



[www.gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk](http://www.gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk)

November 28<sup>th</sup> 2025 Issue 4/7 Autumn Term 2

## Non Uniform Day

We will be holding a non-uniform day on **Friday 5th December** in return for donations for our Christmas hampers which will be raffled off at the Christmas performances. Please check out the poster below for more details (full size poster at the end of the newsletter).

**Please note:** children **do not** have to dress in their class colours, just bring a prize in the corresponding colour (see below)

Non Uniform Day  
Friday 5th December

Please help us to create our colourful prize hampers by coming to school in non uniform and donating an item of food/drink/toiletries etc. in that colour.

These hampers will then be raffled off at the corresponding Christmas Performances.

We appreciate all donations, thank you!

Please note any alcohol should be taken to the main office or handed straight to a member of staff and this will be a normal day of lessons for the children so no high heels and please also be wary of sending your child in expensive designer clothing which could become marked as a result of activities and play.

## Data Collection Sheets

Today your child should bring home a data collection sheet showing all of the information we hold on our system for them.

**Please could you check this carefully and add any changes/updates then return to the school office as soon as possible**

It's vitally important that we hold the correct information for your child, **including medical, dietary and parental details.**

Also, for safeguarding reasons, we **must** have at least two contact telephone numbers for each child.

Thank you in advance

Mrs Carrick

## Reminder

The last day of term is **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. School reopens on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January**.



Dear Parents,

This year our children from Reception to Year 4 will be going to Gosforth Civic Theatre on Thursday 18th December to see their production of a show called 'A Town Called Christmas'. It is sure to be a magical show filled with puppets, fairy lights, songs and dancing. We will be walking from our school to the theatre on the day and the trip is being paid for from our generous PTA.

There will be two showings on the day:

Showing one- Reception and Year 1- 10:30 showing (leaving school at 9:45am)

Showing two- Year 2-Year 4- 13:30 showing (leaving school at 12:45pm)

All children will return to school before school finishing time.

Please ensure you provide permission for your child to attend the trip via ParentPay.

We would also love parent helpers to assist us in walking from the school to the theatre on the day. Parents are then welcome to stay and enjoy the show. Please inform the office if you are able to attend alongside your child. We are always very appreciative of the help and support you provide. Please understand that we cannot take all parents.

Thank you  
Miss Bell

## School Council

Huge thanks to our lovely school council who did an amazing job of choosing our Christmas Tree this year!



School Council have also been busy over the last few weeks reviewing our raffle ticket prizes, gold star wrist bands and attendance awards!

The children have said they love the wrist bands and the system works well. The children suggested that we remind everyone each half term to recycle old wrist bands and pop them back in the pots when they've moved on to a new one.

The children love the raffle tickets but would prefer prizes to trophies. They were very conscious about pocket money toys which are often made of plastic and break quite quickly and have asked for notebooks and pencils instead. Mrs Lamb will do some shopping and these will be available soon!

The children like the attendance trophies and display but would like the display to be moved into the assembly hall so it can be updated in celebration assembly.

A brilliant job school council – keep up the good work!

Mrs Lamb



## PTFA

Our PTFA had a lovely meeting on Tuesday evening planning our upcoming Christmas events.

### PTFA Christmas Eve Bags

Our brilliant Christmas Eve Bags are back again this year filled with everything you need for a cosy Christmas Eve!



Bags are available to buy via ParentPay until Friday 5th December and will be available to collect after your child's Christmas Performance.

Many thanks  
PTFA



## Santa Dash Daily Mile

On **Wednesday 10th December**, it's **Christmas Jumper Day** AND our festive version of the much-loved **daily mile**. We invite all our children to wear Santa hats, reindeer antlers or any other funky headgear alongside their jumpers if they would like to. Don't forget your trainers! Last year, an incredible **116,499** young people took part all across the country, here's to another record-breaking festive dash round the playground!

Mr Guest



## Parking

Parking at the front of school and in the surrounding streets has greatly improved recently. Please remember

- ★ not to idle and to switch engines off
- ★ to be considerate of our neighbours
- ★ not to obstruct drive ways
- ★ leave the disabled bay free for disabled users and remember not all disabilities are visible
- ★ to drive slowly
- ★ not to leave belongings on show or leave children in cars unattended



## Victoria Tunnel

Our Year 3 and Year 4 children had a brilliant time on their WW2 trip yesterday. We were given a guided tour of the Victoria Tunnel – used as a shelter for the people of Newcastle during the Blitz. We also made our own 'Dig for Victory' posters using a real printing press. A huge thank you to all of the children, staff and parent volunteers for helping to make the trip a success!

Mr Hindess



## Nursery Zoolab

Nursery had a fantast visit from Zoolab this week! All of the children were really brave and loved handling some exotic creatures. Take a look at some of the highlights below!



# LET'S GO ZERO 2030

Miss Pope and I had a productive afternoon at the Civic Centre on Tuesday afternoon beginning to write our climate action plan. We are taking action now to reduce our carbon footprint. The plan covers four different areas.

1. **Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency**
2. **Climate adaptation and resilience**
3. **Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure**
4. **Climate Education, Green Skills and Green Careers**

If you'd like to join our Sustainability working group, we would love to hear from you. We're also keen to hear from anyone who works in the field of any of the four areas above.

We'll be working on this more in the new year but there are a couple of things you can help us with now.

## Reduce, reuse, recycle

Please remember if you have any old **gold star wrist bands** to return them to school to be reused.

If you have any **pre-loved uniform** that no longer fits, please drop it in to our uniform recycling bin in the main entrance (washed please).

One of our lovely parents stores this at home and pre-loved uniform can be purchased for a fraction of the price. All money made comes back to school to be spent on playground equipment for our wonderful children.

## Pre-Loved Uniform

PRE-LOVED ITEMS WE CAN SELL		PRE-LOVED ITEMS WE CAN NOT SELL
OFFICIAL SCHOOL JUMPERS/HOODIES	£2.50	NON – OFFICIAL JUMPERS
OFFICIAL SCHOOL CARIGANS	£2.50	NON – OFFICIAL CARIGANS
OFFICIAL SCHOOL POLOS	£1.50	NON – OFFICIAL POLOS
GIRLS CHECKED DRESSES	£1.50	GREY BOYS TROUSERS
GREY PINAFORES	£1.50	GREY TAYLORED GIRLS TROUSERS
GREY SKIRTS	£0.50	GREY BOYS SHORTS
GREY GIRLS SOFT TROUSERS	£0.50	DAMAGED OR MARKED ITEMS
SCHOOL BAG (NEW STYLE)	£2.50	

Items are sold from 1 Park Drive, Melton Park NE3 5QB, with a drop off box in front of the garage. Please only drop off items on the list that can be resold.

Please REMEMBER items must not be marked as they are unable to be sold on. You can text me Natasha Davy (Parent) on 07736276653.



This is the pre-loved uniform drop off area in the main entrance to help us to reuse, recycle and re-love uniform for the benefit of our children and community.



# Healthy School

## Focus on Fish



Fish is a super-food for growing children. It provides high-quality protein to support muscle growth, and oily fish in particular (such as salmon, mackerel or sardines) is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are linked to brain development, visual health and good heart function. Because of these benefits, regular inclusion of fish in the diet can help children grow well, think clearly and stay well.

Did you know that in the UK, children are encouraged to eat two portions of fish each week, with at least one of those being an oily fish. Fresh, frozen or tinned fish are all good options — just remember to check for bones and choose low-salt varieties when using tinned fish. Trying different recipes such as fishcakes, fish pie or baked fish fingers can help make fish more appealing to children or try to swap the fish for a regular protein in established favourite meals.

If you have a child resistant to eating fish or trying new foods, have a look at the tips on the following link: [wcrf.org](http://wcrf.org)

Mrs Wells

## Starting School in September 2026!

### Applying for Places

**Nursery Application forms for places in September 2026** will be available on the school website and from the office from Friday 9th January 2026.

The closing date for applications is 27th March 2026 at noon.

Offer letters will be emailed out on Wednesday 1st April 2026.

The deadline for accepting a place is Friday 24th April.

### Nursery visit dates

- ★ Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 4:00pm
- ★ Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 4:00pm
- ★ Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 9:30am
- ★ Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 4:00pm
- ★ Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 4:00pm
- ★ Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 9:30am

### Reception Applications for September 2026

Applications open: 1st September 2025

Applications close: 16th January 2026

National offer day: 16th April 2026

Further information can be found at

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/apply-school-place/applying-reception-places>

### Middle School Applications for September 2026

Applications open: 1st September 2025

Applications close: 31st October 2025

National Offer Day: 2nd March 2026

Further information can be found at

[Applying for Transfer places | Newcastle City Council](#)

Mrs Lamb



## TIMES TABLES ROCK STARS

Well done **Mrs Guest's** class for being our most active class this week! Our activity is down so please remember to login to practice your times tables every week! Our top coin earners are **Jesse P**, **Rowan G** and **Fionntan M**.



Well done for all your work on NumBots this week, KS1 activity is up by 10%! Our most active class this week is **Miss Tate's**!

Our top coin earners this week are:

- ★ Miss Pope – **Toby B**
- ★ Mr Edwards – **Elliot B**
- ★ Miss Tate – **Harrison J**
- ★ Mr Patterson – **Alice W**
- ★ Mr Hindess and Mrs Armstrong – **Alice B**
- ★ Mr Guest – **Lewis D**
- ★ Miss Bell – **Gerard C**

Great work everyone!

Miss Pope.

## Attendance

Our whole school attendance to date this academic year is **97%** which is slightly up on last year's **96.6%**.

Our classes of the week this week are **Year 2 Miss Tate** with **98.9%** and **Year 3/4 Mr Guest** with **97.6%**!

Well done everyone!

Mrs Lamb



There has been lots of creativity and imagination shown this week by some of our Year 2 children, and their dens have been wonderful to see!

Well done to **Miss Tate's** class and **Mr Patterson's** class for your lovely interactions and for playing so positively together. I hope you don't mind sharing the golden well award this week!

Thank you!

Ms Gasper



## FAO: Year 3 and Year 4 Parents

Hello,

Gosforth Park have been engaging with Northern Squash club's schools outreach work.

They are now offering free taster sessions at all of their junior beginner boys and beginner girls classes.

**Boys: Saturdays 9am - 10am**

**Sundays 2pm – 3pm**

**Girls: Saturdays 10am - 11am**

**Sundays 1pm – 2pm**

**Location** - McCracken Park, Great North Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DT  
Northern Squash Club

Thank you,

Richard Vitty, Head Coach

07757989582

richard.vitty@gmail.com



With the festive season almost upon us, we know it's not always the most wonderful time of the year for everyone. We know that Christmas and New Year can be a challenging time for many families for many different reasons. We have pulled together some resources on a range of different topics in one handy place for you to use or share with loved ones.

- [The NHS](#) - 999 and 111 services are available for emergency and urgent mental health matters, while the website also has details of care on offer
- [If U Care Share](#) - The charity has a range of resources on its website, including a 24/7 confidential Crisis Messenger for anyone struggling
- [Hub of Hope](#) - A searchable online resource which provides suggested services for a range of mental health and addiction issues based on location
- [The Samaritans](#) - The long-running charity offers 24/7 support by phone, email or its Self-help app
- [NHS](#) Support for Domestic Violence and Abuse
- [NHS](#) Addiction Support

- [Struggling at Christmas](#) Get free, safe and anonymous support from kooth.com. We have a range of flyers from Kooth on Loneliness, Loss, Social Anxiety and Family Difficulties which we'll send out on Parent Pay.
- [EDNE](#) Eating Distress North East (EDNE) offers independent confidential services to people affected by eating distress across the North East
- [Free digital mental wellbeing support](#) for adults across the UK is also available at quell.io
- [Education Support](#) offers help with the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities and can be contacted on 08000 562 561
- [Cruse](#) Bereavement Care (CRUSE) is a national charity committed to promoting the well-being of bereaved people. Patients may contact the national Helpline seven days a week (various times) which is run by trained bereavement volunteers who offer emotional support to anyone affected by grief, calling free on 0808 808 1677.

Wishing you a peaceful and safe Christmas from the whole GPFS Family.

Mrs Lamb



## Reminder

In more extreme weather, where it is not practical to grit the whole site, one of the following two systems will be in place.

**Red Route (red dotted line on map)** – this is the minimum which will be gritted in **extreme weather** (snow and ice) if school is open

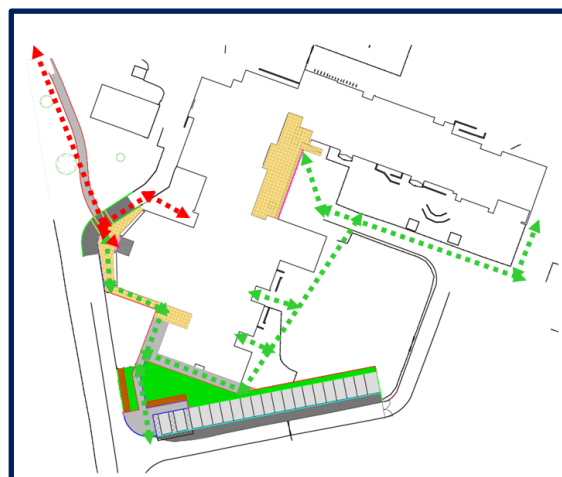
- The pathway leading from the school gate down the main path into the main entrance (this will be used by Year 1 - 4)
- The pathway leading from the school gate down the main path into the wraparound entrance (this will be used by Nursery and Reception)

Staff will be at the front of school to show children where to enter school when usual doors are not accessible.

**Green Route (green dotted line on map)** will be gritted in addition to the red route **on typical icy days** but not in exceptional circumstances and/or extreme weather.

This will cover

- The pathway leading from the school gate down the main path, past the front entrance, round the path and through the gate onto the main playground (in approximately a 1m wide path) to the KS2, KS1, Reception and Nursery doors.
- A pathway from the car park to the main path



We will send the following messages on ParentPay to let you know which system is in operation. Our full gritting policy can be found here:

<http://www.custompark.newcastle.sch.uk/website/policies/85462>

Dear Parents

School will be open today, however, due to extreme weather, please make sure you follow the gritted pathways allowing children to enter school via the main office (Year 1-4) and Wraparound entrance (Nursery and Reception). Please do not arrive early and do not let your child play on un-gritted/un-cleared areas before or after school.

Please take extreme care on your way to school and let the school office know as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend today.

Many thanks

Dear Parents

Please make sure you follow the gritted pathways allowing children to enter school via their usual allocated doors this morning. Please do not arrive early and do not let your child play on un-gritted/un-cleared areas before or after school.

Please take extreme care on your way to and from school.

Many thanks



# Rainbow Wraparound

Bookings must be made during the booking window which opens on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month and closes on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, for the following month.

	<b>Booking opens 12 noon</b>	<b>Booking closes 12 noon</b>
<b>October bookings</b>	September 10 <sup>th</sup>	September 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>November bookings</b>	October 10 <sup>th</sup>	October 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>December booking</b>	November 10 <sup>th</sup>	November 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>January bookings</b>	December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	December 17 <sup>th</sup>
<b>February bookings</b>	January 10 <sup>th</sup>	January 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>March bookings</b>	February 10 <sup>th</sup>	February 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>April bookings</b>	March 10 <sup>th</sup>	March 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>May bookings</b>	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	April 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>June bookings</b>	May 10 <sup>th</sup>	May 20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>July bookings</b>	June 10 <sup>th</sup>	June 20 <sup>th</sup>

Parents must make their own bookings on the school cloud system. The only exception to this is families using vouchers. If you are emailing dates for voucher bookings, you must include

- Your child's name
- The day and date
- The sessions required (breakfast, until 5pm, until 6pm).

If you would like to, you can book sessions in advance for the entire school year.

If you do wish to book the same sessions for the entire school year, please email Mrs Carrick at [wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk)

Block bookings can only be made via email or through school cloud (not text message).

Please email [wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk) for any wraparound queries, **NOT the admin inbox or Mrs Carrick directly, as this will delay any response and may result in you missing the booking window.**

**Please ensure all block bookings are made/requested before the booking window closes. We cannot guarantee any block bookings after this date.**

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thanks

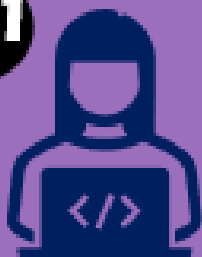
Mrs Carrick

[wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:wraparound@gosforthpark.newcastle.sch.uk)

# Applying for working parents' free childcare



1



Apply through the childcare service using:

<https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk>

You will need to confirm your identify

If successful you will receive an eligibility code – '50xxxxxxxxxx'



2

3



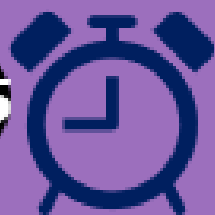
Take this code to your childcare provider with your NI number, child's date of birth and complete a Parent Declaration form

Your childcare provider checks the code is valid and if valid, confirms when you can start



4

5



Every three months, you **MUST** reconfirm your eligibility through your childcare account (helpline below)

Your 30-hour eligibility code has a validity end date.

**If you fail to reconfirm or become ineligible, you will stop receiving the free hours.**

**This is your responsibility.**

For support call the childcare service on

**0300 123 4097**



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

## TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at [videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games](http://videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games).

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## 'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

## DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

## CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like [systemrequirementslab.com](http://systemrequirementslab.com) can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

## MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

## BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers; they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

## APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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## CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

## WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnight rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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## LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

## IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register; entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

## STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

## Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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GPFS PTFA

# CHRISTMAS EVE BAGS

Available to buy on ParentPay  
until Friday 5th December

**STILL ONLY £5**

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR  
FAMILY FUN THIS CHRISTMAS!**

Reindeer Food  
Christmas Sweet Treat  
Tree Decorations  
Christmas Activity Sheet  
Christmas Pencil  
Chocolate Lolly

Available to collect  
at Christmas  
Performances



# Non Uniform Day

Friday 5th December



Please help us to create our colourful prize hampers by coming to school in non uniform and donating an item of food/drink/toiletries etc. in that colour.

These hampers will then be raffled off at the corresponding Christmas Performances.

We appreciate all donations, thank you!



Please note any alcohol should be taken to the main office or handed straight to a member of staff and this will be a normal day of lessons for the children so no high heels and please also be wary of sending your child in expensive designer clothing which could become marked as a result of activities and play.



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

## BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

## IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

## MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

## ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

## Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



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