



October 17, 2024

The Honorable Brent Howard
Oklahoma State Senate Judiciary Committee
2300 N Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Chairman Howard,

Thank you for providing TikTok with the opportunity to submit comments on our commitment to the safety of our community and our ongoing efforts to foster a safe and age-appropriate experience for teens on our app.

TikTok's diverse community of more than 170 million people in the U.S. includes teenagers, centenarians, and everyone in between -- and the average age of our users is over 30 years old. In Oklahoma, people come to TikTok to discover small businesses, create engaging content, and connect on topics ranging from Sooner and Cowboy athletics to Pumpkinville held each October at the Myriad Botanical Gardens. None of this can happen without a sustained commitment to platform safety that is constantly evolving to address new challenges.

We are committed to keeping young people safe on TikTok. We provide teens with age-appropriate features, settings, and controls that reflect careful consideration of both the differences between adults and teenagers and the differences within the 13-17 teenage group. TikTok accounts for teens under 18 are automatically set to private and have a default [60-minute daily screen time limit](#). In addition, direct messaging is not available in accounts of teens under 16, and their content is ineligible for recommendation in the For You Feed. TikTok also limits push notifications by default for teen accounts – accounts for users aged 13-15 [do not receive push notifications](#) from 9 pm until 8 am and accounts for users aged 16-17 have push notifications disabled starting at 10 pm.

TikTok also recognizes the vital role that parents and guardians play in protecting the online safety of teens. With that in mind, TikTok's [Family Pairing](#) allows parents or guardians and teens to customize their safety settings based on individual needs. With Family Pairing, parents and guardians can link their TikTok accounts to their teens' accounts and set unique limits for screen time, restrict direct messaging for their teens over 16, limit search capabilities, and further mute push notifications, amongst others. TikTok also offers a [Guardian's Guide](#) and [Teen Safety Center](#) to help familiarize them with our platform and its tools and controls. Our hope is that these resources empower parents to customize their teens' TikTok experience and help families establish an ongoing dialogue about safety and well-being in our digital world.

TikTok is continuously working to provide a safe app experience for our community, and we aim to be a leader in minor safety. TikTok works with leading youth safety and well-being experts, as well as adolescent psychologists, to inform our approach, including the Family Online Safety Institute, Common Sense Networks, the Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital, ConnectSafely, and the Cyberbullying Research Center, as well as our U.S. Content Advisory Council and [Youth Council](#). TikTok is also active with the Technology

Coalition, an organization that works to protect children from online sexual exploitation and abuse, and serves on its board of directors and as chair of its transparency committee.

Notably, just last month, we announced the development of the *Digital Safety Partnership for Families*. The Digital Safety Partnership for Families is designed to help make it easier for families to start conversations about online experiences and set positive digital boundaries together. This new resource can be thought of as a family pact where parents and teens have the opportunity to decide how they will use digital platforms and communicate with one another about their digital experiences. It is intentionally not specific to any one app or service, which means that parents and teens can customize the template agreement as they discuss important topics, such as the importance of having regular conversations, and how to responsibly use both apps and devices as well as their respective safety features.

TikTok's work to provide a safe and fun online environment for our teen users is never-ending. We are regularly adding to and improving our app's safeguards and look forward to working with you and the Oklahoma legislature on solutions for how we can best protect teens.

Respectfully,

Caulder Harvill-Childs
Public Policy Manager, State
TikTok Inc.

Appendix: Tools, Features, and Partnerships

TikTok works to support the safety and well-being of our community, especially teens, and empower parents with tools and controls to safely navigate their digital experiences.

- Since 2021, [TikTok accounts for teens under 16 have been set to private by default](#).
- Content created by users under 16 is [ineligible for recommendation](#) in the For You Feed.
- Accounts for users aged 13-17 are automatically set to a default [60-minute daily screen time limit](#).
- Accounts for users aged 13-15 [do not receive push notifications](#) from 9 pm and accounts for users aged 16-17 have push notifications disabled starting at 10 pm.
- [Direct messaging on TikTok](#) is not available on accounts for teens **under 16**.
- We do not allow content that shows or promotes [suicide, self-harm content](#), or [disordered eating](#).
 - This includes content promoting dangerous activity and challenges, dangerous weight loss behaviors, and content that facilitates the trade or marketing of weight loss or muscle gain products.
- We also [surface search interventions](#) when someone searches for words or phrases related to suicide, self-harm, or disordered eating to direct them to local support resources where they can find support and information about treatment options.
- TikTok has tens of thousands of trust and safety professionals working alongside innovative technology to maintain and enforce our robust [Community Guidelines](#), [Terms of Service](#) and [Advertising Policies](#), which apply to all content on our platform.
- We proactively remove content that violates our Community Guidelines. For example, in [Q2 2024](#), we removed more than 178 million violative videos globally, which accounts for just 1% of total published videos over that period. The vast majority (98.2%) were removed proactively, before they were reported to us.

We introduced [Family Pairing](#) to allow a parent or guardian to link their TikTok account to their teen's account to directly manage a number of safety controls for their teen's account. With Family Pairing, parents and guardians can control the following settings:

- **Account privacy:** Set their teen's account to private or public.
- **Comments:** Restrict who can comment on their teen's videos.
- **Direct Messages:** Restrict who, if anyone, can send private messages to the account
- **Daily screen limits:** Set the amount of time spent on TikTok each day
- **Screentime dashboard:** See their teen's time spent on TikTok
- **Search settings:** Restrict their ability to search for content
- **Push notifications:** Restrict push notifications to their teens during certain times
- **Keyword filters:** Add hashtags or keywords they would prefer their teen not see in their For You feed recommendations
- TikTok also offers a [Guardian's Guide](#) and [Teen Safety Center](#) to help familiarize families with our platform and its tools and controls.

TikTok works with a variety of global partners on minor safety efforts:

- We are an active member of the Tech Coalition, a global alliance of technology companies to protect children online. In addition to being on its board, we also co-lead the multi-stakeholder forum on Minor Financial Sextortion held last year, and we chair committees within the organization to advance the fight against online child sexual exploitation and abuse.
- We are part of the WePROTECT Global Alliance, the largest and most diverse multisector alliance dedicated to ending online child sexual exploitation.
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is a vital partner for TikTok in our work to counter online child sexual abuse and exploitation. TikTok accesses IWF's URL and keyword list and, via NCMEC, its hash database of known child sexual abuse images. In addition to its frontline work, IWF provides insight on new and emerging trends and acts as a convener for key stakeholders.
- We worked with ConnectSafely — a nonprofit dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy, and security — to develop a TikTok-specific guide for parents and teens.
- TikTok's Top 10 Tips for Families guide for the Family Online Safety Institute offers information on several tools to help teens manage how they interact with other users and who can see their videos. It includes information about privacy restrictions, content, comments, and messages.

10 ways we protect the privacy & safety of our younger community members



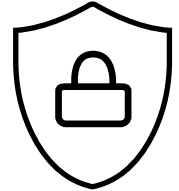
1. Age-appropriate features

Our younger community members need to wait to use some of our features; for example, they need to be at least 16 before anyone can Duet or Stitch with their content, and at least 18 to host a LIVE or to send or receive Gifts.



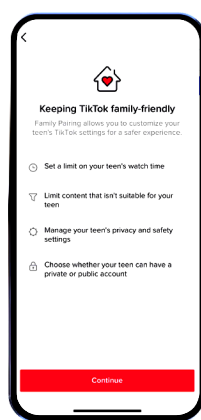
2. Safeguarding the teen viewing experience

Keeping teens safe starts with how we design TikTok. The For You feed is designed with safety in mind and we work to remove videos that contain mature or complex themes from the experience of teens under 18.



3. Empowering parents & guardians

Our Family Pairing features allow parents or guardians to link their TikTok account to their teens' and customize various safety & privacy settings - including their account type, who can comment on their videos, and how long they spend on TikTok each day. You can learn more in our [Guardian's Guide](#).



4. Age checks & assurance

Only people who confirm via our neutral age gate that they're 13 or older are allowed to set up an account on the main TikTok app. In the US, we offer a curated experience for those under age 13 that includes additional safeguards and privacy protections.

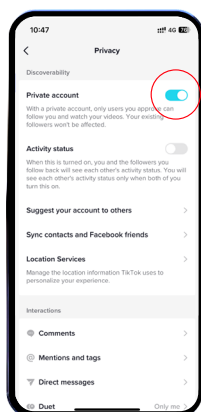


If we learn an account holder is not in their age-appropriate experience, we work to adjust their experience or remove them from TikTok.

5. Private by default

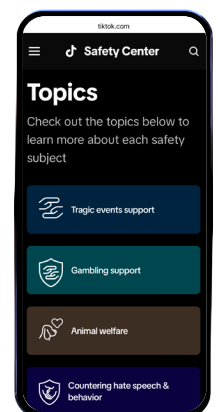
Our settings are designed to be private by default.

For example, accounts belonging to people aged 13-15 are set to private by default, so only those they approve of as followers can watch their videos.



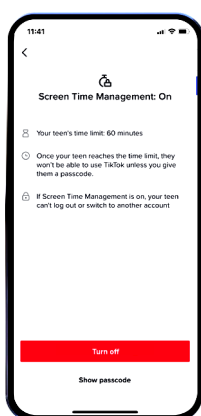
6. Teen education

We've created a series of **instructional videos** and **guides** on our privacy settings, bullying, eating disorders, online challenges and other digital safety topics which everyone can access on our Safety Center. Furthermore, our **Privacy Policy** has a section specifically about our teenage community members.



7. Screen time management

Teens on TikTok get extra support as they develop their digital habits, including a 60-minute daily screen time limit for accounts under 18 and a weekly recap of their time on TikTok. Accounts ages 13-15 don't receive push notifications after 9pm, or after 10pm for accounts ages 16-17. Teens can also set a custom schedule to mute notifications.



8. Partnering for success

We partner with dozens of organisations around the world, such as WePROTECT Global Alliance, Internet Watch Foundation and the Technology Coalition, who provide us with honest feedback and intelligence about emerging risks, helping us continually improve our work to keep TikTok safe.



9. Community Guidelines

We remove content and accounts that violate our **Community Guidelines**, and people can easily report content in-app, most simply by long-pressing on a piece of content and tapping report. We publish quarterly data about the volume and nature of content we remove on our **Transparency Center**.



10. Advertising

All ads on TikTok must comply with our Advertising Policies, which help ensure people only see ads that are appropriate for their age. Moreover, ads must not display, facilitate or promote inappropriate behaviours involving young people, such as underage drinking or smoking.



Safety and privacy protections for teens on TikTok

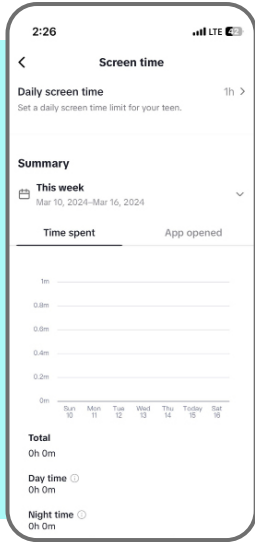
At TikTok, we consider the unique developmental needs of teens by providing different experiences for teens ages 13-15 and 16-17. In the US, we offer a curated experience for those under age 13 that includes additional safeguards and privacy protections.

Feature	13-15	16-17	18+
Direct messaging	Not allowed	Off by default	Friends by default
Account visibility	Private by default	Private pre-selected, option to set to Public	Public
Eligible for For You feed	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
Video downloads	Not allowed	Off by default	Allowed
Comment rules	Only Friends can comment	Followers by default	Everyone
Duet and Stitch	Not allowed	Off by default	Allowed
Going LIVE	Not allowed	Not allowed	Allowed
Daily screen time	60 minutes	60 minutes	Personal choice
Virtual gifting	Not allowed	Not allowed	Personal choice
Nighttime notifications	Disabled from 9pm	Disabled from 10pm	Personal choice

We work to educate families on the safeguards available to help them manage their TikTok experience at our [Youth Portal](#), [Safety Center](#), and [in-app videos](#), and through partnerships with teachers' organizations, youth safety NGOs and educational institutions around the world.

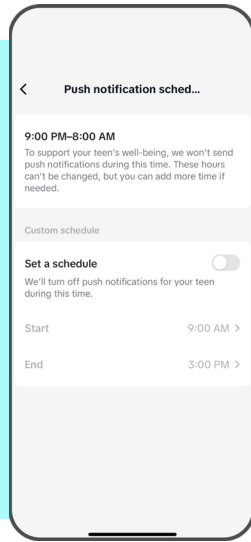
Family Pairing, Only on TikTok

Our Family Pairing feature lets parents link their TikTok account to their teen's to choose a variety of content, privacy, and well-being settings.



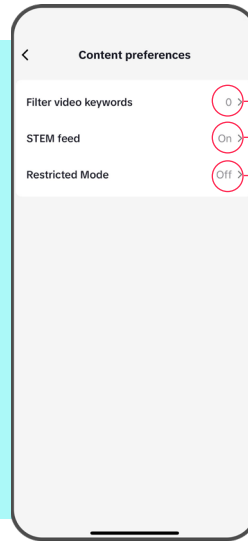
Screen time

Choose how much time their teen can spend on TikTok each day and get insights into their time spent through a screen time dashboard.



Push notification schedule

Mute their teen's push notifications during scheduled times.

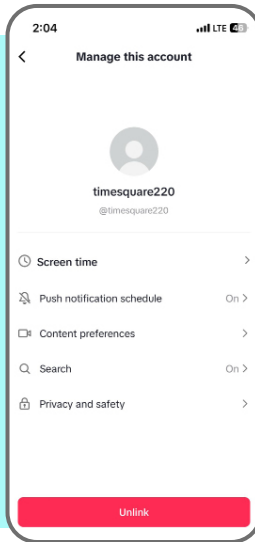


Content preferences

Add hashtags or keywords they prefer their teen to not see in their For You feed. Parents can ensure that the TikTok feed featuring videos related to science, technology, engineering, and math is enabled.

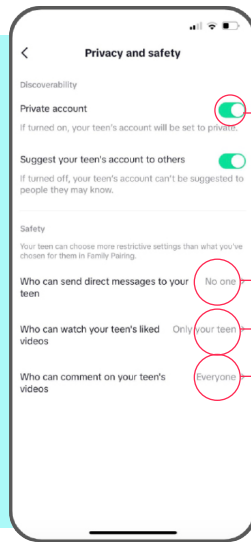
Note: This feed is enabled by default for teens under 18.

Limit exposure to content that may not be appropriate or suitable for them.



Search

Choose to restrict their teen's ability to search for content.



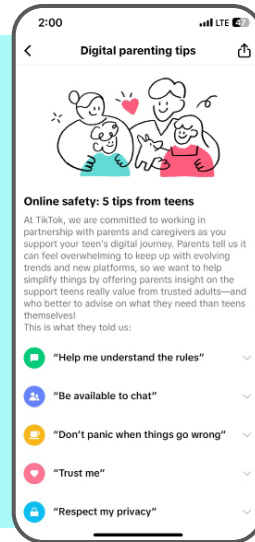
Privacy and safety

Set their teen's account to private or public.

Restrict who, if anyone, can send direct messages to their teen if they are 16+.

Select who can view their teen's liked videos.

Restrict who can comment on their teen's videos.



Digital Parenting Tips

We also hear from teens that they want their voices to be listened to. Parent or guardian accounts who link to their teen's account via Family Pairing will receive a notification prompting them to find out more about the support teens would like from the trusted adults in their lives.



Even without Family Pairing enabled, parents can help their teens enable our app's Screen Time offerings, including Daily Screen Time and Restricted Mode.