



The Cyber Safety Tech Mum

## What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is an app that lets people share images, videos and live messages.

Although it can be used to share images from the phone's camera role, it is mostly used by teens to 'share the current moment'. When a post is made it is called a 'snap.' Snaps disappear in 24 hours, however, they can be screenshot or a copy made via a 3rd party app, then saved and shared. Users receive a notification from Snapchat if this occurs but they can be powerless to stop it from being shared.

Snaps can be shared privately or with a group.

The enormous range of filters available inside the app also make it very popular.

## Age Ratings for Snapchat

- Australia – Apple App Store: 12+
- Australia – Google Play Store: Teen
- Overseas – 13+
- Commonsensemedia.org rate it at 16

I would not recommend this app for any child under 13. Kids often don't understand the full extent of the included features and are not yet mature enough to make adult decisions.

## Snapchat Features

There are lots of features within Snapchat! You cannot turn any specific feature off so it is important to understand what each of them are designed to do.

The more the app is used, the higher the user's score. As the user gets higher scores, they are rewarded with trophies and other items.

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### **Snapstreaks**

Snapstreaks are awarded when snaps (not chatted) have been consistently sent over two days. A fire emoji will appear next to the persons name along with number that represents the number of days the streak has been going for. Snapstreaks are awarded to private snaps, not snaps shared with a group.

Kids get very caught up in wanting to be rewarded with a streak and then to see how long they can keep it going. This keeps them attached to their phones and within the Snapchat app – exactly what Snapchat wants!

### **Snapchat Stories**

Snapchat stories are a collection of snaps that play in the order they were taken. A story lasts for 24hrs.

Stories can be sent to 'Our Story.' Snaps are selected by Snapchat and are made public.

### **Snapmaps**

Users can submit their snaps to snapmap and see things like events, sports, news etc all over the world.

Friends can also share their location with one another.

You can turn maps off or put it in Ghost Mode so that your child's location is not visible but they can still see their friends location.

### **Discover**

Discover is content from news sources, celebrities and entertainment outlets. Users can subscribe to specific Discover sources to regularly see their content.

Some Discover sources are from legitimate companies whilst others are promote goods and services and others again are a little more 'out there.'

If you child has used their correct birth date to create their account then they will not see promotions for alcohol or adult content.



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## **Snapcode**

Snapchat users can scan snapcodes from websites, posters and friends devices.

Scanning a snapcode can be a quick way to link with websites, view exclusive content, unlock filters and lenses and add new friends.

Users can also create their own Snapcodes that they can share.

## **Cameos**

Cameos are animated GIFs using a selfie that you can send in a chat.

## **Face Lenses & World Lenses**

A face lense is when rabbit ears or cat ears are added to an image. World lenses are like 'overlays.' For example, you could add the Sydney Harbour Bridge into your photo to make it look like you are actually there. Snapchat charges for the use of world lenses.

## **Geo-filters**

Snapchat users can create geo-filters that can only be obtained by other users visiting that location.

Businesses will often create a geo-filters and when customers visit their store (location) they receive exclusive use of that filter.

## **SnapCash**

Snapcash lets users transfer money between them, much like Paypal.

## **Memories**

Memories is a locked section, using passcode, where users can save their Snaps to send later or just because they are special to them. If the user wants to be the only person able to view them then they can setup "My Eyes Only."

## **SnapStore**

Snapstore is a store where you can buy items to use in Snapchat.



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### **Shazam**

Shazam lets you hold your phone close to music and then reports the title and singer of the song.

### **Spotlight**

Spotlight is a feed of submitted snaps can be scrolled through and then 'liked.' If a user submits a snap to spotlight it becomes public and can be viewed by anyone.

### **Snap Originals**

These are short series type shows that are created especially for Snapchat by companies like Buzz Feed.

### **Sounds**

This feature allows users to add music to their Snaps.

### **Snap Games**

Launched from the chat section, users can play voice or text games with their friends.

## **Snapchat Dangers you need to know about**

There is a reason that there is a minimum age required for Snapchat account creation.

- Kids can become 'friends' with people they don't know.
- Strangers can contact your child. Kids can choose to 'chat' to people that they actually don't know.
- Strangers can see your child's location if it is turned on.
- These strangers send your child sexually explicit images and request them in return. This can be done using gifts to gain your child's confidence. They can transfer money to your child via Snapcash.
- Your child's Snap could be distributed publicly by some who has taken a screen shot or saved it via a 3rd party app.
- Snaps and messages 'disappear' so there is no trail of the communication your child has had with other people.
- Kids can become obsessed with maintaining a snapchat streak and some kids will share their account password with others in order to get help to keep the streak going.
- Users can become victims of cyberbullying.
- Kids can potentially view adult material that is not suitable for their age.



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## Snapshot Privacy Settings

To access privacy settings, open the Snapchat App and click on the gearwheel (top right) to open Settings.

Scroll down to the “Who Can.....” section and make your selections.

- Who can contact me.....
- Send notifications....
- Who can view my story....
- Who can see my location.....
- Who can use my Cameos Selfie.....
- Who can see me in Quick Add.....

## Snapshot Parental Controls

There are no parental controls within the Snapchat App.

## What can parents do?

- Make sure that you understand the features in Snapchat
- Make sure that your child meets the terms & conditions to create an account
- Talk to your child about ‘disappearing’ Snaps. Nothing just disappears on the internet.
- Use the privacy settings
- Talk to your child about accepting friends requests. If they do not know that person in real life then they should not be friends – even if that person is a ‘friend of a friend.’
- Turn off location or at least put it into Ghost Mode.
- Ask your child to teach you how to use the app. This creates conversation around the dangers.