

Online Safety Concern - TikTok Challenges

Simon Aston Online Safety & Wellbeing Officer

Good afternoon I hope this finds you well and you are keeping safe.

We have been made aware that young people are being encouraged to take part in dangerous challenges on social media, in particular on TikTok, and have received a number of reports from schools and professionals that are concerning. We encourage schools and organisations to be vigilant as we continue to monitor the situation and keep you up to date as best as we can.

If you are concerned or are worried around “games” or “challenges” online then we highly recommend you have a look at the [DfE guidance](#) and the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#). You can also report worrying or suicide content online through [Report Harmful Content](#) and Northamptonshire Police.

What can schools do?

- Firstly remind parents and carers to be vigilant around what their children are accessing online but don't frighten or scaremonger parents or carers, one of the best things you can do is encourage parents and carers to watch and engage when their children are online.
- Avoid naming upsetting challenges, hoaxes or scary online content. [The Education People](#) have produced some good guidance especially around not scaring parents or carers in line with the DfE guidance highlighted above. We have also attached a parent guide to help parents keep their children safe online.
- We need to encourage children and young people not to share challenges online and to think critically. In schools promote to parents and carers Stop, Think and Talk:
 - **Stop** what you are doing online if you access something that frightens, worries you or if you are not sure something is real or not, encourage young people to close the device down or put the tablet or phone to one side
 - Encourage and reassure children not to over **think** what they have seen especially if the hoax or challenge is violent, they are safe and what they have seen is not going to harm them.
 - Encourage children and young people to **talk** about what they have seen online with a trusted adult and ideally not to share what they have seen with friends online or in WhatsApp groups or Snapchat.
- Have open conversations and teach children about peer pressure, especially online. Young people can sometimes be drawn into viewing scary content online because it is what all their friends are doing or seem to be doing and saying 'no' can seem like a very hard thing to do.
- Signpost and support – A strong online safety tool you could give out to children around your school could be report, block and tell a trusted adult.

- Embed and Empower - Make sure critical thinking is embedded within your curriculum, critical thinking is so valuable for safeguarding children and young people online and encourage parents and carers to do the same.

[Childnet International](#) have some great resources for schools and so do [Internet Matters](#) for parents and carers. Children and young people should have the opportunity to learn to critically identify and respond to dangerous or harmful content, however be mindful that some children will struggle to identify harmful online hoaxes and online challenges.

There is further guidance from [Internet Matters](#) around safety on TikTok that you can share with parents and carers. It's also important that we are encouraging young people to report dangerous challenges online which again is highlighted in the guidance from Internet Matters as well as our [YouTube videos](#) regarding TikTok. If you are going to share information with parents and carers [LGfI](#) have a very informative poster around hoaxes and challenges online.

For more information around online safety please email onlinesafety@northamptonshire.gov.uk