



A school's guide to

# Managing TikTok



This guide explores the impact TikTok can have on schools & students and offers some practical advice for dealing with this latest student craze.

# The stats

**41%** of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24.

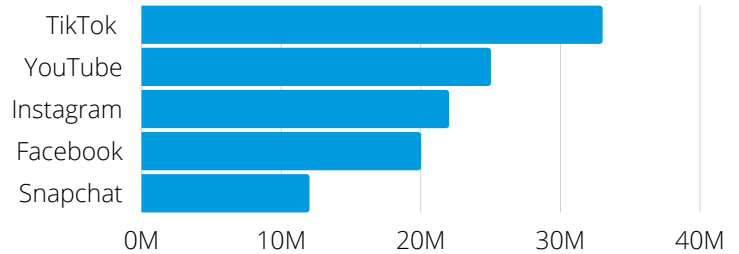
More than **1 BILLION** videos viewed every day in the last year.



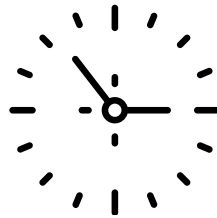
**43%** uploaded a 'duet' video, essentially engaging with a total stranger.

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TikTok generated **\$5.6 B** in revenue for the first-quarter of 2020.  
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**TikTok is the most downloaded app on the App Store.**



Source: Oberlo 2020

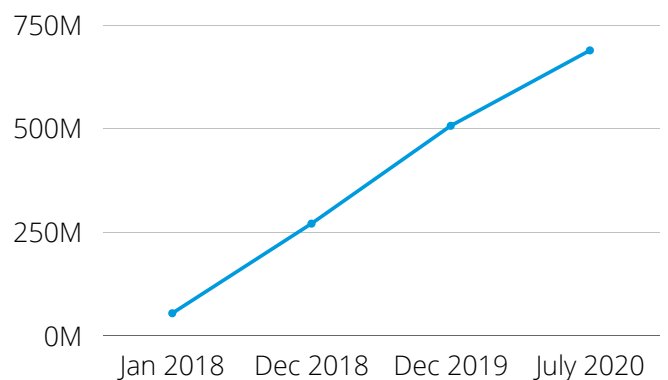


TikTok users spend an average

**52 MINUTES**

per day on the app.

**Here's a breakdown of TikTok's global user growth.**



TikTok made up approximately **7%** of **all cyber bullying complaints** received by the eSafety Commissioner in 2020.

**More likely than not**, the majority of students at your school are regular users of TikTok. The daily use of the social video app has exploded over the past few years, resulting in schools struggling to deal with its impact on students and consequences for the school. Skipping school, broadcasting indecent videos in uniform and distraction from learning are just a few of the side-effects impacting schools.

## What is TikTok?

This free social media platform is used for creating and watching short videos and sharing them with friends and strangers. Clips are often created using short grabs of music and can be enhanced by a range of tools such as filters, animation and special effects. The majority of videos produced are of young people lip-syncing and dancing to popular music but there are also talent videos, comedy skits, challenges and informational clips.

## The **problems** for schools & students

In its short lifespan, TikTok has already raised a few eyebrows. There have been several concerns raised by governments, regulators, and the media, which are a direct concern for schools and their students. Like most social media apps, TikTok collects a huge amount of personal information about its users by demanding access to their phone's camera, microphone, contact list and location using GPS tracking.

### **Data breaches and young children**


In 2019 TikTok was fined US\$5.7m (AU\$8.4m) in the US after it was found to have illegally harvested the personal information of children under 13 who had been using the app - in violation of their terms.

TikTok has since set up a separate section of the app for children with no sharing, commenting, messaging or profiles and has removed all videos submitted by pre-teens. But these changes were only made for the US market. Concerns remain regarding the use of the platform by young children globally, which exposes them to many real dangers.

## Addiction and distractions in the search of fame

A social media app proving to be a distraction for students both during school and homework times is nothing new. However, it is the extent to which TikTok has been able to take an addictive hold over students and the resulting behaviours that are particularly concerning. Many young people using the app are doing so in pursuit of becoming 'TikTok famous' (getting a large number of views on videos). TikTok even offers monetary incentives through their 'Creator Fund' for users in some countries (this does not yet include Australia) who are able to build an engaged audience on the platform. TikTok provides a possibility for ordinary people to build a large audience and even make a substantial income through the app, which adds legitimacy to this dream. It was reported in New Zealand that students had been skipping school in a bid to become TikTok celebrities.

Like many free to access social media platforms, TikTok is in the business of monopolising user time to make money. They use a number of clever strategies to maximise both the number of visits to the app and the duration of each visit. One of the key strategies is the highly intuitive algorithm that is behind how videos are presented through a user's For You Page (FYP). The FYP presents an endless scroll of videos. The videos presented through the FYP are heavily curated for each user based upon how they engage with content through the app, the profiles they interact with, and the behaviour of others within a similar demographic, amongst other things. The user-level curation coupled with the endless scroll and short video duration creates the perfect environment for that 'just one more video' mentality.



***"I've had to go around to houses where kids haven't been coming to school because they just want to make TikTok videos and become famous."***

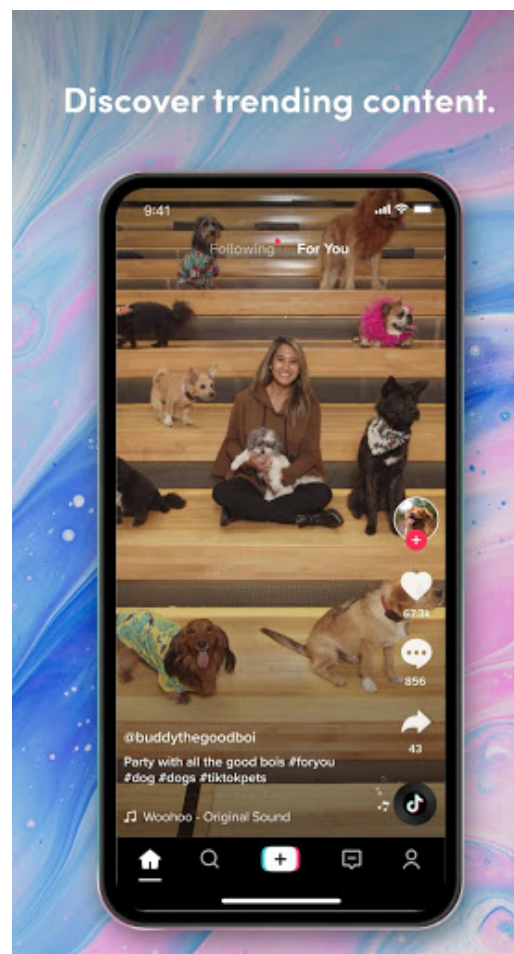
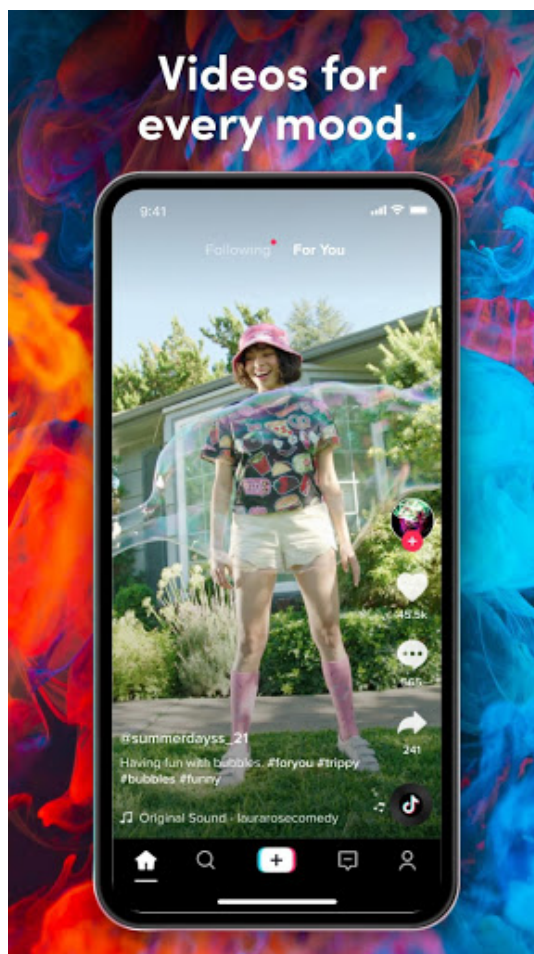
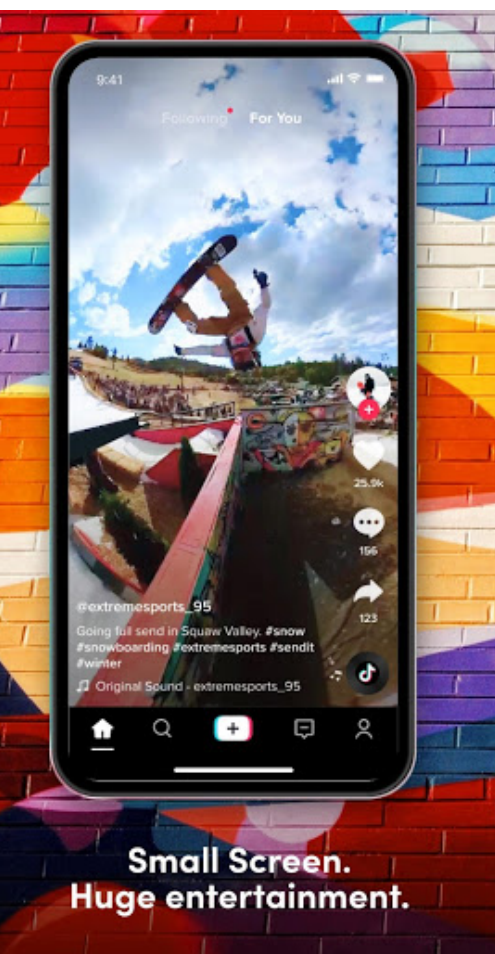
**Thomas Bartlett**  
Deputy Principal, Manurewa Intermediate School



## Explicit material

There have been several incidents of students uploading inappropriate material while identifiable in their school uniform. A few examples of this behaviour include imitating sex acts and miming to explicit or sexist songs. This situation presents several challenges for a school, the first being to address and educate students over improper behaviour. Often there may be an element of innocence surrounding this type of behaviour but it is imperative for schools to immediately address it and educate students on both the impact and implications of their actions. It is about identifying teachable moments to impact student behaviour change.

**A second problem these incidents raise for schools is one of a PR nature.** Having your school in the public spotlight as a result of inappropriate student behaviour is not something your, or any, school wishes to deal with. Therefore, prevention through the approaches outlined below will help ensure that your school is only in the public spotlight for the right reasons.



### TikTok Promotional Material

Promotional material centered around being, fun, creative, and engaging. A luring atmosphere for youngsters.

# How schools can respond

## Set clear expectations

For students to follow the rules around social media use, they first need to have a clear understanding of what they are. Most schools are clear on the fact that they do not permit the filming of TikTok videos during the school day - but what about on the school grounds after hours? Wearing a school uniform? Be specific about where the boundaries lie, make sure that students are engaged in the development process, and understand the outcome.

## Support your allies (aka parents)

One of the biggest challenges in managing TikTok (or any social media platform for that matter), is dealing with the diverse parent/guardian decisions. Some kids will be using TikTok unsupervised, others will be feeling left out because they're not allowed on the platform. Parents are allies in the cyber safety space. Empower your parents to make informed decisions around managing their child's online journey and reduce the number of incidents that escalate to the point of requiring school intervention. Providing parents with access to tools and reputable sources of information and training regarding online safety (such as [ySafe](#), the [eSafety Office](#), and [Netsafe](#)) can be helpful.

## Be aware of workarounds

As all school staff are aware, setting clear expectations is only a piece of the puzzle. If the rules you have set are not being consistently implemented, then your entire management approach is compromised. If you know that students are using mobile data to film TikTok videos in the school bathrooms during breaks (which is commonly seen on the app), and this is against your school rules, make sure that staff follow the procedure you have in place to address the situation.

## Educate about privacy and digital footprint

Some of the major concerns around TikTok from a school's perspective are the privacy implications (particularly with students forgoing privacy settings in pursuit of becoming 'TikTok famous') and the digital footprint concerns that can come with this. Start early with education around online privacy and online reputation, so that when students do start entering the world of social media, they are empowered with the skills and knowledge to make good decisions.



# How Linewize can help manage TikTok at your school

The internet, and apps like TikTok in particular, are a powerful distraction for young minds and therefore technology should be employed to help maintain their focus on studies and education.

## Educate and empower parents & families

Designed specifically to drive parental engagement, [Linewize Community](#) helps ensure parents are involved in their child's online activity and empowers them to effectively manage cyber safety, including app use such as TikTok, social media and screen-time. Your parents have access to tools to set firm boundaries around what their children can access online - and when they can access it - while allowing the flexibility that modern family life demands. Your entire school community is further benefited by guidance from cyber experts and the support of our dedicated School Community Engagement Team.

## Remove the distraction from your school

[Linewize School Manager](#) can ensure every student is protected and their learning devices are being used purely for learning purposes during school hours - no matter what network they are connected to or filter avoidance tactics they may employ (such as VPNs). And detailed reporting can help highlight harmful content spreading throughout the school or identify potentially dangerous student behaviour before it becomes a problem.

## Keep your students focussed in class

[Linewize Classwise](#) allows teachers to keep their class focussed with the ability to monitor student learning devices during classes and empower teachers to either block or unblock apps and websites depending on what they need to execute their lesson.

***"Linewize offers a granular solution,  
not a one size fits all."***

**Russell Burt**  
Principal, Point England School







“

The Linewize ecosystem is unique in providing a **complete end-to-end solution** for schools in terms of **duty of care and educational outcomes**, with the addition of community engagement and support.

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Yugon Chobanoff

IT Director, John XXIII College

## Book a Linewize Demo

Discover how Linewize solves your school's cyber challenges.

**BOOK NOW**



## About Linewize

The Linewize ecosystem is used by over 3,000 schools and 1.7 million students across the globe. It's a unique response to the challenge of today's connected learning environments, supporting the integration of technology, education and engagement to create cyber safe communities where students thrive.

For more information, visit [linewize.io](https://linewize.io) or email [sales@linewize.io](mailto:sales@linewize.io)



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