves safe online.
- **Bullying** can be a big concern in the gaming world, and so can online conversations that contain inappropriate themes and language. Make sure children and young people know how to block and report certain people if they are experiencing bullying on a game. Also, just remember it may not always be other young people playing these games, at times your children could be interacting with adults.
- Online games work just like any other company, in that they need to make **money**. Some games have created their own currency (E.g. V Bucks in Fortnite), other games encourage users to spend money via a linked bank account/debit card. For a lot of games you can turn off or restrict in a purchases, however some other games (E.g. console games) may require a payment method to be registered before users can access.
- The longer you play games the better you become. May sound obvious but some games can't be paused, as levels need to be completed or the game needs to be played through in its entirety. This can have a huge impact on the **behaviour** of children and young people, and of course their **sleeping patterns**. Try and keep technology out of bedrooms, and encourage a good night's sleep by coming away from tech an hour before bedtime, and work with your children set realistic time limits.



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Tik Tok

KEY FACTS— WHAT IS IT?

- TikTok is a social media app. It is not new, previously operating under Musical.ly up until 2017, after which it was bought out and relaunched as TikTok.
- Users create short video clips of up to 60 seconds.
- It is most popular with young people under 16, with an age restriction of 13.
- Once the app has been downloaded users have instant access to videos, however in order to comment, like or share users must create an account.
- Users can sign up via linking their social media platforms, or create entirely new accounts by inputting a mobile phone number or an email address.

WHAT ARE OUR CURRENT CONCERNS?

- When users sign up to TikTok their account becomes public by default. The obvious concern here is young people having open profiles, and their interactions on the platform being exposed and accessible to anyone.
- Young people posting videos and offering up personal information - E.g: posting videos while wearing school uniforms.
- There is an issue with young people being exposed to, or viewing, sexual content. As well as hearing inappropriate language, or posting inappropriate videos themselves.
- Various video challenges are currently circulating on the app encouraging young people to do dangerous and/or inappropriate things.
- Users, especially young people, do not know how to report concerns through the app, or engage elsewhere for help. TikTok does not have strong enough policies in place regarding user privacy and security, or sharing information.
- Young people are also spending large amounts of money on the app and its features.

CONFUSING OR WHAT?

- Although TikTok has updated their policy so only users aged 18+ can purchase, share and receive virtual gifts, the minimum age limit to host a live stream is still only 16.

KEEPING SAFE ON TIKTOK – WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?

- Remind young people and parents to set accounts on TikTok to private.
- Communicate with young people around what is considered 'safe and unsafe' to post online.
- Make sure you are embedding critical thinking work within your curriculum – it is vital young people are challenging and questioning what they see, and interact with, online.
- Educate young people on how they can report their concerns online, and who can help.
- Advise parents to sit, discuss and walk through TikTok with their children – i.e. you can set up 'family safety mode' within the app. Support young people in making safe connections online.
- Support parents by helping them set boundaries regarding their children's online use and behaviours.
- Please don't assume all children use TikTok the same way. Ask young people regularly where they are going online, and how they are using it.