

Classroom CONNECTIONS

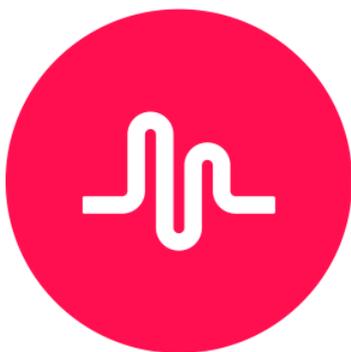
Trending App: Musical.ly

T3, 2016

Musical.ly is one of the hottest trending apps at the moment for tweens and teens. This app, built on a social media platform and free for users, is ideal for creating and sharing short videos. Musical.ly is a video community that makes it easy and fun to create amazing videos and share them with your followers.

Highlights of musical.ly include:

- Shoot, save and share short videos up to 15 seconds long.
- Create lip sync videos to your favourite songs.
- Edit videos with creative effects and filters such as slow motion, time lapse, reverse and hyper speed.
- Collaborate with others from around the world with the unique duet function.
- Share videos directly to other social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vine.
- Discover others brilliant videos created by the musical.ly community.



musical.ly

Although it can appear to be an innocent app, parents do need to be aware that some music videos have inappropriate language as well as suggestive gestures and dancing that they may consider to be unsuitable.

This app is intended for youth over the age of 13, based on content warnings as a lot of the available music and sound bites can contain adult language and innuendo as you hear on the radio. However, when used as it should be (and with parents using it with younger children or at least within eye/earshot), this app can be great for kids as it is easy to use and allows the creative juices to really flow.

Kids select snippets of popular songs and record themselves lip-synching or dancing. Once they have finished recording they can add effects and filters and share them with other “musers”, as well as across other popular social networks.

What parents need to know:

- Accounts are public by default; this means anyone can see their video and anyone can follow them.
- For the highest protection, set the account to private, so that your ‘muser’ can approve every follower and only their followers can see their music videos.
- Once shared, muser-generated videos can be viewed and shared on other social media and messaging apps. This means they may lose control of who sees their video.
- Ensure security settings are enabled and ‘hide location’ has been fixed. This means other musers cannot search for them and they are not identifying their location via GPS.
- Be attentive to the information shared i.e. school or sports uniform, location signs, etc.

On a positive note, musical.ly does promote itself as a fun and safe community. It encourages all interactions to be encouraging as an avenue for creative self-expression, and prides itself on having a positive, passionate and fun community. Millions of users around the world are using the app every day as creative outlet to express themselves. In June 2016, musical.ly released its breakout livestreaming platform live.ly, providing its community with a broader canvas on which to express themselves.

However, as with any social networking platform there is the risk of inappropriate conduct, communication and/or content. The app is very user friendly and reporting unacceptable use or blocking users is straight forward. To block a user/fan, go to their profile, press on the “...” in the upper right corner, and select ‘block this user’. You can unblock a user on the same menu. In the unfortunate event that you need to report abuse, click on the three dots (bottom right) of the music clip and select “report abuse”; you will then be asked to select a reason from the menu. Parents can go to <http://musicallyapp.tumblr.com> or <https://esafety.gov.au> for further information.

As is similar with other social networks, this app also uses hashtags which are an efficient method to find content related to specific topics, as well as the people talking about those topics. The easiest way for a musers to increase their chance of having a featured video is to check the trending hashtags and the discover screen and create great, creative musicals using those hashtags. Users need to be aware that once they start using hashtags their

videos are searchable on the public platform, meaning they have forfeited their privacy protection.

Regrettably, some hashtags can take musers on a digital journey they may not wish to make; some adult content has been found on the site. This is disappointing as the site strives for a positive community, yet it is a reminder that we must have conversations with our children about what they can do if they mistakenly come across content that makes them feel uncomfortable. Talking to a trusted adult, making a report and blocking a user can go a long way in empowering them to use the app as safely as possible.

Make a plan – don’t ban!

Musical.ly is an awesome app so it’s no wonder that kids love it. The musical.ly iPhone app delivers an instant video experience that lets users take part in contests, follow power users, musicians and celebrities as a way to get started. If your child is the type of person who likes to win and compete in challenges, then they will enjoy this app. There is a rotating list of trending topics that they can compete in and official musical.ly challenges that allow them to show their talent within a focused topic.

Technology is an intricate part of life today and there is a lot of benefit to its use. As a parent it is important to make a plan with them on acceptable use and what you expect around their behaviours when they engage with others. Children’s access to technology often presents opportunities for learning, collaborating with others and expressing their creativity.