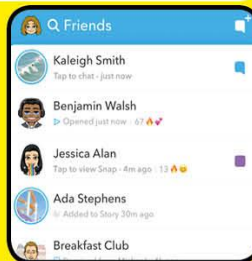
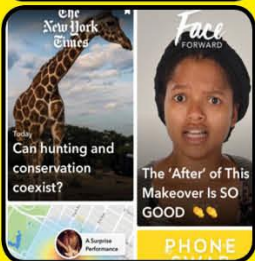


Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images, videos and chat with friends. Users can share images and videos directly to specific friends, or through a 'story' shared with their entire friend list, which documents the last 24 hours. In a study, Snapchat was ranked the 4th most negative app in terms of having an impact on young people's health and wellbeing, with children feeling that they can use the app Snapchat to "make you look pretty".



What parents need to know about SNAPCHAT



EXPOSING YOUR CHILD'S EXACT LOCATION

The 'Snap Map' lets you share your EXACT location in real-time through a map on the app. The users location updates when the app has been opened on the device. There is a warning on the Snapchat website about uploading images and videos to 'Our Story', stating that "Snaps you submit to Our Story can still show up on the Map, no matter what location setting you choose!". When uploading to Our Story, you child's image or video could appear in "Search results and Stories on or off Snapchat - today or in the future".

SCREENSHOTS & SAVED MESSAGES

While Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and text disappear eventually, users still have the capability to screenshot or record what has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is a possibility in the app and send a compromising image or message to somebody that they think they trust. They may also accidentally send an image or message to somebody who they do not trust. Simply by pressing and holding a message, allows the user to save a message they have received, which can be screenshotted or used against them at a later date.

SEXTING

Due to 'Snaps' disappearing, (users can even send a one second photo or video), Snapchat has become the chosen platform for children and young people to send sexually explicit images or 'selfies'. Once a photo/video has been screenshotted, or recorded using another device or software, this can lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves. However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed, but taking formal action isn't in the public interest.



SNAPSTREAKS & ADDICTION

'Snap Streaks' are gained when snaps have been sent back and forth consecutively between friends. The longer that Snaps are sent between users, the longer the streak becomes. Furthermore, Snapchat rewards users who have achieved high Snap Streaks, by gifting emojis, adding incentives for users to keep the streaks. Children invest time into making their streaks as high as possible: this can put an incredible amount of pressure on children and their friendships to make sure their streaks are continued.

LENS EXPLORER

The Lens Studio on Snapchat gives users the freedom to use their imagination to design their own filters for themselves and others to use. Snapchat states that the lenses users create "must comply with our Lens Studio Submission Guidelines and Community Guidelines and must be appropriate for Snappers ages 13+." The Lens Explorer in the app now allows users to choose from thousands of these creations to alter their snaps. Anyone can create a Lens for Snapchat, which opens opportunities for age-inappropriate content to be uploaded.

NOS National Online Safety



Top Tips for Parents



DISCUSS THE RISKS OF SEXTING

It can be slightly awkward talking about this topic with your child, but if it helps them protect themselves, then it is worth it. Talk to them about the consequences of sexting and make sure that they're aware of the risks. Ensure your child knows that 'Snaps' can be screenshotted. Teach them that if they post anything potentially embarrassing or harmful (either of themselves or someone else) it can have severe consequences; the message, image or video can be shared further.

USE 'GHOST MODE'

We highly recommend enabling Ghost Mode on the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map'. To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, change the setting to 'Ghost Mode'.

RESTRICT STORY VIEWS

Your child can add videos and images to their 'Story' throughout the day which will last for 24 hours. By default, anyone in a users friends list can see their story. We recommend checking the privacy settings to ensure that this has not been edited. This can simply be done in the apps settings under the 'Who Can View My Story' section. The options to choose from are 'My Friends', 'Everyone' or 'Custom' - we suggest that it is set to 'My Friends'.

REPORTING A STORY, LENS, FILTER, SNAP OR MESSAGE

If your child comes across inappropriate Snapchat content, which may be sent directly to them or in another person's story, advise them to report it immediately. This may include an inappropriate lens, filter, message or Snap. To report an offensive lens, they should open the app and select the lens they want to report. An info button will appear above the lens. Click this, followed by the flag icon. This will send a report to Snapchat for further investigation. Reports can also be made on the Snapchat support website: support.snapchat.com.

HOW TO DELETE A MESSAGE

Advise your child never to send any negative messages (or images through gallery in the chat on the app) as screenshots can still be taken. You should also advise your child to screenshot any negative comments that they receive as the sender can also delete them. To delete a message, simply press and hold the sent message and press delete.

TURN OFF 'QUICK ADD'

'Quick add' helps friends find each other on the app. This is based on mutual friends or if their number is in their phone book. Explain to your child that if this feature can open up their profile to strangers. We highly recommend that your child turns off the 'Quick Add' feature. This can be done in the settings.

