



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONNECTICUT

WILLIAM TONG
ATTORNEY GENERAL

October 4, 2021

By Email

Mr. Shou Zi Chew
Chief Executive Officer
TikTok
5800 Bristol Parkway, Suite 100
Culver City, California 90230

Re: *TikTok "Devious Licks"*

Dear Mr. Chew:

As both a concerned parent and Connecticut's chief civil law enforcement officer, I write to request a meeting with you regarding the harmful impact TikTok is having on the mental health and physical safety of young people in Connecticut.

Last month, New Britain High School temporarily closed due to unprecedented vandalism and behavior challenges, which school leaders attributed in part to the viral "Devious Licks" TikTok challenge. Educators across Connecticut have reported stolen school property, clogged toilets, and excessive vandalism believed to be associated with the "Devious Licks" challenge. Now, there is new concern that a viral "Slap a Teacher" may be putting educators at risk. Families and educators are already coping with the unprecedented social and emotional fallout of the pandemic. The last thing anyone needs right now is for children to be inundated by targeted social media encouraging lawlessness, self-harm and reckless, dangerous pranks.

I appreciate that TikTok has taken steps to identify and remove "Devious Licks" content from its platform. That is a welcome and positive step. But it should not take a nationwide school vandalism spree for TikTok to act. As many others have noted, the "Devious Licks" challenge was far from the first viral challenge with harm to the safety and wellbeing of TikTok's young users. Viral TikTok videos have resulted in youth overdosing on medications, disfiguring their bodies, and engaging in a wide variety of physically dangerous acts. With new reports of the "Slap a Teacher" challenge, it is clear that TikTok is unable to control the spread of harmful content.

Simply put, whatever TikTok has been doing to enforce its terms of service has not been working and merits serious review and reform. I ask that you share a detailed description of all policies and procedures in place to prevent against abuse and misuse of your platform. I further urge your company to thoroughly analyze why these measures have been inadequate to date, and ask that you

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publicly commit to any necessary changes to eliminate whatever flaws or loopholes exist that have enabled these harmful trends to spread on TikTok. I respectfully request that you come to Connecticut to meet parents, educators, and myself to hear firsthand the impact your business has had on our communities, and to share with us what more you will do to protect our youth.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Tong", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

WILLIAM TONG