



The
Portsmouth Academy

Our Ref: GRY/woo/ParLtr/TikTok

10 November 2021

Dear parents,

It has recently been brought to our attention that there are a number of accounts on TikTok referring to The Portsmouth Academy. Many of the videos produced within these accounts are harmless and a good example of 'finding humour' - one of our Habits of Excellence. There are however some which are concerning, these include the use of images of staff which have been taken without consent and derogatory remarks.

The Portsmouth Academy is not deemed a 'public place' and it is not therefore reasonable for our staff to expect their image to be taken and shared without their permission. I have asked staff to report any instances of their images being shared to TikTok and, if they feel it is defamatory, to the police. This is the same advice I give to parents when there is online peer on peer abuse.

In recent months there has been some leeway given to students around use of mobile phones as many have downloaded Class Charts and use it throughout the school day to check their timetable and their progress. This has however now clearly been abused by a minority of students. I am therefore taking the following action to address:

- A tutor time session to outline the legal ramifications of sharing images and defamatory online comments and empathy and understanding – this will focus not just on staff but around other students also.
- An opportunity in tutor time for students to check Class Charts and their timetable before they head off for their learning day.
- A relaunch of the mobile device policy with students – this can be found at the following link: <https://www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Mobile-Device-Policy.pdf>
- In line with our mobile device policy, mobile phones will be confiscated if they are seen to be in use around the academy.
- Our Y11 student leader for Social Media and Communications to speak to the student body around how they can stay within the boundaries of acceptable use of social media.

Please could you discuss all of the above with your son or daughter and make it clear to them that misuse of social media has consequences. If you wish to know more about TikTok as a social media platform please see the attached 'Wake Up Wednesday' information sheet which was shared in the parent newsletter before the half term.

Thank you for your ongoing support around monitoring your child's social media use and engaging with the information the school puts out to parents around keeping your child safe online.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R Grey
Principal – The Portsmouth Academy

P.S. Have you downloaded the Class Charts app? The attendance and homework modules are being launched from January and you will therefore have live updates on these areas, alongside achievements and any challenges your child is facing. Request your code, and see the parent user guide at the following link: <https://www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk/class-charts/>

www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk

TRANSFORMING LIFE CHANCES

Principal: Rachel Grey, BA (Hons)
Director of Education: Natalie Sheppard BSc (Hons) NPQH

St Mary's Road, Portsmouth PO1 5PF
E: info@theportsmouthacademy.org.uk

T: 0333 360 2200
Registered company number: 7359755



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

18

CENSORED

EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

W&A*

TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become 'TikTok famous'. While most aspiring stars hoping to be 'the next big thing' will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media platforms, TikTok can be extremely addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next means it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase 'TikTok coins', which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 89p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts is 'private'. Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something does slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

Meet Our Expert

Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



SOURCES: www.tiktok.com



www.nationalonlinesafety.com



@natonlinesafety



/NationalOnlineSafety



@nationalonlinesafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 27.10.2021