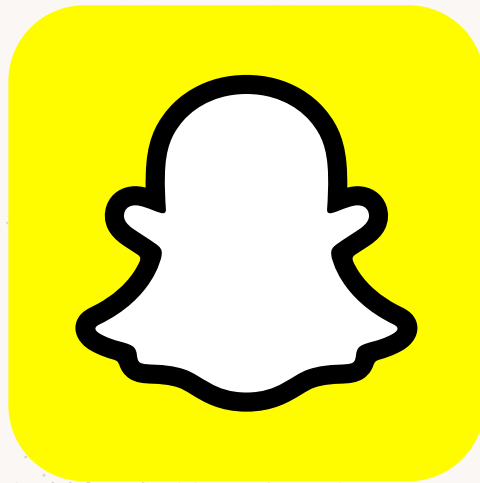


ScreenSafe
Supporting Schools and
Parents

A Focus On



**Snapchat
How Does It
Really Work?**



ScreenSafe
Social Media & Online Safety for
Parents, Children and Schools

I Snapchat isn't new, but it's definitely not slowing down in popularity with children and teens. The features change constantly, the risks evolve quickly, and it's one of the hardest platforms for parents to get visibility on.

None of this means your child is "bad" or "doing something wrong" – it just means we need to understand how the app really works to be able to make the best decisions and support our children.

Here are the key things every parent should be aware of:

Age Rating 13+

It's important to remember that this is the minimum age recommended for this platform. This is due to companies being able to use and sell your child's data to other companies for marketing and advertising.

It is nothing to do with the content being age appropriate or 'safe' for a 13 year old.

Snap Map

This lets children share their live location with friends... and sometimes strangers. Kids often add "mutuals" – friends of friends – without realising the risk.

Your child can share their Snapchat stories publicly and see those of complete strangers on a real-time map,

Why it matters:

Location-sharing is one of the biggest safety concerns. Make sure your child is using Ghost Mode only where they select who can see their location and that is ok to be nobody! Kids and teens feel immense pressure to be 'tracking' each other 24/7 which is unhealthy and causes lots of arguments, upset and anxiety at being left out or the fear of not knowing where someone is all the time!



Drug Dealers Target Kids on Snapchat

It's not dramatic – it's happening, everywhere, including at a school near you. Dealers use emojis, disappearing chats and the "quick delivery" culture of the app. There have been tragic cases where children have been given substances laced with lethal substances.

Why it matters:

Children don't need to go looking for danger – danger often comes to them and these individuals know how to build trust and connection with young people.

FOMO & Friendship Drama (Fear Of Missing Out)

Snap Map and streaks ramp up social pressure. Children can see – in real time – when friends are out without them. It hits self-esteem hard.

Why it matters:

Emotional safety is as important as physical safety. FOMO can quickly turn into anxiety, overthinking and feeling "not good enough."

My AI (Snapchat's Chatbot)

Snapchat rolled this out without warning parents. Kids can ask it about anything, and testers have shown it will discuss sexual topics, alcohol, lying to parents and more.

Why it matters:

AI feels "friendly" and children trust it far more than we think. Chatbots can feel very real and emotional connections can build quickly from children.

Inappropriate Content

The Discover page leads to adult content, sexualised themes and TV clips that are absolutely not suitable for young users. Controls don't reliably block it.

Why it matters:

Even responsible children can stumble into content that is too mature, too graphic or too emotionally overwhelming. You cannot hide this content or make it 'age appropriate'

“My Eyes Only” – Snapchat’s Hidden Vault


A locked, encrypted photo vault inside the app. Even if you know their Snapchat password, you won't see what's inside unless you know the separate passcode. Try and reset the password and it will delete everything in that folder before you get access! That says a lot about this platform!

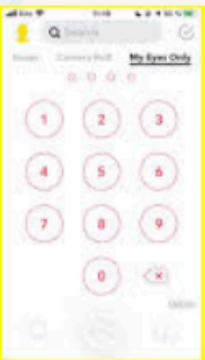
Why it matters:

Secrecy online is a breeding ground for risk. Predators encourage children to use this feature and it's 'extra secret' features can encourage children and teens to create and share more risky or inappropriate content.

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**MOVE
SNAPS TO
MY EYES ONLY**






My Eyes Only is for Snaps that you want to keep extra private!

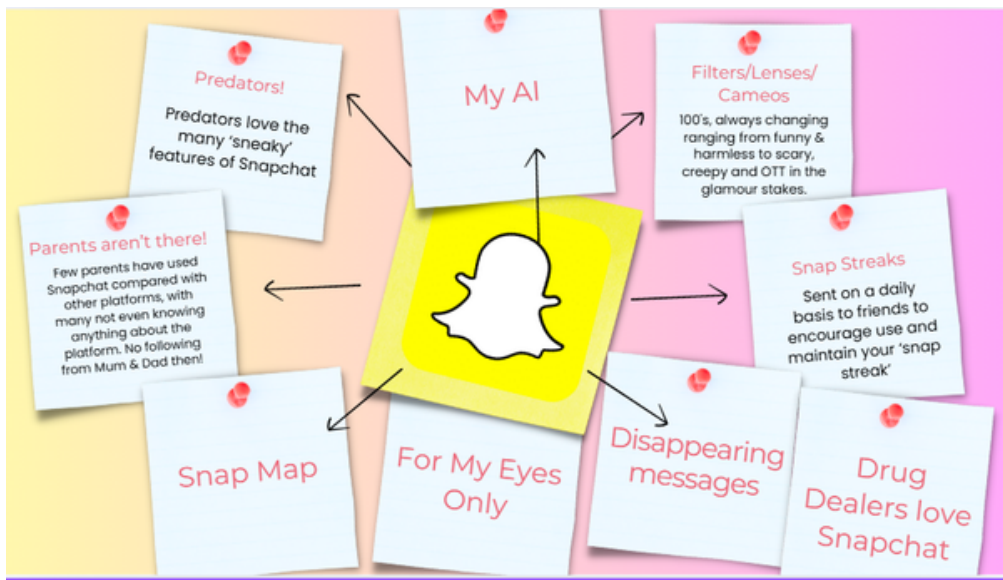
After you move Snaps and Stories from your Memories to My Eyes Only, you'll need to enter your My Eyes Only passcode to see them again 🗝️

If you don't remember your current My Eyes Only passcode, follow these steps to create a new one.
Acknowledge that creating a new passcode will delete all Snaps in My Eyes Only and tap 'Continue'

I lost Snaps I had saved to My Eyes Only after I reset my passcode.
My Eyes Only adds an extra layer of protection to Snaps you want to keep private. Unfortunately, this means that when you reset your forgotten My Eyes Only passcode, Snaps saved with your former passcode are deleted.

To respect your privacy, Snapchat Support cannot recover forgotten My Eyes Only passcodes or deleted Snaps for you.





In Summary

It is very difficult (I would go as far to say impossible) to truly monitor your child's activity on Snapchat. Messages and photos disappear once they have been opened which means image sharing, bullying and inappropriate or dangerous conversations are hard to see or track.

Due to all of the above points I would strongly recommend delaying access to this platform for as long as possible and definitely would not advise access before 13.

As and when the time comes when you think you may give your child access to Snapchat, or any social media platform, I would recommend setting up an account yourself first, as a 13 year old, and understand how it works, what type of content they will see and how it could impact their mental wellbeing.

The algorithm, combined with what children and teens search for and send each other makes their experience on these platforms *very different* to ours.

This all comes from a place of no judgement (I gave my daughter Snapchat when she was 11! - It was a steep learning curve!) I wish I had known what I know now and that is why I want to share this with as many parents and carers as possible.

Thank you

Anna

Hi, I'm Anna!

founder of Screen-Safe I'm an Online Safety Expert, Mum of two teens, CEOP Education Ambassador and Governor at a High School in Leeds.

I help parents, carers, schools, and professionals keep children safer in today's digital world and in the future.

I know how tough it can feel to keep up, the guilt, pressure and worry many parents and carers feel around this topic and I see first-hand how challenging this is for schools and families to balance.

From upskilling staff, educating parents and supporting children, I'm passionate about protecting children's mental wellbeing while building their digital resilience.

Through Screen-Safe, I give families and schools the tools, confidence and language they need to navigate social media, gaming, grooming, sextortion, screen time, cyberbullying, AI and how and when to have the more challenging or sensitive conversations. No topic, risk or behaviour is left out!

For us to truly be able to protect our children online and support them through the different ages it is crucial that we understand the real risks, threats and pressures children are facing and experiencing online today, so we can act with confidence and clarity, rather than in fear or panic.


If you'd like to find out more or see how I can support you then I'd love to chat.



Scan here to sign up for my newsletter and receive more tips and support to keep your child safer online



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 www.screen-safe.co.uk