



Snapchat – A guide for parents and carers.

WHAT IS SNAPCHAT?

Snapchat is a popular social media-messaging app that allows you to send and receive pictures and videos (called Snaps) to users. Snap Inc is the developer of the app and creates other products such as Snapchat Spectacles.

It is available for both Android and iOS users and is free to download. However, there is a premium subscription to the app also available for purchase called Snapchat+.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It was initially a private photo-sharing app. However, Snapchat features now include short videos, video chat, messaging, photo storage, generative AI and more.

Each Snap shared with your followers is **temporary and is available for 24 hours** unless you delete it or set a different limit. You can also add different filters, lenses, emojis and text to your Snap. Additionally, you can create a group chat to talk with friends or message individual friends.

HOW OLD DO I NEED TO BE?

Like many other social networks, the minimum age to use Snapchat is **13 years old**.

- Users aged 13-17 have additional privacy settings.
- Age verification is limited, relying on self-reporting.

However, it is incredibly easy for a child to circumvent the Snapchat age limit by using a fake date of birth. Snapchat does not have the means to verify their identity or their age, so fooling the app is a breeze. Parents should monitor their child's usage to ensure safety.

WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

NSPCC - Click [HERE](#)

Internet Matters - Click [HERE](#)

Advice from Snapchat - Click [HERE](#)

Snapchat allows users to report harmful content. Below is a chart which shows the type of incident that was reported in a 6-month period in 2023. From 1 January - 30 June 2023, Snap enforced against 6,216,118 (out of 17,267,985) pieces of content globally that violated their policies.

Reason	Content & Account Reports
Sexual Content	5,843,879
Harassment and Bullying	6,645,969
Threats and Violence	615,011
Self-harm and Suicide	122,369
False Information	387,242
Impersonation	521,168

Reason	Content & Account Reports
Spam	1,924,768
Drugs	642,421
Weapons	81,223
Other Regulated Goods	216,562
Hate Speech	267,373

IS SNAPCHAT SAFE?

PROS	RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of ways to connect with friends • Creative tools to have fun with friends such as different filters, AI and more • Messaging features to help some teens develop social skills or find connection with others. This is especially beneficial for children who have additional learning needs such as autism and may struggle to communicate offline • A creative outlet to show off their personality and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snapchat does not save pictures and messages sent so you can see them later. Therefore, it is very hard for parents to monitor their teen's activity on Snapchat. • Contact from potentially harmful strangers • Seeing inappropriate content • Endless scrolling (or 'doom scrolling') • bullying, harassment or hate from both friends and strangers • Disappearing messages, which can make it hard to collect evidence in cases of bullying or similar behaviours. • Because of the lower risks of having a photo eventually making the rounds of the Internet, it is also tempting for teens to use Snapchat for sexting. Snapchat itself admits that up to 25% of users may send sensitive content on a regular basis "experimentally." • According to a study by the Cyberbullying Research Centre, 22% of teens surveyed reported sending nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves via Snapchat. • Geolocation: Snapchat's Snap Map feature can reveal a user's precise location to friends or even strangers if the user has not set the appropriate privacy settings. This can put children at risk of physical harm, stalking, or cyberbullying.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snapchat has the "alert" screenshot function, so they will know if someone has taken a screenshot. However, there is nothing to stop a viewer from taking a picture of the screen using another device. Therefore, the moment that disappears from the screen is now a permanent part of someone else's image library. |
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What safety features are available on Snapchat?

Family centre

Snapchat's new family centre gives you an overview of your child's activity on the app. By linking your account to your child's, you can see a list of their friends and who they have contacted in the last seven days – but not the content of those messages. Family centre also gives you access to a confidential reporting service that allows you to report any concerns directly to Snapchat's Trust and Safety team.

Ghost mode

Enabling this will stop other users from seeing your child's location. To edit location settings, go to the cog button in the right-hand corner of the screen. Then enable 'Ghost mode' and select 'until switched off' to make sure it stays enabled.

Limit contact from adult users

Snapchat has introduced restrictions to help limit unwanted contact from adults. Adults will not be allowed to add young people who are 17 and under unless they have a certain number of friends in common. This won't stop all contact from adults, but it will help to limit it.

Privacy settings

There are different privacy settings available that will help to limit who can see your child's account and contact them. Who can contact me – This lets you manage who can contact your child. Who can view my story – Here you can block specific people from viewing their story. To explore the different privacy settings available, select the cog in the right-hand side of the screen and select 'Privacy'.

Default chat functions

By default, you can't chat to someone on Snapchat unless you are friends. Make sure to speak to your child about who they accept friend requests from.