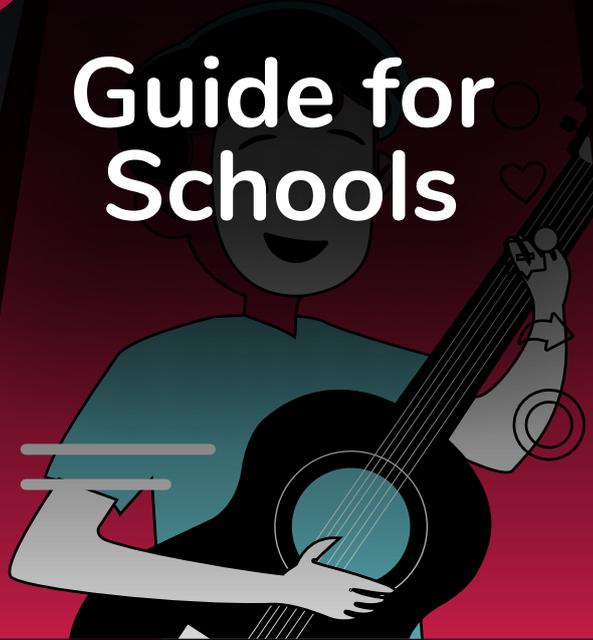


TikTok

Guide for Schools



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V 1.0.6

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app set to reach 1.8 billion users by the end of 2022 across 155 different countries, where users can create, share, and watch short videos. The app contains a variety of music and special effect features that allow users to express themselves in creative ways. This includes singing, viral dance trends, lip-syncing, performing comedy sketches and online challenges.

How do you get it?

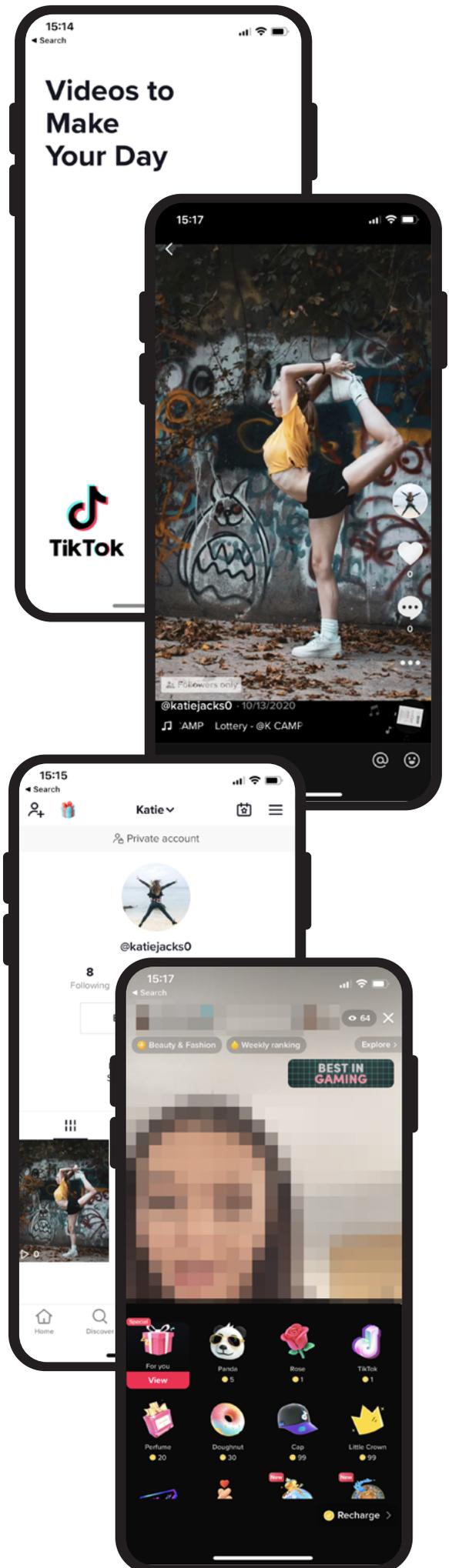
The TikTok app is free to download on Android and iOS devices. It can also be accessed on web browsers and some smart TVs. However, if a user has a direct link to a specific TikTok video, they can watch it without having the app installed on their device. It is only if they want to like, comment, or create their own video content that they will need to sign up for an account.

Creating an account

Accounts can be created by connecting the TikTok account to a Facebook, Twitter, or Google account, or by using a phone number or email. If someone uses their phone number or email, they will be asked to enter their date of birth, create a password, and be given the option to verify their contact details.

How does it work?

Once signed up and logged in, users can search for topics they are interested in, follow celebrities, influencers, and creators, or find people they know via their phone's contact list. Users can also upload, comment, and like different videos using a variety of the inbuilt editing tools and features.



Potential Risks



Age Verification

TikTok requires users to be at least 13 years old. However, there is no strict age-verification in place, meaning there is nothing to stop users from claiming to be older to meet requirements.

Stranger Danger

Users are able to manipulate their profile information without any sort of verification, so you can never be certain someone is who they say they are. Strangers may also be able to contact other users directly, depending on privacy settings.



Explicit Content

Explicit and/or sexual language maybe heard in the music/audio features on the app. Users may also use suggestive emojis or hashtags to discuss explicit content that is unsuitable for younger audiences.

Powerful Algorithm

TikTok uses a powerful algorithm that learns from every individual user by only showing them content they are most likely to engage with. This can become risky if someone watches potentially harmful content, as the algorithm will continue to suggest this type of content.

External Links

There are external links found on profiles, meaning users could be signposted to inappropriate or explicit content found on other platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or OnlyFans.

In-app purchases

Users can buy digital goods on the platform and gift these to others, creating a risk of potential overspending or grooming. Many influencers also try to encourage their followers to send them gifts in order to receive a 'shout out' or special message.

Payment Links

There is an option to share links to PayPal accounts, meaning other users can send money for actions, mentions, or support. However, there is a concern that this could be used to coerce young people into performing inappropriate actions.

Persuasive Design

The platform is based on 'vertical/ portrait videos' that encourages users to continually scroll through a curated feed of infinite videos, with easy-to-use features and labels that keep attention focused on content.

Video Downloads

Videos can be downloaded and saved without permission if users are over 16. Users are also not notified if their video is downloaded. These can then be shared on other external apps and platforms, or screen recorded and reshared.

Potential Risks

Social Pressure 🙄

Young people may feel pressure to take risks while filming videos in the hope they will gain more followers, likes, and shares. They may also be pressured into 'trading' or 'swapping' intimate videos or pictures.

TikTok Challenges 😈

This platform is well known for featuring popular challenge videos that are widely shared and copied. These typically involve dances and filters, but can also involve risk-taking behaviour like stunts and pranks or inappropriate content.

Data Collection 📁

By default, TikTok asks for more information than necessary, including the user's location and contact lists. A user may not realise that they are agreeing to sharing these details and will need to manually change them.

TikTok Now ⚡

Users can post temporary 10 second videos or photos once a day at a random time called 'Now'. This could mean a user feels they could post something inappropriate as the posts are not permanent and might not be seen by everyone.

TikTok Live 📺

In order to access the livestreaming feature, TikTok Live, users must be 18. Young people might input a false date of birth to be eligible. There is also option to use the 'Multi-Guest' which allows up to 5 other creators to join the livestream.

Addictive Nature ⚠️

Due to the constant scrolling and unique personalisation of TikTok's 'For You Page', younger users may find they develop addictive tendencies to using TikTok. This could result in neglecting offline responsibilities, such as homework or chores.

Fake News 🙄

TikTok has been criticised for publicising instances of fake news and misinformation, specifically to younger users who may not have developed the critical thinking skills necessary for debunking false news stories.

Teacher-Targeted Bullying 🗨️

There has been a recent increase of videos posted on TikTok by pupils with the intention of bullying or harassing their teachers. These are often widely shared and have a variety of consequences, including legal action, depending on the content.



Advice for Schools

Dealing with Viral Videos

If any videos or photos of a pupil, teacher, or member of your school staff are being shared over TikTok without their consent (e.g. in an instance of Teacher Targeted Bullying), the staff member in question should be informed immediately. The videos in question should be reported to the platform and we recommend using our Risk Identifier in our useful resources section to accurately assess the risk involved. Schools should then refer to their own policies (such as the positive behaviour policy) in regard to supporting pupils.



There are many ways a school can support anyone who has been targeted in this way, such as creating a culture of listening across the entire school community, attending safeguarding training (such as our free CPD training courses through the Safer Schools NI App), and formatting an effective response plan before an incident takes place. Staff who have been targeted online can use our 6-step resource in our useful resources section, for responding effectively to incidents of bullying.

Further escalation

For extreme cases, the school may wish to make a report to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) using the freephone number 101.

This will be at the school's discretion but may cover content or behaviour that is illegal, or which could cause significant physical or psychological harm to a person. This may also apply when the school is unable to identify the user. For example, when the user's account contains fake information.



Additional Guidance

Underage users

TikTok requires users to be at least 13 years old and provides an online form to report accounts where it is suspected that the account holder is younger than 13.

For more details visit their website at support.tiktok.com.

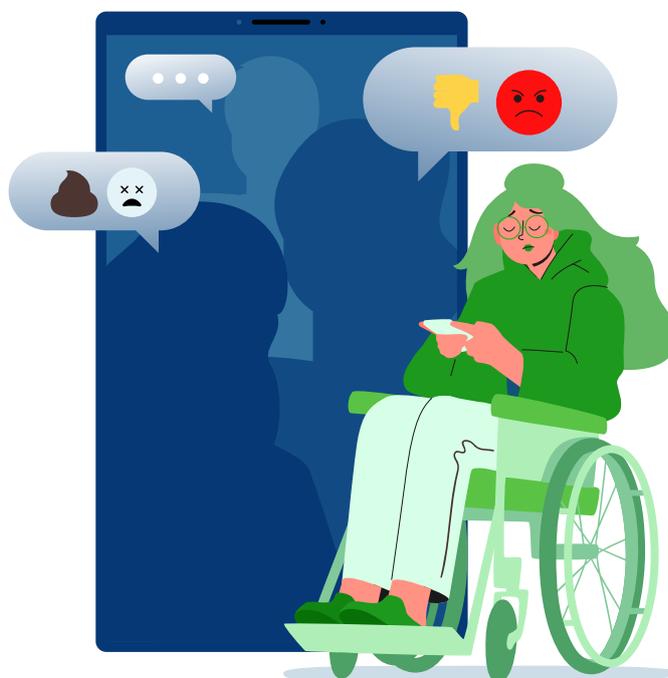


If a child in your care has permission to use TikTok despite being underage, which is a breach of the platform terms and which we would strongly advise against, it is important that they correct their age once they turn 13. This is to ensure the platform knows their true age and processes their data appropriately.

Reporting and blocking

If a school becomes aware of inappropriate content, they may wish to report a video and/or report/block a user.

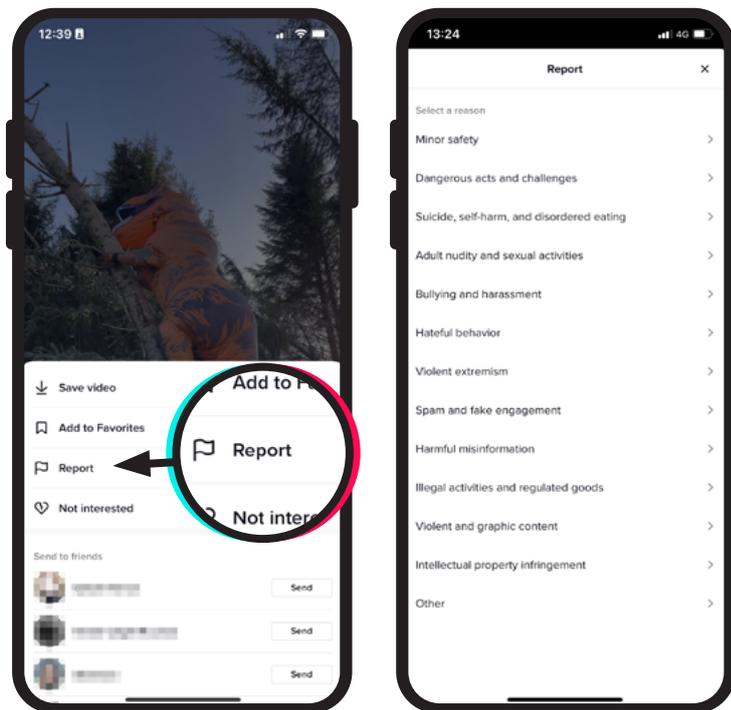
-  **Reporting a video** will refer the individual video to TikTok for examination and they may take action if it goes against the Community Guidelines.
-  **Reporting a user** refers the account, including their video content, to TikTok. The platform should then take action if the account goes against the Community Guidelines.
-  **Blocking a user** prevents them from viewing your videos or engaging with you through direct messages, comments, follows or likes.



The reporting process is entirely anonymous, and the user will not be made aware as to who has reported them. Posts may need to be reported multiple times if removal is unsuccessful.

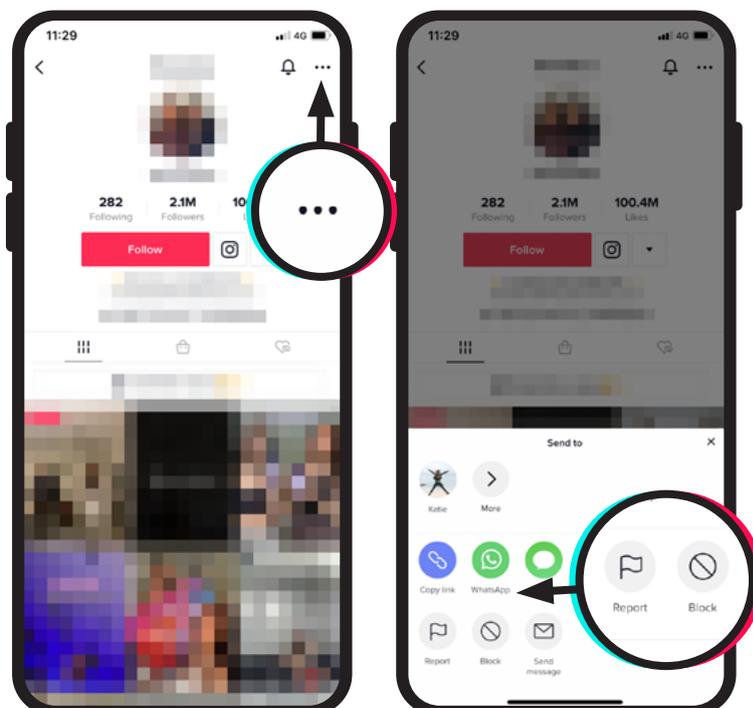
How to report a video

- Hold your finger on the video until the menu pops up along the bottom of the screen or alternatively tap on the arrow alongside the right-hand side of the video.
- Tap 'Report' and select a reason for the report from the list of options.
- Select more specific reason details as requested by the app.
- On the final screen tap the 'Submit' button.



How to report and block an account

- Go to the profile of the user you wish to report or block and tap the three dots in the top-right corner.
- Click either 'Report' or 'Block' from the menu that will appear at the bottom of the screen.
- When reporting an account, you will be asked to submit a reason from a list of options.
- Blocking can be done without submitting a reason.
- More information on reporting users and content can be found on TikTok's safety section of their website at support.tiktok.com.

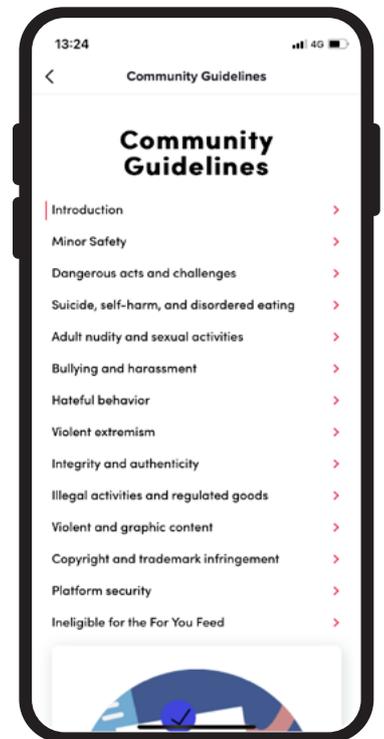


TikTok's Community Guidelines

TikTok provides guidance on what is and is not allowed on the platform and state that they will remove any content that violates these guidelines. This covers areas such as violent extremism, hateful behaviour, and illegal activities.

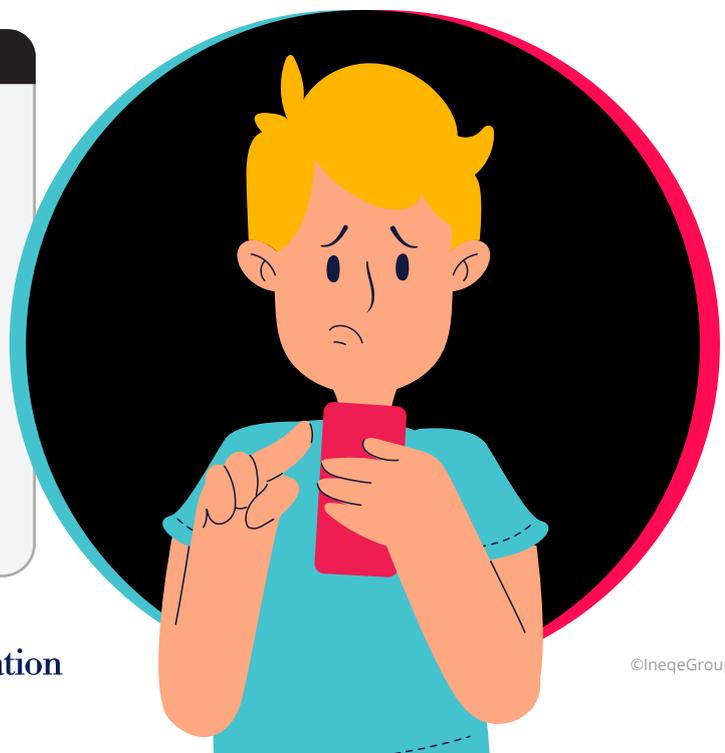
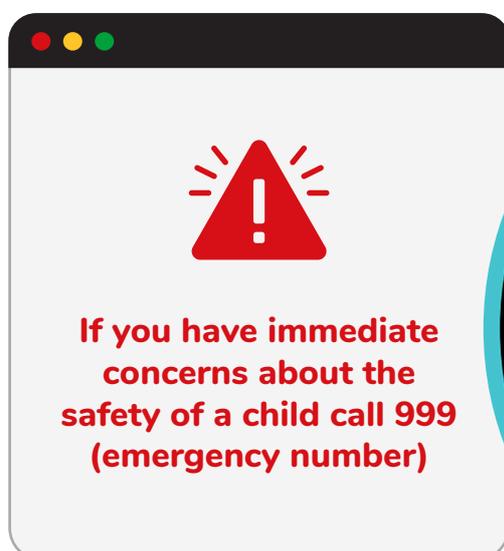
TikTok content that a school may deem inappropriate can include:

- Unofficial/fake accounts that are pretending to be the school.
- Images and videos of teachers, staff members or pupils which have been taken or altered without their consent.
- Pupils uploading inappropriate material where the school building or grounds are clearly identifiable.
- Parents, adults, or non-pupils who discuss or present the school in a negative way.



Summary

- In the first instance of the school being notified of inappropriate content they should report it directly to the platform and make the staff member involved aware.
- If a pupil or pupils are identified, the school should follow its own positive behaviour policy and use the resources below to help protect everyone involved.
- Parents should also be contacted and informed. For further escalation, the school can make a report with the PSNI.
- If you need support with a child protection issue, you can also contact the Education Authority's Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) on 028 9598 5590.



Useful Resources

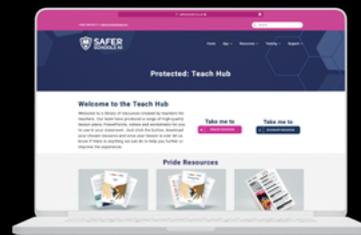
We've put together some helpful guidance for you to use. These will assist you in knowing how to promote the overall health and wellbeing of the entire school community as they engage in the online world.



Safer Schools NI App

An award-winning app that uses innovative technology and expert advice to help entire school communities/parents and carers navigate the digital world that children and young people live in every day.

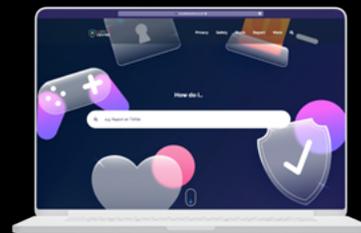
[saferschoolsni.co.uk/
staff/](https://saferschoolsni.co.uk/staff/)



Teach Hub

An award-winning free online library of downloadable resources, PDFs, lesson plans, and videos made for teachers, and school staff to help children and young people be safer online.

<https://bit.ly/teach-hub-ni>



Online Safety Centre

An interactive database of safety cards that cover online safety basics for children, young people, teachers, and school staff including topics like Blocking, Reporting, First Phone, and more.

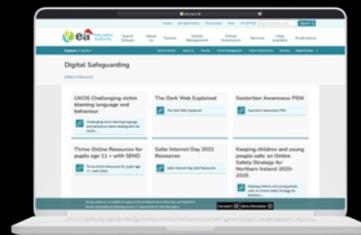
oursafetycentre.co.uk



UK Gov Education Hub

A blog curated by the Department for Education that highlights issues school communities are facing in both the online and offline world, including challenges found on platforms like TikTok.

bit.ly/EDUCATIONHUB



EA: Digital Safeguarding

A collection of the Education Authority's best digital safeguarding resources which offers timely advice, guidance, and support to teachers and school staff.

bit.ly/educationauthority

Useful Resources



Responding to Online Challenges

A resource specific to young people, parents, and schools on how to identify and respond to online challenges, trends, and hoaxes with a more appropriate response for each group to use.

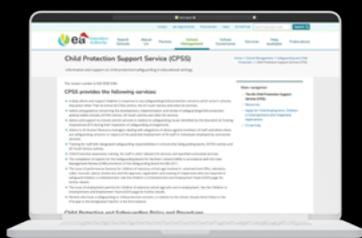
bit.ly/3OLF8KP



TikTok Safety Audit

A thorough look at the Safety Settings available on TikTok, including detailed walkthroughs, visual examples, and interactive questions that question the overall safety and effectiveness of individual features.

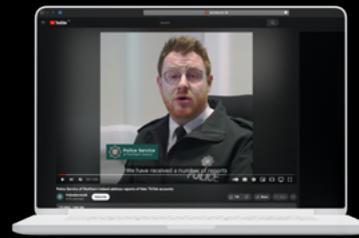
bit.ly/tiktokauditsni



Child Protection Support Service

A landing page for all information and support on child protection and safeguarding practices within educational settings, including applications for chaperones and more.

bit.ly/ChildProtectionCPSS



PSNI

A video from the Police Service of Northern Ireland addressing reports of fake TikTok accounts. These accounts are typically being used to perpetuate Teacher Targeted Bullying.

bit.ly/PSNIvideo



Inspire Wellbeing

A charity endorsing wellbeing for all. Find a service to support your lived experiences or get informed about mental health, addiction and intellectual disabilities.

www.inspirewellbeing.org

Risk Identifier

Taken from the Safer Schools NI CPD Teacher Targeted Bullying course.



Use our risk identifier to assess and take appropriate action if a staff member is facing a potential online bullying incident.

Immediate Danger

Examples: Threat of violence or serious harm, risk to staff or pupil safety, or life-threatening concern for someone's mental state.

Steps: Call 999.

Criminal or Serious Safeguarding Concern

Examples: Communication of any kind (this includes messages, comments, images or video) that are grossly offensive, harassing, indecent, obscene or constitute a hate crime (motivated by hostility around race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, or pregnancy).

Steps: Report the incident to the police. Use 101 or 999 depending on the severity of the situation.

Legal Action Required

Examples: Defamatory communication of any kind that could cause serious harm to reputation (this includes messages, comments, images or video) or copyright issues or harassment (e.g. online trolling or cyber-bullying).

Steps: Discuss potential options for redress with your Board of Governors and, if appropriate, Managing Authority. Staff member concerned may wish to consult their union as well.

Ethical, Policy or Reputational Breach

Examples: Receiving friend requests from pupils or parents, students complaining about teachers online in a vague or mild manner, or the discovery of an 11 year old child using a platform that is aged 13+.

Steps: Follow the relevant school policy regarding online safety.

Low Risk

Examples: A private year group Facebook group used to discuss a school project.

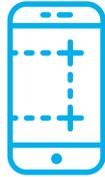
Steps: Occasional monitoring/no action required.

Teacher Targeted Bullying

What you can do



If staff become the victim of online bullying, use the following six steps to respond effectively and minimise repercussions.



CAPTURE THE EVIDENCE

Capture evidence of the abuse by screenshotting, taking a photo, or printing, if possible. This includes who said it and when. **NOTE: Never capture evidence if it involves an indecent image of a child.**

CONTACT YOUR SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or Head of Pastoral Care within your school. This could be someone else from your safeguarding and leadership team. Follow your school's internal processes for raising safeguarding concerns.



CURATE YOUR ACCOUNT

Curate your own social media presence. Are your accounts private? If a young person has accessed your account information, can you figure out how?

COMPLAIN TO THE PLATFORM

Complain by reporting the post to the platform and blocking the student if needed.



CREATE A LOGBOOK

Create a logbook of incidents, including how they made you feel, the steps you took at the time, and the outcome.

CONSIDER REPORTING

Consider calling the police. If the abuse is repeated or the student refuses to stop, and it is causing you significant distress or you feel your safety is at risk, seek help from the authorities. This includes indecent content or material that is motivated by hostility, hatred, or prejudice based on a person's sex, race, religion, or other protected characteristics.





SAFER SCHOOLS NI

Educating, empowering and protecting the NI school community

The digital world is 24/7; it's outside and inside of the school gates, so you need a service that does the same. Safer Schools NI is a digital library of age-appropriate safeguarding resources that you can check out anytime, from your phone to your computer to your classroom.

As a NI Safer School, you get **free** access to;

- A customised version of the Safer Schools NI App for your school community
- Resources and lessons for your teachers, parents and carers on our Teach and Home Learning Hubs
- Training for your school staff and pupils through the iAcademy
- Age-appropriate resources
- Advice and signposting
- and so much more



Download today for **FREE!**



To learn more or register your School for Safer Schools NI, click below!



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