

What parents and carers need to know about Snapchat

When Snapchat's number of active users plateaued at around the 180 million mark for the majority of 2018, many observers surmised that the platform had become 'old hat' in the eyes of its younger fan-base. A continuous (and lockdown-abetted) recovery since then, however, has proved that reports of the app's demise had been greatly exaggerated.

Snapchat's willingness to move with the times, strategically adding new features such as Spotlight and Snap Map, has kept it relevant and appealing. Each fresh tweak, however, provides potential scope for new harms – whether deliberately or accidentally inflicted. This week's #WakeUpWednesday guide focuses its discerning lens onto Snapchat.

Almost two thirds (63%, to be exact) of Snapchat users check the app at least once every day, while almost half (49%) log in more than once – with an average stay on the app of around 30 minutes. Such repetition hints at compulsive behaviour, but potential addiction isn't the only online safety risk associated with the popular image- and video-sharing platform.

Snapchat has previously faced criticism over the many 'beautifying' filters and effects which have been linked to self-esteem and body-image issues – while the fact that messages can be set to automatically delete is seen in some quarters as facilitating sexting. Our #WakeUpWednesday this week has all the essential information that parents and carers need about Snapchat.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SNAPCHAT 13+

Snapchat is a photo- and video-sharing app which allows users to chat with friends via text or audio. Users can share images and videos with friends (or through a story, (disappearing like previous 24 hours) visible to the entire friend list). Snapchat usage rose during the pandemic, with many young people turning to the app to connect with their peers. The app continues to develop features to engage with a larger audience and emulate current trends, rivaling platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS
Even if your child only connects to the app with people they know, they may encounter strangers. Snapchat has a 'Discover' section which contains sponsored content, and users can connect with strangers through the app. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

SEXING
Sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat. The app's disappearing messages feature makes it easy for young people to send and receive explicit content. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE
Snapchat's filters and lenses can be used to create a false image of oneself. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

VISIBLE LOCATION
My Places lets users check in and share their location with their friends. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD
The Quick Add function helps people find each other on the app. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS
Snapchat has recently announced that it is rolling out a new safety feature which allows users to choose who they can connect with. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

TALK ABOUT SEXING
If your child is using the app to connect with strangers, it is important to talk to them about sexting. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE
Snapchat has a 'Privacy' section which contains information about how to keep accounts private. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT
If your child is using the app to connect with strangers, it is important to be ready to block and report them. Snapchat has a 'Safety' section which contains information about sexting and how to report it. Snapchat also has a 'Snap Map' feature which allows users to see the location of their friends and other users. This can be a risk if your child is using the app to connect with strangers.

Meet Our Expert
Dr Claire Sutcliffe is a senior safety consultant, author and speaker. She has been involved in many campaigns to raise awareness of online safety. She is also a member of the National Online Safety Advisory Board. She can be contacted via email at claire@nationalonlinesafety.com or via Twitter at [clairesutcliffe](https://twitter.com/clairesutcliffe).

National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

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Version of this guide as of 15th March 2023. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 05.03.2023