Musical.ly and TikTok

- TikTok (formerly called Musical.ly) is a social media platform that lets you create, share and discover 15 second videos. You can use music and effects to enhance your videos and you can also browse other people's videos and interact with them.

- Age rating 12+

TikTok advertises as…..

- Tiktok advertises as being a destination for mobile videos.
- On TikTok, there are short form videos that are 'exciting, spontaneous and genuine'.
- You can watch and engage with what you like and skip what you don't.
- Its easy for you to discover and create your own videos.
- There is the opportunity to watch endless customised videos specifically for you. This is a   personalised video feed based on what you like and share.

TikTok Information

Information

Provider	Size	Category
TikTok Inc.	182.7 MB	Entertainment

Compatibility ⌄	Languages ⌄	Age Rating
Works on this iPad	English and 39 more	12+

Age Rating
12+
Infrequent/Mild Mature/
Suggestive Themes
Infrequent/Mild Sexual
Content and Nudity
Infrequent/Mild Cartoon or
Fantasy Violence
Infrequent/Mild Alcohol,
Tobacco, or Drug Use or
References
Infrequent/Mild Profanity or
Crude Humour

In-App Purchases ⌄	Copyright
Yes	© TikTok Inc.

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At a glance

Kids use this to...

Play

Create

Learn

Connect

Expert view of the risks...

Sexual

Medium Risk

Violence & hatred

Medium Risk

Bullying

Medium Risk

Suicide & self-harm

Medium Risk

Drink, drugs & crime

High Risk

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos much in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity to become the iOS store's most downloaded app with over 33 million downloads. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1billion monthly active users worldwide.

AGE RESTRICTION
12+

What parents need to know about TIKTOK

MATURE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up for the app, it's possible to be about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are lighthearted or funny takes on dance routines which are designed to make people laugh. However there has been a slew of videos which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content, including young teens dressing overtly sexually and behaving suggestively. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be quite common to come across explicit content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.

INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.

TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities - social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.

ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to either user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's videos if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five minute visit into 45-minute visit.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.

Safety Tips For Parents

National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

TALK ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use the app, make sure you also take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have a dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour for them. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding of them. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media superstardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.

ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.

EXPLORE AND LEARN YOURSELF

Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with TikTok. You could then even use the app with your child and watch some videos with them. If you are the parent of a teen, even if it does not make you popular, keep a close eye on what they're viewing and sharing. That said, it's a brilliant chance to turn it into a bonding opportunity with your child also. You could even unleash your inner performer and make videos with them while (more importantly!) keeping them safe online.

LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a safe space for your child to express themselves. However, just in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in two preset ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.

Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.

SOURCES:

Talking to your child about what they are sharing

Help your child think about what they share online and who sees it. Compare it to what they would be happy to share offline.

You might want to start by asking:

- What kinds of things do you share online?

- Should we share everything?

Remind them that they shouldn't share private things, such as:

- personal information, like emails, names, phone numbers, school names

- photos of themselves with strangers

- photos of their body

- gossip

Exploring apps together

- Exploring apps, sites and games together is a great way to involve your child in the decision-making process.

- Be positive about what you see, but also be open about your concerns. Ask them what they think is appropriate and what worries them.

- If you decide it's not appropriate, then make sure you explain your reasons why (and be prepared for an unhappy child).

- You might decide it's ok for your child to use.

- Your child might come across something upsetting or negative on TikTok. If this happens, they might want to report content or block user.

- To report users in TikTok, you can go to settings and click 'report a problem'. You can block another user by going to their profile and clicking 'block'. You can explore these features with your child and discuss when and why they might want to use them.

- And remember to let your child know that they can always talk to you about worrying things they see online.

1 How to make TikTok account to private ↗

Please note that even with a private account your child's profile photo, username, and bio will be visible to all TikTok users. It is best to ensure no sensitive or personal information is included here.

Step 1- Go to your profile page

Step 2– Tap three dots on the top right corner and select "Privacy and Settings"

Step 3 – Select "Privacy and Safety" option and toggle "Private Account" on/off
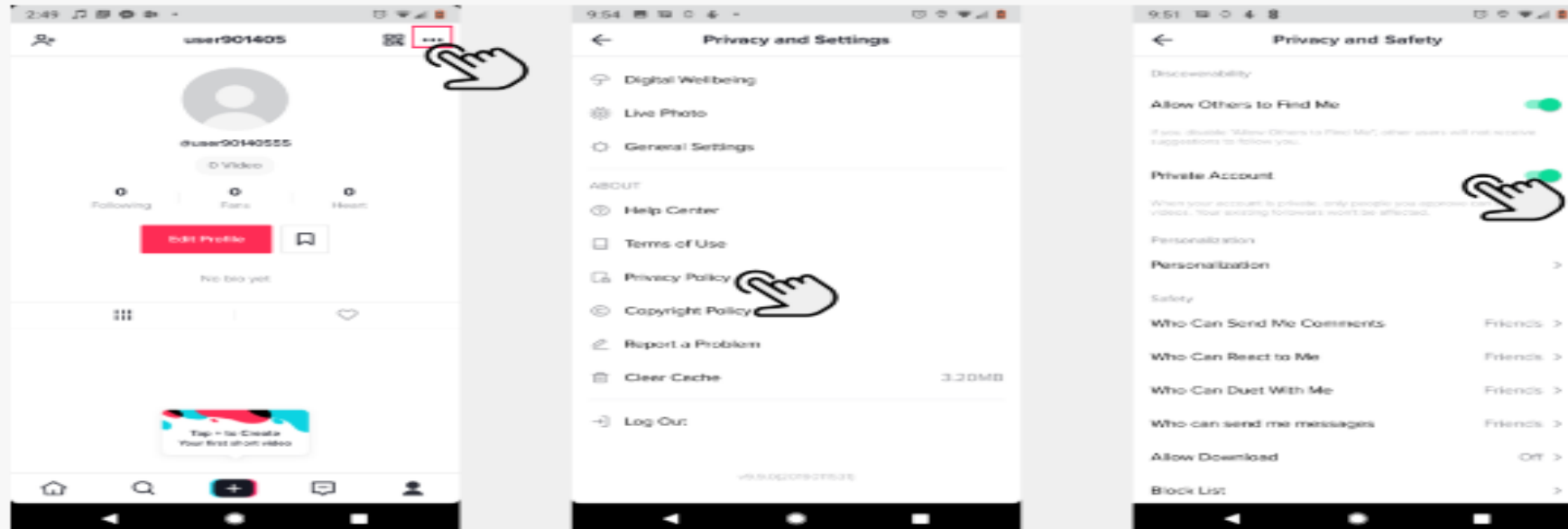
2 **How to enable Digital Wellbeing** ✏️ **setting on TikTok**

This enables your child to manage how much time they spend on the app and block inappropriate content that they may be exposed to.
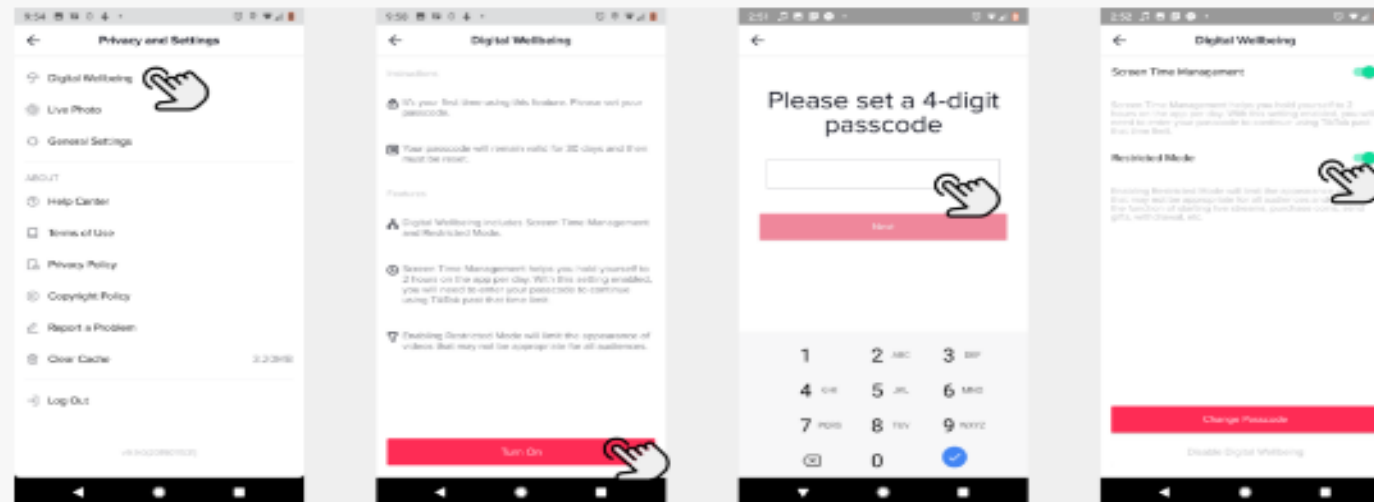
To manage screen time and set Restricted mode

Step 1 – Select "Digital Wellbeing" under the app settings

Step 2 – Tap "Turn On"

Step 3 – Set a passcode

Step 4 – Toggle "Screen Time Management" and Restricted Mode' to turn these on.
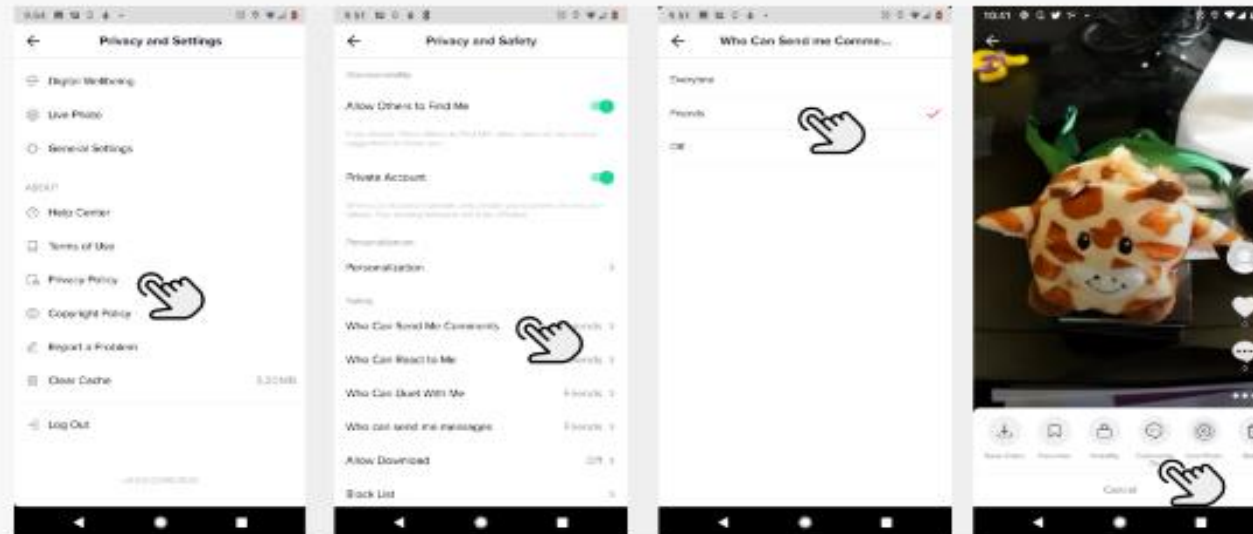
3

How to **control comments** ☑ on TikTok posts

Step 1 – Go to Privacy and Safety settings option under the app settings

Step 2 – Tap 'Who Can Send Me comments'

Step 3 – Choose 'Friends or Off' to limit comments to people your child knows on the app.

Step 4 – You can also turn off comments on individual videos by going to the menu button on the video and selecting 'Comments off'
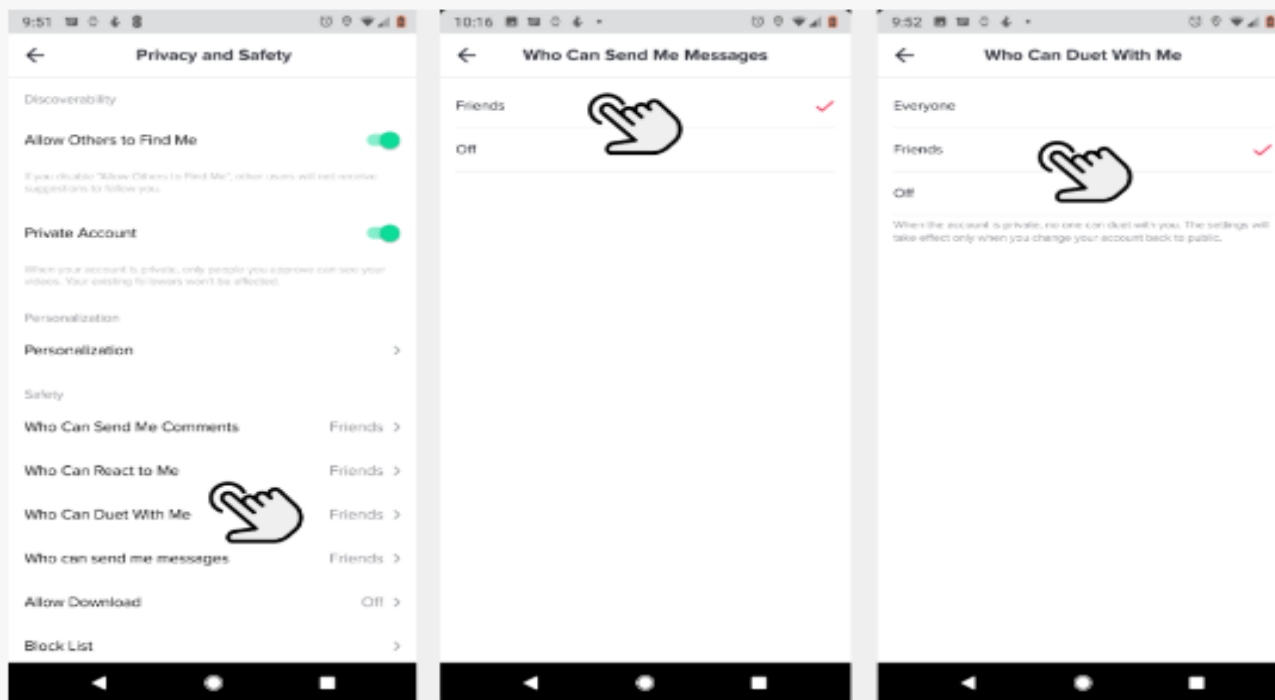
4 **Managing Duet control**

In Privacy and Safety settings menu tap 'Who Can Duet With Me' and then Choose from the options 'Everyone', 'Friends' or 'Off'.

Setting privacy on Direct Messages

In Privacy and Safety settings menu tap 'Who Can Send Messages to Me' and then Choose from the options 'Everyone', 'Friends' or 'Off'.

5 How to report or block on TikTok ☑

To **block or report a user on TikTok**, go to their profile and tap the three dots at the top of the screen. From the options select block or report. In the next screen select why you are reporting them.

To **report a comment**, tap the comment and from the options that appear tap report and follow the instructions.

To **report a video**, go to the video and tap the 'share' icon. On the next screen tap report and follow the instructions.