

Level up your kid's safety on TikTok

Whether it's taking part in the viral #bananadrop dance trend or watching videos of cute cats, short-form mobile video platform TikTok has become synonymous with the latest creative and entertaining videos that are making their rounds on the Internet.

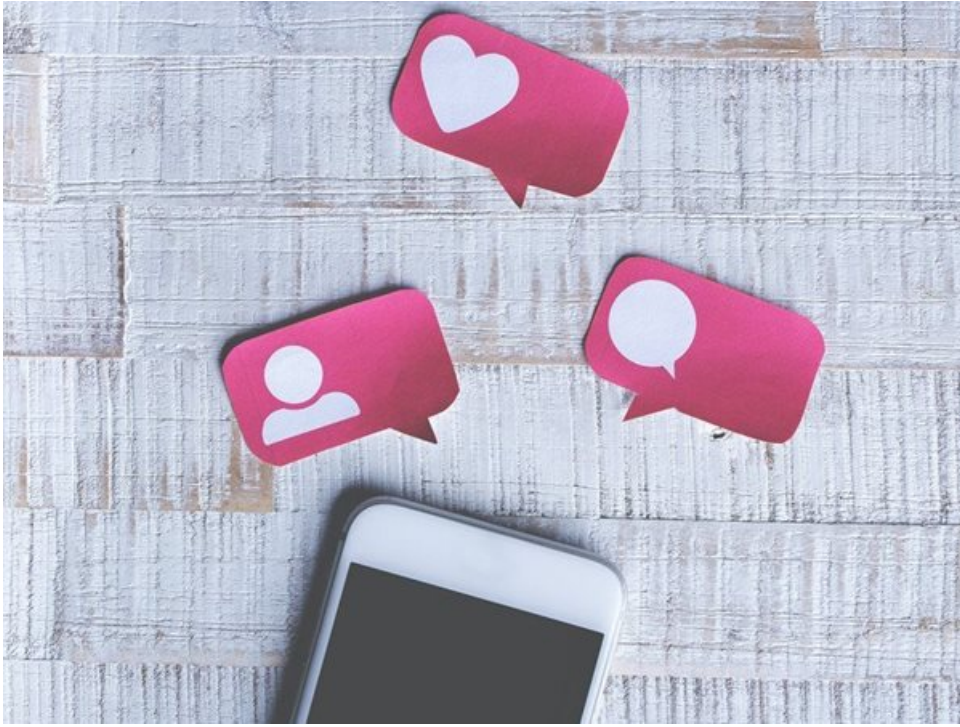


Photo by Cristian Dina© from [Pexels](#)

Dean McCoubrey, founder of MySocialLife, admits that understanding the digital and social landscape that teens live in nowadays is not straightforward - it's actually one whole generation apart from our parents.

“*The fact remains that adults – parents, teachers and counsellors – need to acquaint themselves with what media kids are consuming and then educate themselves. Given the massive following of TikTok, it is an excellent start that parents and learners are being pointed to safety features.*” ”

What do you need to know?

- **Make sure you're the right age**

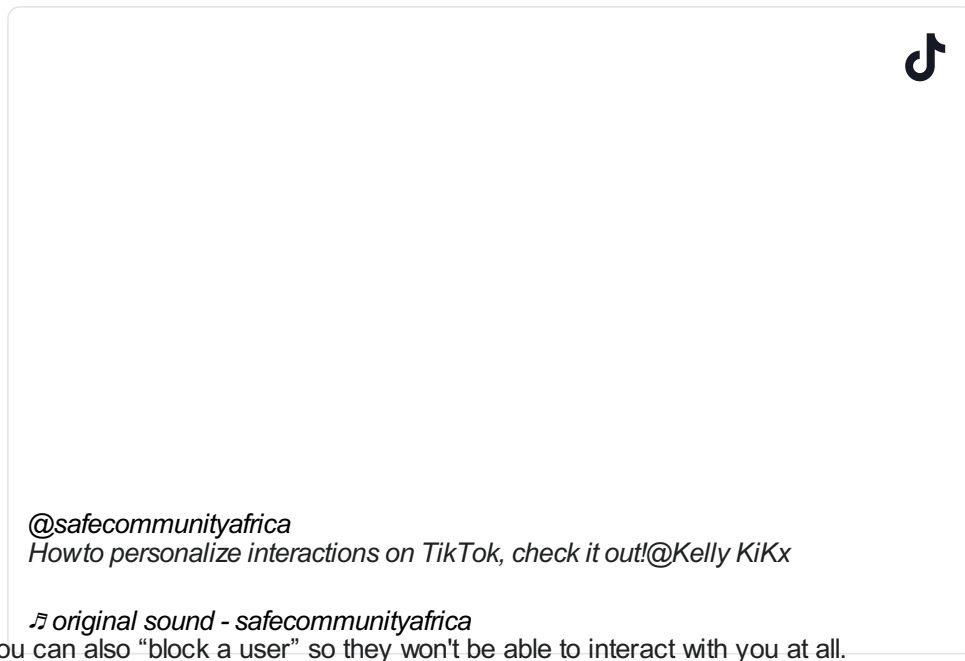
Before accessing TikTok, an age-gate measure is available at the sign-up stage to ensure only users aged 13 years and older can gain access to the platform. This is also referred to in the Terms of Service.

Tips for parents: TikTok has an app store rating of 12+ which means that parents can simply block it from their teen's phone by using device-based parental controls if they need to.

- **Level up on privacy**

Once you have successfully signed up, your TikTok account is set to public automatically, which means anyone can view or comment on your videos. Creator, @Kelly_KiKx, shares a video with her safety tip on how you can limit interactions and decide who can comment, like or message you on TikTok.

Users also have the option of setting their account to private which means when someone wants to follow you, you'll need to approve them as a follower before they can see your content.



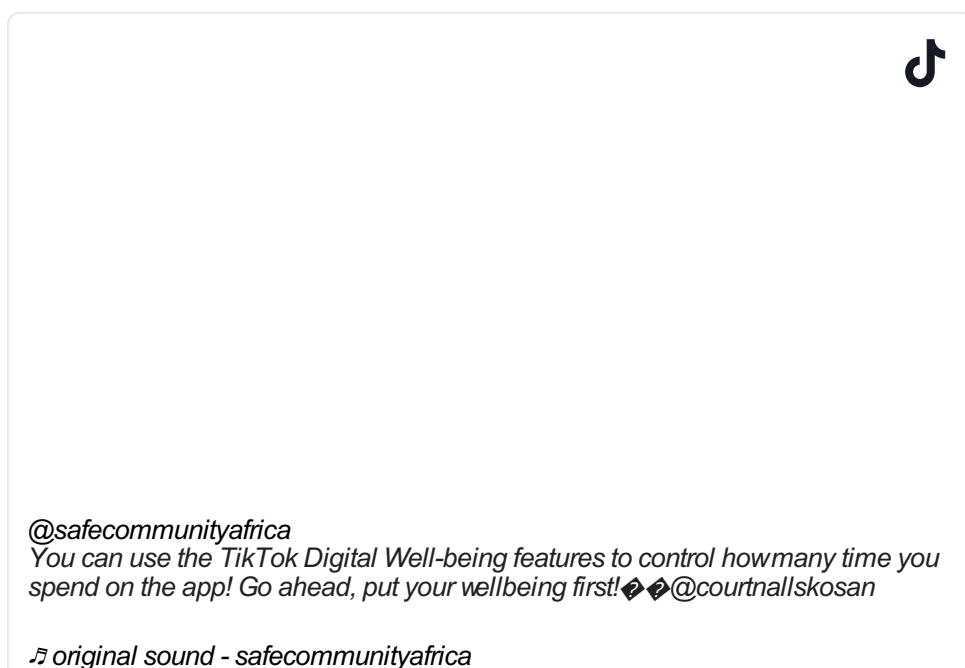
Remember, you can also “block a user” so they won't be able to interact with you at all.

Tips for parents: Parents are advised to work together with their teens to find the best interaction preference to ensure great user experience while on TikTok.

- **Cap your screen time**

TikTok's Screen Time Management function can be found in the privacy and settings options under the section "Digital Wellbeing". This feature lets you set a daily time limit and once the time is used up, a password needs to be entered to continue using the app.

Watch as creator, @CourtnallSkosan, shows us that this feature helps to monitor and control how much time is spent on TikTok and works well especially for those of us who can't put down the phone.



Tips for parents: To ensure time spent on TikTok is monitored, parents should help teens set up a password. This will be a reminder that the time spent online has been used up.

- **Being thoughtful about your profile**

It's good to note that even with private settings your profile photo, user name and bio are available to all TikTok users. Sharing personal information like your phone number, or your home or email address can heighten the risk of identity theft, spam, and compromises your general safety.

Keep personal information limited. This tutorial illustrates the value of being thoughtful about what you choose to share in your profile and videos.



Tips for parents: Safeguard the amount of personal information shared online by helping teenagers understand why certain information should be kept confidential.

- **Enable Family Pairing for extra support and safety**

This functionality allows parents and teens to customise their safety settings based on individual needs. Family Pairing will allow a parent to link their TikTok account to their teens' and set controls including Screen Time Management, Restricted Mode and Direct Messages.

Tips for parents: Setting this up together with your teen will help guide their online experience while allowing time to educate about online safety and digital citizenship.

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