

Wooden Hill Primary and Nursery School

Staplehurst • Wooden Hill • Bracknell • Berkshire • RG12 8DB

www.woodenhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk

Tel: 01344 421117

Email: secretary@office.woodenhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk



Headteacher

Mrs Joanna Lagares

10th September 2020

Dear Parent and Carers,

Re: TikTok

We are aware of extremely distressful content currently being circulated on the social media platform TikTok. This is in relation to a video that was circulated over the weekend involving a streaming of an adult male taking his own life. There now appears to be various clips showing content of self-harm, fake suicide, users' suicidal thoughts and users' upsetting reactions having seen the initial video.

Following reports raised to the platform, TikTok has been attempting to take down the video but is struggling due to the numerous reposts. TikTok spokesperson Hilary McQuaide reported to the media:

"Our systems have been automatically detecting and flagging these clips for violating our policies against content that displays, praises, glorifies, or promotes suicide. We are banning accounts that repeatedly try to upload clips and we appreciate our community members who've reported content and warned others against watching, engaging or sharing such videos on any platform out of respect for the person and their family."

However, despite their automatic detecting systems, TikTok appears to now be flooded with similar content despite stating such content has been banned. **Please be aware that even with the 'wellbeing' parental control, these videos can still be viewed.**

Why should we be concerned?

- Children are being exposed to violent and graphic images currently while using Tik Tok
- Children who view this content may be significantly psychologically harmed
- These clips can feel real for children and those already struggling with their mental health may harm themselves
- This content does not even require a search. It appears on their feed with no option but to view while using Tik Tok. There is no protection against it
- This is not specific to one country, it is global.

What can parents do?

1. **TikTok has an official age rating of 13 as there is content that may not be suitable, or may be disturbing, for primary aged children. It is important that parents do not allow children the use of TikTok without a parent present to monitor the content of what is viewed.**
2. Ensure you know what your child/children can access online and review this regularly. Despite the comments made by TikTok, there currently appears to be limited to no safeguarding in place around this content. Therefore the risk of your child being exposed to this is extremely high while using TikTok at the moment.
3. Speak to your child/children and establish if they have viewed anything upsetting or disturbing on TikTok or other platforms and offer support.
4. The NSPCC publishes advice and guidance for parents on discussing online safety with their children, as well as Net Aware - the UK's only parental guide to social media and gaming apps: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>.

The constantly evolving digital world means there is a steady influx of new apps and games and it can be hard for parents to keep track. That's why it's important for parents to monitor the use of these apps and games and the potential risks that children can be exposed to.

If you need any further support with this, please contact your child's teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Lagares', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joanna Lagares
Headteacher