

Concerns Raised on some Apps available to Children

This is a gentle reminder for those who are not aware of the App called `Whisper`. I received an email through the E-safety Officer's Programme from one of our high schools -

I would like to draw your attention to concerns expressed by one of my student's mum about a new social media app called "Whisper". She told me that her daughter had uploaded it onto her phone and she had 5 contacts, all from older men. Mum admitted that the girl is naïve and had told them her age and where she lived. All the men sent messages asking for pictures of her in a bikini or less.

So what is Whisper?

Whisper is an anonymous social network that allows people to express themselves. If you have ever had something too intimate to share on traditional social networks, simply share it on Whisper! Connect with others with FREE private messaging and respond to other Whispers with your own anonymous Whispers. Discover Whispers from around the world and browse Whispers on topics that interest you most.

Safety tip: This app is scary since it promotes open sharing of secrets and then people can contact you to meetup. Be careful if your students have this app. The recommended age is 17

This is an American site but the video is very good at explaining what Whisper is all about <https://safesmartsocial.com/whisper-app-parents-guide-video/>

This is also another one that is on our radar

ICQ – A New App for free video call, chat and voice.

This is a new app with an age rating as low as 4 where young people can connect with almost anyone. The app boasts its 'very friendly video chat interface' and 'unlimited international chat rooms and channels.' While this app claims to have a secure network and manageable privacy features it also comes with its risks. You can video call using 'masks' where what you're seeing may not be who you're talking too, also the fact anyone from anywhere in the world could use this app to connect with your nearest and dearest and not always for the nicest of reasons.

NSPCC warns app labeled Tinder- teenagers are putting young people at risk:

- Adult users of Yellow can view child profiles just by changing date of birth
- Popular app where you 'swipe' for friends is branded 'Tinder for teenagers'
- Some young users claim that some 'young girl' profiles are also faked
- Tinder was forced to bring in an over-18 policy after children were abused

UPDATE: Tinder is no longer allowing users under 18 on the app.

Tinder is a FREE dating app that you can download for your phone, desktop and tablet. The app has two separate communities – one for 18+ and one for younger teens aged 13-17. When you set up a profile, [Tinder](#) automatically takes information based on your Facebook profile, including photos, date of birth and sex. Once your profile is set up, Tinder will then provide you with a list of relevant matches based on your profile, interests, mutual friends on Facebook, location, sex and selected age range. You can then either swipe right to make a match with another user, tap

his/her image to view more or swipe left to continue looking through potential matches.

Why is Tinder so popular?

The app currently has around **10 million daily users** and is becoming very popular with teens. The dating app, which is free to download, is really easy to use and there is very little effort required to set up your profile. Users simply swipe through images to view potential matches, and in one click they can indicate anonymously whether they are interested in another user or not.

How does it work?

To join Tinder you must have a Facebook account. The app uses information which is public from your Facebook profile to create your Tinder profile. Once set up, users can then choose to widen or limit the criteria for potential matches – you can adjust location (Tinder uses location technology to find other Tinder users near you), sex (Male or Female) and age range. Users can then browse, like or dismiss any potential matches. Tinder notifies users of matches when both users like each other's profiles. It then opens up a simple messaging option that allows users to chat, message, or share photos and videos with their matches. Tinder users aren't notified if another user isn't interested.

What parents need to know?

Many teens use Tinder for fun and have no intentions of meeting up with a potential match. However there are some risks of using the app that parents should be aware of.

Is there an age restriction on Tinder?

Yes, like most other social networks and apps, **users must be at least 13 years old.** The app uses your information from Facebook including date of birth to verify your age.

Can Teens Connect with Users over 18?

Users aged between 13 and 17 can see only other Tinder users within the same age group. Users over 18 can see only other users who are also over 18. Tinder identifies age based on the date of birth given on Facebook. **Parents should be aware, however, that there are fake profiles on Facebook and it is very easy for people to pretend to be someone else.** It's possible that your teen might end up matching with a person who is much older than he/she says he/she is!

Is it different from 18+ Tinder app?

Tinder for teens works in the same way the adult app does, however it separates the two communities. A person 18 years or older cannot see Tinder profiles of users aged 17 and under. Similarly teens can view only profiles within the 13-17 age group.

Privacy

Once you sign-up to Tinder, any Tinder user (within your community i.e. teens or 18+) that falls into your selected criteria can see your profile. It is a good idea to limit the amount of information you share on your profile or in one-on-one chats to ensure you avoid any potential risks. Unlike some Facebook apps, you'll see when signing up, **Tinder does not post to Facebook.** By default, the app is only visible to you on Facebook. If you are unsure about app settings, simply go to your profile settings on Facebook, click on app settings and select the Tinder app.