



Digital Safety Newsletter Spring 2019

Welcome to our Spring digital safety newsletter. Although the internet is a fantastic resource and great fun, make sure you are keeping an 'eye' on how long your child spends looking at screens. This newsletter also includes information about the app TikTok, formally called Musical.ly. Ongoing concerns about the app continue due to the way that content creators are encouraged to share their content, allow others to comment and make contact.

All About ... TIKTOK

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a Chinese owned social media app based website with 150 million users worldwide. Most of the content is focused on short videos of people lip-syncing to music or popular films.

What are the concerns?

The minimum age for a TikTok account is 13. The two main concerns arise from the use of inappropriate language and content and the many reports of contact from strangers. A significant proportion of the content is described by National Online Safety as containing swear words and sexual themes. By default all accounts are public so anyone on the app can see content posted by others. The risk is then that strangers are able to make contact directly with children. This can occur when the account has not been set to private

- To set an account to private, tap the top right corner and select 'Privacy and Settings', before selecting 'Private Account' on/off. Even when the account has been set to private, profile pictures, usernames and bios are still visible to all users.



Advice to parents

- Encourage your child to always think before they do, say, like or post anything online.
- Comments made by others can be negative or even cruel. Make sure your child knows how to comment respectfully and handle negative feedback.
- Report inappropriate content by tapping 'Report'.
- Click the 'Privacy and Settings' to turn on 'Private Account'.

Screen Time

A recent study by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health concluded that although they could not recommend a maximum due to current lack of evidence, children who spent more than 2 hours per day tend to have more depressive symptoms, poorer sleep patterns, less physical fitness and poorer educational outcomes.

Why not use settings or apps to manage internet and screen time?

-  **Flipd** is an app that hides distracting social media apps and games on your child's device for a period of time of your choice so they can stay focused and uninterrupted, but are still able to look up information online for homework. For Android and iOS devices - free on Google Play and App Store (Paid for in-app purchases are offered).
-  **Glued** was designed by parents who were frustrated by the amount of time their son spent online, Glued helps families reduce screen time by rewarding those who abstain with points, like a digital version of a real-world star chart. Currently for Apple iOS devices - free in the App Store. Coming soon to Android devices - free on Google Play (Paid for in-app purchases are offered).

As always, don't forget the positives of the internet. The internet now has 4.2 billion users. By 2020, it is estimated that there will be 40 billion internet enabled devices in the world. Lets help our children to keep safe and make the most of their digital future.

Mr. Browne

This newsletter with active links is available in the Online Safety section of www.gisburnroad.com