

December 2020



Dear Parents,

With Christmas around the corner and the likelihood that children will be receiving new electronic devices, it is important you are aware of how to protect your child and keep them as safe as possible online. Please read the advice below which I think you may find relevant.

## TikTok

### Direct messaging

#### What is TikTok?

**You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok.**

Users can watch musical clips, record 60 second clips (it includes lots of lip synching and dancing), edit them and add special effects.

#### Is your child using TikTok?

TikTok have created their top 10 Tips for you, which provides a really useful overview of settings to make TikTok a safer environment:



<https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktoks-top-10-tips-for-parents>

#### Privacy settings

Find out about TikTok's privacy settings and choose the most appropriate for your child. It is safer for an account to be set to private (therefore only people your child chooses to accept can follow them) although you would still need to talk to your child about only accepting requests from people they know in real life. You can also set whether or not people can comment on their content.

#### Reporting

As with any app/website your child is using to interact with others, ensure that they know how to delete, report or block another user as well as know how to report any inappropriate content that they come across:

<https://support.tiktok.com/sv/privacy-safety/block-accounts-sv>

It is important your child understands that if they come across anything they do not like or makes them feel uncomfortable, then they should speak to you or another trusted adult.

#### Direct messaging/commenting

TikTok has a direct messaging element so users can chat to each other (**TikTok now automatically disables Direct Messages for registered accounts under the age of 16**) as well as the ability to comment on each other's content.

There is a risk on TikTok that cyberbullying can occur, or a user can receive unwanted attention from a stranger. TikTok have produced this list of available settings to reduce the risk of this happening

<https://www.tiktok.com/safety/resources/anti-bully?lang=en>

## Sharing videos and images

Net Aware have produced the following article to help those who may be worried about their child sharing videos and images online through apps like TikTok and Snapchat.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/should-i-be-worried-about-my-child-sharing-videos-and-images-online2/>

## Family safety mode

TikTok have created Family Pairing to help you keep your child safe whilst using TikTok. Family Pairing allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's account.

<https://www.tiktok.com/safety/resources/anti-bully>

## How to protect your child's personal information

as of the date released 1.11.20

CEOP and Parent Zone have produced this article about personal information and how you can help your child protect their personal information and recognise the risks.

*Age Ratings*

*Do you check?*

### What can I do?

Age ratings are there to protect your child and ensure that your child is only playing games suitable to their age and reduce any potential risks. Talk to your child about why games and apps have an age rating and set clear ground rules. In addition:

Video games are rated using the PEGI system, PEGI rates games across 5 different age groups, these are 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18. So if a game is rated as 16, it means that the game is **not suitable** for those under the age of 16. **The PEGI rating considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty.** (Source: <https://pegi.info/>) In addition, PEGI rate the game based on the features of the game and provide icons to easily identify what type of content is within the game, for example drugs, bad language or gambling. A full description of each 'content descriptor' is available here: <https://pegi.info/what-do-the-labels-mean>.



### Apps/Social Media

Apps and Social media platforms are all age rated so you can check whether your child should be using them. Age ratings are clearly labeled within the App store and Play store but it is important to be aware that it can be the developer that sets the age rating so remember to review the app yourself.

### What are children saying online?

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your children about how they are speaking to others online.