

# Know! The TikTok Challenges Continue On

In the previous Know! Tip, we shared information regarding the TikTok “Bathroom Challenge,” where students record themselves vandalizing and destroying school bathrooms and then post their so-called “devious licks” on the popular social media site for all to see.

School officials nationwide have since learned that the Bathroom Challenge is just one of many challenges on a long list that encourages students to behave badly. In fact, a school-year schedule is (and has been) circulating with a new TikTok challenge for each month.

Once again, parents and other adult allies are being asked to talk with their students to discourage them from participating in these destructive acts and warn them of the consequences should they choose to take part.

“Not only will a student’s participation in any of these activities result in school discipline, but they will also face the potential legal consequences of their actions. For those that entail the theft and destruction of property, families will be held responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement of any property that is damaged or stolen,” said Westerville (Ohio) City Schools Superintendent John R. Kellogg.

School officials are also asking for parents and caregivers to encourage their students to do the right thing by notifying school officials if they learn of anyone who has participated or is planning to participate in any of these challenges.

For key information on what to share with your children, please refer to our previous tip.

Even when we know what to say, it isn’t always easy to get young people to listen or to engage in conversation with us. So here are a few additional tips to help open the lines of communication with youth and keep them talking. (Adapted from the Child Mind Institute.)

- Pose an open-ended question, then listen carefully: Regarding this topic, you can start by asking what your child knows about the year-long list of “devious lick challenges,” then sit back and listen. Keep in mind that you’re likely to hear far more if you show that you’re open and interested but not prying for answers.
- Keep your cool: While you don’t have to be void of emotion, it’s important you keep your cool even if you don’t completely agree with what your child is saying. If you get too worked up, or your child feels like they are being harshly judged, they will either censor their comments or simply shut down altogether.

- Don't be a dictator: Young people need to know what is expected of them with clarity; however, they do not need a dictator to get the point across. Remember, the way you say it can be just as important as what you say.
- Give praise: Let them know that you appreciate them talking to you and maybe even educating YOU on the topic.

Once again, awareness and conversation are key. It would be naive for us to think we can stay a step ahead of all the internet challenges or other opportunities that encourage risky choices for our youth. Instead, we can set clear expectations for their behavior, encourage healthy, positive choices and keep the conversation ongoing.

Sources:

Child Mind Institute, Rachel Ehmke - Tips for Communicating With Your Teen.

Westerville City School District, Superintendent John R. Kellogg, Letter to CSD Families, Sept. 30, 2021.