

This week at

# Consett Academy



At Consett Academy, students develop their personal, social, health and careers education through our Aspire curriculum. We place a high value on developing the whole child, and their Aspire learning is a vital aspect of this. Delivered by your child's tutor, the Aspire programme covers key themes of personal development such as understanding mental health, wellbeing, relationships and British Values. Many of these sessions involve discussions where children can express their opinions and feelings in a safe and structured way. A key part of our Aspire programme is also based on developing the values and character of the young people in the Academy: that is why our programme builds in opportunities to discuss and explore Attitudes, Success, Pride, Initiative, Resilience and Enterprise: ASPIRE.

This week during Aspire, tutors have used the opportunity of it being Children's Mental Health week to raise awareness of how we can look after our mental health and build positive connections with others. The charity Place2Be provide excellent advice and any parents wishing to look at ways of supporting their children's mental health can access their resources by following this link [How to support your child's mental health – Place2Be](#) Any parents who feel that they need to inform the Academy of any concerns about their child's mental health, please contact your child's year team.



# This week at Consett Academy



Thank you to all Year 9 parents and carers that were at the Academy on Monday for parents' evening to discuss their child's next steps and GCSE options. A reminder that the deadline for submitting option choices is Friday 17th February. The link to the option form can be found on our website Options Process 2023 | ([consett-academy.org.uk](https://consett-academy.org.uk)) alongside a copy of the Pathways Booklet, and video links to subject overviews.



It has also been Online Safety Week and students have had assemblies to support them in keeping themselves safe online. We know that this is also an area that parents and carers want to keep up to date in. This resource will update parents and carers about anything you need to know about Tik Tok.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

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

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-18 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18  
UNAPPROVED

### DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

### IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

### ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social networking platforms, TikTok can be addictive: figures show that young people are investing increasing amounts of time in it. In the UK, children with TikTok spend an average of 103 minutes per day on the app, versus 83 minutes on YouTube. This compulsive repeated use can interfere with their sleep patterns – leading to irritability – and distract them from other activities.

### TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.



### MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-18s will have their TikTok accounts set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.



### LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.



### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.



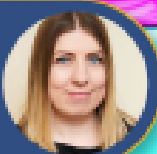
### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.



### Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



National  
Online  
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



This week at  
**Consett Academy**



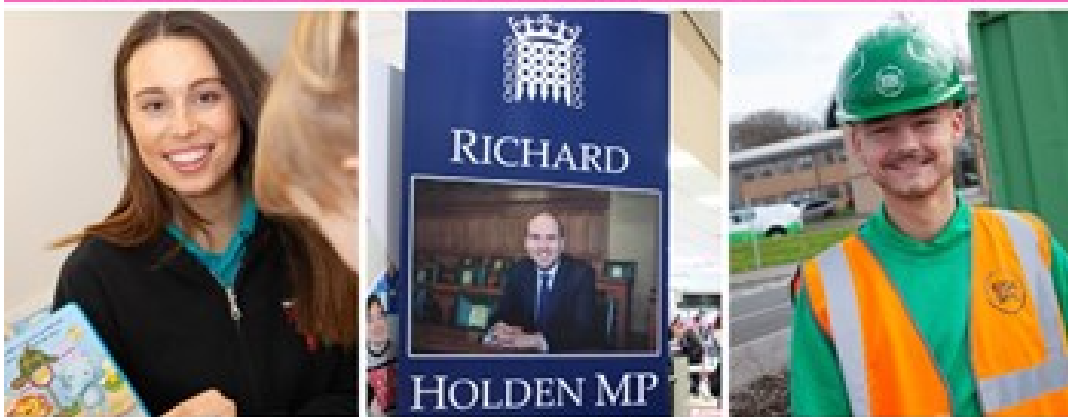
This afternoon, we have 160 Key Stage 4 students and several of our Sixth Form students visiting Derwentside College for their Apprenticeship Fair. We look forward to sharing what they found out about their next steps. Keep an eye on our social media and next week's newsletter to find out how they get on.

# Apprenticeship Jobs Fair

**Friday 10 February**  
**From 11am until 4pm**

At Derwentside College, Front Street, Consett, DH8 5EE

Join Richard Holden MP in  
Partnership with Derwentside College



**Come along and meet the businesses looking for your talent!**

Visit a range of fantastic employers from a wide range of sectors with Apprenticeship Job Opportunities including Engineering, Healthcare, Construction, Administration plus many more...



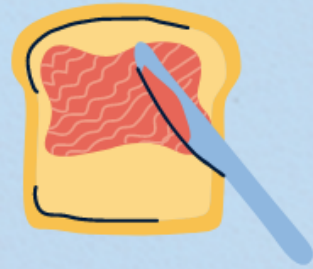
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# Breakfast Club

**Everyday  
8.00**

Consett Academy have partnered with Chartwells and the National School Breakfast Programme to provide a free breakfast for students



Students wishing to attend breakfast club can arrive from 8am at the main entrance.

Breakfast will be available from the main servery with a range of cereal, porridge and bagels provided free of charge!

**Free of  
charge!**