



# PEEL COMMON *Community Junior School*

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Dear Parents

It has been brought to my attention that there are children in our school who are using the TikTok app, some as young as Year 4. I am extremely concerned with this. Mrs Hamer has advised Year 4 parents recently of the risks involved in using this app but I am still told that children are accessing the app and using it in 'public/open' mode which is putting their safety at considerable risk.

The following information has been garnered from a parent guidance website:

“How safe is TikTok?

Using any social network can be risky, but it's possible for older, teenage children to safely use the app with adult supervision (and a private account). When you sign up for TikTok, your account is public by default, meaning anyone can see your videos, send you direct messages, and use your location information. Parents should make sure to turn on all privacy settings for accounts their older children are using, so only people you know can interact with your videos or message you on the app. That means either opting for a private account or changing the settings for comments, duets, reactions, and messages to "Friends" instead of "Everyone." You can also turn those features off completely.

TikTok recommended for?

Common Sense, the website, recommends the app for age 15+ mainly due to the privacy issues and mature content. TikTok requires that users be at least 13 years old to use the app. Anyone under the age of 18 must have approval of a parent or guardian -- but there are plenty of young tween users. If your younger child or tween wants to use the app, the account should belong to an adult who can monitor what younger users are browsing and sharing. There's also the section of the app mentioned above that's meant for kids under 13 that restricts access to mature content and comments, but since entering a false birthdate is easy, it's still best for older teens.”

I have been told by a parent of an older child that when they were unaware of the public setting of the app, their child was exposed to unknown people attempting to 'groom' their child, exposure to both sexualised and violent content and encouragement to complete inappropriate 'challenges'.

I would strongly urge you to check to see if your child has downloaded and is using this app. For you to consider not allowing your child access to this app. Or, if you still decide to allow your child to continue using this app, then for it to be highly supervised and used only in the 'private' setting. As one of our key mantras in school, 'Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'. Please help us, help you safeguard your children and protect them from potentially harmful content and unsafe, online behaviours.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andy Clarke  
Headteacher

