

GOOSEBERRY ALERT No. 60

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ALERT: A 10 year old child in Italy has died after apparently following a challenge on the TikTok video sharing app which has an age limit of 13+ years. Italy has temporarily blocked access to TikTok for users whose age cannot be proved definitively. Apparently, this challenge has been around for some time and has not yet gone viral so take care not to encourage its spread by giving specific details to children.

Gooseberry Student



Online dares and challenges can be fun and sometimes they are used to fundraise for charity. Sometimes, however, they promote dangerous or embarrassing pranks or extreme activities, and this can put children at risk.

Think about good digital citizenship. What should you do if you come across risky dares or challenges online? *(Think about using reporting tools to inform the platform, not on-sharing challenges with others, telling a trusted adult)*

What should you do if you become aware that your friends are getting involved with something risky? *(Think about warning friends of the risk, discouraging them, telling a trusted adult, seeking help from a trusted adult if the content is worrying them).*

Activity: *It can be hard to resist pressure from friends even when they suggest activities that we are uncomfortable with or know are risky. Practise in pairs some ways of confidently and politely refusing without falling out with a friend. Take turns to be the one encouraging the risky behaviour and the one saying “no”.*

Gooseberry Teacher



The age limit for using the TikTok app is 13+, although many younger users give a false date of birth to evade the restrictions. There have been a number of risky challenges which have appeared on TikTok over the years. In last week's newsletter we reported on an instance of risky photos taken on a railway level crossing with a slogan which challenged others to take similar risks. You can find more details of the TikTok challenge mentioned above [here](#). Please don't share the details with children as this may upset them as well as causing the details to spread.

Have a general discussion about online dares and challenges to raise awareness without causing worry. Talk about how peer pressure can sometimes lead to poor decision making and discuss ways to resist it in order to avoid getting caught up in risky behaviour. Remind them about reporting tools on platforms and encourage them to discuss any concerns with their trusted adults.

Gooseberry Parent



There have been a couple of incidents of risky challenges on the TikTok app in recent days, one of which has led to a child fatality in Europe. It is important to be aware that dares and challenges do appear on social media sites. Age limits are there for a reason and young children often don't have the maturity or knowledge to recognise the risks that are inherent in some dares. Unfortunately, older children can also get caught up in acts of bravado or peer pressure to take risks.

Please be careful not to mention the details to your child, as this could encourage the dare to spread, or it might worry them. Have a general conversation about the need to think for themselves and not get caught up in risky group behaviour. Empower them to be assertive with friends who may pressure them to be involved, and encourage them to talk to you if they are worried about anything they come across online.

Other Resources

For **Gooseberry Schools**, you will find supporting lesson plans and accompanying parent advice sheets in:

Town Level (ages 10-11) – Sc5 Video Chat looks at peer pressure and how to resist it in the context of sharing rude images. It briefly discusses dares.

City Level (ages 11-13) – Sc2 Digital Footprint looks at peer pressure and the temptation to push boundaries in order to appear popular.

Sc9 Keeping Healthy Online mentions dares as part of the potential negatives of social media use.

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