



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

### Safeguarding Newsletter

May 2023

The Safeguarding team. If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the schools safeguarding team



Miss Queenan



Miss Jennings



Mrs Seaman



Mrs Cawsey

Dear Parents,

Welcome to this months addition of the safeguarding newsletter. In this edition, we will be thinking about a national issue, County Lines.

In school, our year 6 pupils have been completing the DARE programme which looks at drug and alcohol misuse. In other classes, although we do not look at this explicitly, we do speak to the children about making choices and how they can keep their body healthy.

As ever, if you would like to discuss anything further, please do get in touch.

Mrs Seaman

Headteacher

## Spotlight on: County lines and CCE



County lines is when gangs and organised crime groups exploit children to transport and sell drugs,

normally between big cities where the exploiters are based to smaller towns, sometimes across

county boundaries but also locally and within the borough. The children have dedicated mobile

phone 'lines' for taking orders for drugs; children are used as they are less likely

to be stopped by police, allowing adult dealers to avoid the risk of arrest. County lines is a form of criminal exploitation; this occurs where a person or a group

of people takes advantage of their contact with and influence over a young person to coerce or manipulate them into carrying out a criminal act. Children as

young as 6 are known to have been targeted by gangs for this purpose.

Young people may be recruited for county lines and other forms of criminal exploitation by a process of grooming: At the targeting stage, the exploiter befriends the young person and gains their

trust. Young people may also be recruited through social media and/or through their peer group.

Some parents of young people who have been exploited through county lines involvement have

reported that they went through a sudden change in behaviour. Possible indicators of involvement

include:

- Unexplained money, clothes or gifts
- Frequent, unexplained phone calls
- New friendship circle that involves older children or adults

- Not attending school
- Carrying weapons

For more information on County lines and Child Criminal Exploitation please follow the link:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/countylines>

### This months online safety

Have an ongoing conversation: Continue to talk about the apps, games and sites they like to use, and what they like and don't like and any concerns about being online.

Discuss with them when to unfollow, block or report. For help starting this conversation, follow the link:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/having-an-open-and-honest-conversation-about-online-safety-5-questions-for-parents>

Make sure they know where to go for support: Remind your child they can always speak to you or an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried or upset. Remind them that they won't be in trouble at that you are there to help. For a breakdown of report services, visit: <https://www.internetmatters.org/report-issue/>

### Useful online safety websites for parents:

National Online Safety - safety guides on ALL aspects of internet use

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

Internet Matters - wide range of online safety advice for parents to keep their children safe on-line.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
13+

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&#39;F!

## 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, TikTok is designed to be 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 mean 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 99p to an eye-watering £88 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 18s' accounts to '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 18s. 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.