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Online Safety Newsletter
February 2024

Snapchat Safeguarding

What is Snapchat? Snapchat is a social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. Users can send messages (snaps) to others that can only be seen for a set time e.g. 10 seconds and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours.

What should I be concerned about? There are risks to using Snapchat, including the risk of your child viewing content that is not appropriate for them, location sharing and contact from strangers.

What is the Family Centre? Family Centre includes features such as allowing you to see who your child is friends with, who they are communicating with (not the contents of conversations though) and who your child has sent messages, photos or videos to in the last week. You will also be able to report any accounts that you are concerned about as well as restrict sensitive content. Snapchat have also published a safety checklist to help support conversations about how to use Snapchat safely: https://parents.snapchat.com/en-GB/parental-controls?lang=en-GB

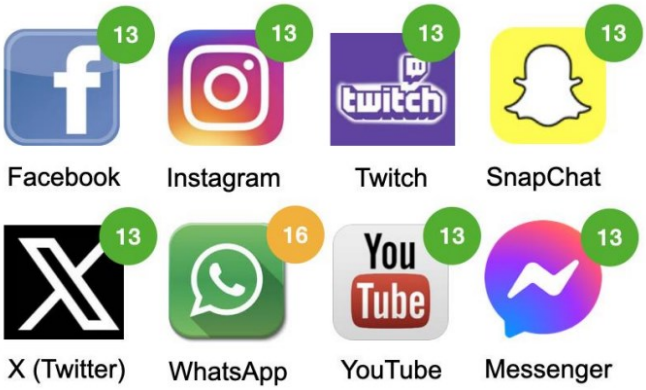
New safeguarding features: Snapchat have recently announced their newest features to help protect 13- 17-year-olds. The first feature is in-app warnings so a pop-up warning will now be displayed if someone tries to add them as a friend that they don't have mutual contacts with, or the person isn't in their contacts.

The second feature is 'stronger friending protections.' Currently 13-17-year olds must have several mutual friends in common for that user to show up in search results or as a friend suggestion, but this number has been increased. These two features are available to users aged 13-17-year-olds, this is one of the reasons why it is always important for your child to sign up with their correct date of birth, so they can benefit from any such features. https://values.snap.com/en-GB/news/new-safeguards-for-snapchatters-2023

Safety tips Please make sure the appropriate privacy settings are set up on Snapchat and your child knows how to block and report other users if necessary: https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2

More Snapchat information https://www.virginmedia.com/blog/parental-controls/

Get to know Age Ratings



Age ratings are in place to help protect your child, so we thought we'd provide you with a little reminder of how important it is to check the age ratings of what your child is accessing online. Here are the age ratings of some of the more popular apps that young people are accessing. Did you know that WhatsApp has an age rating of 16?

It is important to note that whilst age ratings do allow you to see if something may be appropriate for your child, it is also important to review the content yourself. This will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether it is suitable for your child to access and if it would be beneficial to apply further parental controls.

Further information Parent Zone have published this article about why age ratings matter: https://parentzone.org.uk/article/age-ratings

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare III

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare III was released in November and has been rated by PEGI as 18. This means this game is unsuitable for those under the age of 18. PEGI include the following content descriptors:

PEGI state that "this rating has been given because it features graphic violence, violence against vulnerable and defenceless characters, motiveless killing of innocent characters, and use of strong language." You can find out more from PEGI here: https://pegi.info/

Toxicity in Game Play

Safe In Our World and Ubisoft (creators of games such as Assassins Creed) have co-developed the 'Good Game Playbook'. The playbook will be sent to players reporting disruptive behaviour as well as the individual reported. This is to support the person affected as well as to try and educate the person reported about the harm their behaviour might have on others. You can read the handbook here: https://safeinourworld.org/news/ubi soft-safe-in-our-world