



November 4th 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you over the concerns that are being raised regarding the social media platform Tik Tok. Please read the following facts and information carefully.

Please take time to regularly monitor your child's use of their phone, device and any social media accounts that they may have, if they are at the legal age to hold one, as an important safeguarding exercise that I know all parents and carers will take seriously.

What is TikTok?

TikTok (formerly Musical.ly) is a free social media platform for creating and watching short videos and sharing them with friends and strangers. Clips are often created using short grabs of music and can be enhanced by a range of tools such as filters, animation and special effects. The majority of videos produced are of young people lip-syncing and dancing to popular music but there are also talent videos, comedy skits, challenges and informational clips. According to mobile intelligence firm Sensor Tower, in 2019 TikTok reached 1.5 billion downloads and was the third-most downloaded non-gaming app of the year, behind only WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger. The popularity of the app, especially among younger students, is quite staggering.

Parents and carers must be vigilant in how their child accesses social media

Schools across the country are experiencing the following concerns:

There have already been several concerns raised by the existence of Tik Tok, which are a direct concern for schools and their students. Recently there has been a specific increase in students creating Tik Tok content that targets members of staff, intended to be shared across the school community. This week, we have been alerted to several Tik Tok pages created to promote such content, some of them presenting as if they are official Colmers School pages. Much of the content is negative and potentially illegal.

We have seen that some pupil users are tagging in and/or are making videos which include staff and pupil names and even images. This is completely without the permission of these people, who are in most cases, totally unaware of the videos.

Tik Tok has also been used to troll, insult and defame people. In all incidents we do not condone any use of Tik Tok or other social media platforms to impersonate, insult, troll, bully or exploit any pupil or member of staff. **We will apply our behaviour policy if any investigation discovers that a pupil has used social media in a way that goes against our school values and high expectations of behaviour & conduct, and/or is illegal, defamatory or against the Equality Act of 2010. If necessary, we will involve the police.**

Thank you for your ongoing support in working with teachers and professionals to keep children safe and also in the important work that we all do to ensure that our children behave in a way that is safe, respectful, responsible and lawful.

Yours sincerely

Ms E Leaman
Head Teacher