



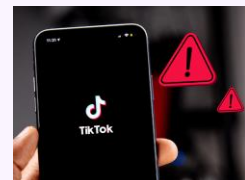
**At Summerhill School we are committed to Safeguarding our children and young people as well as promoting positive well-being for all.**

*This Safeguarding newsletter, aims to help staff, parents and students alike to be aware of the safeguarding and mental health issues, giving you useful links and resources to use if you have concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us on the main school number 01384 816165 or via email on [studentssupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:studentssupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk)*

## Explicit Images Trend on TikTok

There is a new trend circulating on TikTok this is known as the "Foopath" challenge. This involves users attempting to trick TikTok's moderation systems by flashing their bodies. This trend is encouraging users to upload "blink and you'll miss it" nudity. This aims to get around the platforms detection and moderation by being hidden in plain sight. Using screens, mirrors and other reflective surfaces are just some of the ways people have been taken part in the challenge. To encourage healthy discussion, try not to panic if they name the challenge. Be inquisitive, listen to what they say and remind them that even creating a reaction video or using the hashtag as clickbait still puts them at risk of unwanted contact from strangers or exposure to harmful content

For more information please follow this link - [Safeguarding Alert: Explicit Images Trend on TikTok - Safer Schools \(oursaferschools.co.uk\)](https://oursaferschools.co.uk)



## Roblox "Depression Rooms"

With 75% of children not receiving the mental health assistance they need, it is worrying that vulnerable children may be turning to these kinds of online communities for support and advice. Several of these depression room games on Roblox have up to 5.6 million visits and are advertised as being appropriate for 'all ages'. Despite being explicitly against the platform's Terms of Service, Roblox have failed to remove most of these harmful games from the platform at this time. The term 'depression room' is used to describe a game on Roblox that uses sad, melancholic themes to portray depression or suicide. Inside these 'rooms', players can act out depressive behaviours such as crying beside gravestones or sitting alone in dimly lit basements with their head bowed. Some games even allow players to simulate suicide by jumping off a bridge or performing self-harm via cutting with a table of knives, leaving the avatar bloodied and broken. Please read this link if you would like to know more [Safeguarding Update: 'Depression Rooms' on Roblox - Safer Schools \(oursaferschools.co.uk\)](https://oursaferschools.co.uk)



## 3 In 10 Girls Under 18 Have an Eating Disorder

Three in 10 girls under the age of 18 suffer from an eating disorder, a new large-scale study has found. The same study has revealed that one in six boys face an eating disorder, while one in five (22%) of children overall suffer from conditions such as anorexia, bulimia and other extreme dieting behaviour. Scientists looked at data from 32 studies involving more than 63,000 participants aged between seven and 18 in 16 different countries, including the UK. If you like to read more on this please follow this link [30% of girls under 18 have an eating disorder, study finds \(yahoo.com\)](https://www.yahoo.com)



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# NGL

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NGL (which stands for 'Not Gonna Lie') is an app through which users share a link to their Instagram story or Twitter account, inviting their followers to give anonymous feedback. The app includes some prewritten questions (such as 'if you could change anything about me, what would it be?'), plus the option to ask followers to simply 'send me anonymous messages'. All replies go into the user's NGL inbox, with the sender remaining anonymous – although subscribers to the app can receive hints about who each message was from.

## ANONYMITY AND OVERSHARING

Anonymous messaging gives rise to the 'online disinhibition effect', which causes users to feel detached from their words and actions in the digital world. This can make young people in particular (as they tend to act more impulsively online) far more likely to disclose personal information on the internet, as well as making ill-advised confessions or revealing their fears and insecurities.

## PROTECTION FOR BULLIES

Having their identity hidden makes bullies feel safe from repercussions, so anonymous chat sites are a major avenue for cyberbullying. NGL claims to use AI to filter out insulting terms, but our expert sent a range of such phrases (starting with 'cow' and 'ugly', and becoming progressively more offensive) to a 'dummy' account. All of these trial messages were delivered to the recipient's inbox.

## COSTLY SUBSCRIPTIONS

NGL offers a subscription where – for a weekly fee – users can unlock hints about who's been messaging them, including the sender's approximate location and which device they used. Young people will naturally be extremely curious about who sent which message (especially if they have a lot of Instagram or Twitter followers) and may be unable to resist spending money to find out.

## INFLATED ENGAGEMENT

In June 2022, NGL had to revise its terms of service: informing users if a message was sent by the app's developers as opposed to genuine followers. It emerged that, previously, NGL's makers had attempted to boost engagement with the app (as well as enticing users to pay for subscriptions) by sending fake anonymous messages from bots. This update was rolled out very quietly by the team.

## QUESTIONABLE SUPPORT

NGL does have a 'report this message' button for users to flag upsetting content. After sending a message, however, an automated reply arrives stating "...NGL is 100% anonymous and we have no way of knowing the identity of the user and would not be able to find out, even if we tried." This did not fill our expert with confidence that the app can address bad behaviour adequately.

## ACCIDENTALLY GOING VIRAL

The messages on NGL itself are anonymous, but users can share these messages via their Instagram story or Twitter feed – enabling all their followers (or anyone, if their accounts are set to 'public') to see them. If a young person has disclosed something embarrassing or identifiable on NGL without realising, this information has the potential to be re-shared very quickly to a far wider audience.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DEALING WITH NEGATIVITY

Blocking another user on NGL will prevent them sending anonymous messages to your child in the short term – although a determined abuser could get around that obstacle simply by setting up a new Instagram account. If your child continually receives negative messages that upset them, it might be worth encouraging them to consider whether they really need to use the app at all.

### BLOCK IN-APP PURCHASES

To avoid your child running up an eye-watering bill through an NGL subscription (or indeed any kind of costly in-app purchases), go into the settings on whatever devices they use to go online and either disable the ability to make purchases or protect that function with a password. If those options aren't available, it's prudent to ensure there aren't any payment methods linked to their account.

### EXPLAIN ANONYMOUS APPS

We understand that a conversation with your child about the risks of anonymous messaging may seem difficult to initiate (especially if you aren't that comfortable with using social media yourself). It is vital, however, that young people understand that, for some people, having their identity obscured online can make them feel more powerful and less accountable for their actions.

### THINK BEFORE SENDING

Regardless of whether a messaging app is anonymous or not, it's a good idea to regularly talk to your child about how it's wise to think through what they're sharing before they post it. Emphasise that nothing is truly private once it's online. If the post is something your child might hesitate to say to someone face to face, then it's probably not the sort of thing they should be writing online either.