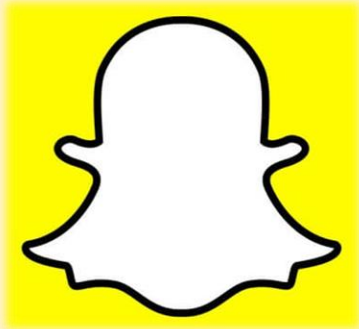# Online Safety 4 Schools

Online Safety 4 Schools

Snapchat
Parents - everything you need to know about the popular photo, video, audio, and live messaging app

What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is now among the topmost used apps for children. **The photo and video messaging app** can be a lot of fun for friends, but it also has the potential to be extremely risky. Snapchat can provide a false sense of internet security among young users and is constantly making headlines as it is used by online predators. Snapchat has also been linked to privacy issues, addiction, depression, bullying, and even suicide.

- Snapchat is a popular photo, video, audio, and live messaging app
- The app is popular because of the private messaging feature that allows users to send private video, audio, or photos to one another that "disappear" after being viewed
- Posts made on the app are called "Snaps." Snaps can be sent to a user's Story, to their friends in one-on-one chats, or to group chats
- Snapchat is known for its filters which create effects over photos or videos. The most popular filters change the user's appearance
- The app is made up of these features: Map, Chat, Camera, Stories, and Spotlight

Who is Snapchat for ?

- **Snapchat says no one under 13 is allowed to create an account**
- AppStore: 12+
- Google Play: T for Teen

Why should parents care?

- The app is extremely popular with children
- Snapchat is highly addictive, especially with the 'Snapstreak' feature that encourages users to Snap with their friends often
- There are many reports of predators using Snapchat (and the 'Snapmap' feature) to target and solicit minors in person, in real-time
- Due to Snapchat saying that Snaps are temporary, many new 'young' users might post riskier content on Snapchat than on other social networks
- Content in the Discover feed can be inappropriate for all users especially young users

- The temporary nature of Snapchat messages could lead some users to get into hot water for sending 'sexts' or sexually suggestive images and text messages
- The Snapchat Quick Add option will automatically suggest some people to you, usually based on the number of common friends or similar metrics, this option is something like Snapchat's version of Facebook's 'People You May Know' feature (possible 'Stranger Danger')

What can parents do?

- Before giving your child access to an app, download it, spend some time using it, then determine if the app is safe for your child & family
- Spend time on understanding the app settings with your child to help them understand safety issues and long-term consequences of who sees what they are sharing
- Have regular discussions with your children about what they are seeing and who they are interacting with on Snapchat
- Remind your children that their online activity (even Snapchat posts that will disappear) can impact their reputation & digital tattoo
- Ensure your child that they can always talk with a trusted adult (like you, a teacher or trusted family adult)) if they see something on Snapchat that makes them feel uncomfortable

Conclusion

Snapchat can be fun for students if they are using it responsibly. Parents should stay vigilant and closely monitor exactly what their kids are doing on Snapchat to help keep them safe.

If a Parent/Carer decides to allow their Un 13 Child to use Snapchat (NOT ADVISABLE)

- If you and your Un 13 child decide to use Snapchat, then make sure you know and always know your childs profile name, password etc. This allows you to have control and allows for periodic checking of your childs use of Snapchat, their contacts, and closed groups.
- Create the profile together and keep the log in details secret. Social Media, Gaming and App usage is not a right it is a privilege, so children (especially those under 13) should earn the right to spend time with their parents using Snapchat, stay in control and share the experience.