

SNAPCHAT:

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Snapchat is an instant messaging app that allows users to send images, videos and texts to people in their friends list. Snapchat is unique in that it is designed to make images and messages disappear after 24 hours, though there are techniques to get around this by taking pictures of the user's screen.

What are the risks?

Connecting with Strangers

Anyone can send a friend request on Snapchat.

It is very difficult to verify their identity.

If your child accepts a friend request, that user can get access to their personal information

Artificial Intelligence

My AI is Snapchat's AI-powered chatbot.

It has been known to give biased, misleading or outright incorrect answers.

There have been reports of young people using AI to ask medical questions.

Inappropriate Content

Many photos and videos on Snapchat are inappropriate for children.

Disappearing messages make it easier for young people to post explicit images and messages on impulse

Visible Location

Snap Map highlights the exact position of a device using Snapchat on a virtual map.

This could be used for sinister reasons if your child hasn't been careful about who they add

Online Pressures

Snapchat lets users filter pictures

Some of these filters are funny and amusing, but some can create unrealistic beauty standards.

Excessive Use

Snapchat works hard to maximise user engagement.

Snapchat Streaks and spotlight challenges keep users glued to their screens as long as possible

So how do I keep my child safe?

Turn off Quick Add

The Quick Add feature helps users discover others based on mutual friends. This makes your child's profile visible to other users. It is recommended that it be turned off in the settings menu.

Choose good connections

Snapchat sends notifications to users reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well and encourages them to delete connections with users with whom they rarely communicate.

Keep accounts private

Ensure your child's account has proper privacy settings enabled, including "Ghost Mode" to prevent their location being broadcast on Snap Map

Chat about content

Though it may feel awkward, it's important to talk to your child about concepts such as sexting, without judgement. Remind them that once something is posted online, the creator loses control over where it ends up (and who sees it).

Talk about AI

Encourage your child to think critically about any response they receive from an AI and remind them that chatting with an AI should never replace interaction with real people.

Be ready to Block and Report

Encourage your child to block and/or report anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable through bullying or pressure to send and receive inappropriate content.