



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SNAPCHAT

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formally delivered by National Online Safety, these guides have addressed wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [thenationalcollege.com](https://www.thenationalcollege.com).

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SNAPCHAT

13+
Age Restriction

SNAPCHAT is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent disappears 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in testing and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. These features may lead to the wrong advice being given to young users turning to it for medical help and diagnosis, which could be hazardous and therefore potentially dangerous.

PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have missed photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's new research found that 6% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'Snapmap', a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has introduced 'My Eyes Only' – a feature that allows users to lock their photos and videos from parents and others in the app. This feature is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two eyes in the top right. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, videos and the 'My Eyes Only' folder.

SCREEN TIME ADDITION

Snapchat prioritises user engagement, with features like streaks (sending the same person every day to build up a high score). The app gives the statistic 'Snapstreak' and 'Streaks' – which show how long you've been sending snaps to someone. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos and stories. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could end up age-inappropriate results. The app's 'Discover' messaging feature also means a lot of young people are more exposed to images and videos – so content continues to be at risk of inappropriate content being shared.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to enhance a person's appearance, the app has been linked to body image issues and low self-esteem. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which are at the top of the app) and 'snapstreaks' (which are at the bottom of the app). These features can increase the pressure on users to log back in and respond.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Center' lets you view the details of the child's account, including their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You can also limit the child's access to the app, set a location tracker on the app, get into settings and turn on 'Screen Time' and 'App Lock' together, and ensure the child can't change their location settings.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how they are not always accurate and encourage setting boundaries with others. If they're hard to set, discuss setting boundaries with others. If they're hard to set, discuss setting boundaries with others. If they're hard to set, discuss setting boundaries with others.

MEET OUR EXPERT

Dr Claire Burdett is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has researched and implemented safe surfing and cyber safety projects for schools. She has written national educational projects and carried out research for the Australian government concerning internet use and online behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://thenationalcollege.com/parentsandeducators>

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With Snapchat's ever-evolving features, it's essential for parents and educators to stay informed about new and emerging safeguarding risks. From AI chatbots to paid content options, this week's #WakeUpWednesday guide takes a closer look at the platform's most pressing dangers – plus the latest updates to be aware of.

Whether it's sextortion, overspending on Snapchat+ or the effects of screen addiction, our guide provides up-to-date advice to help keep young users safe. It's essential reading for any parent or educator who wants to understand Snapchat's key risks – and support a safer, more positive experience for the children in their care.

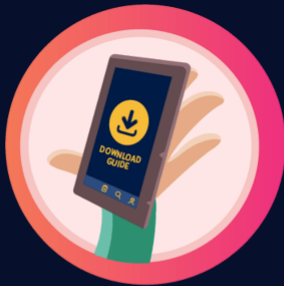
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Meet the expert:

Dr Claire Sutherland

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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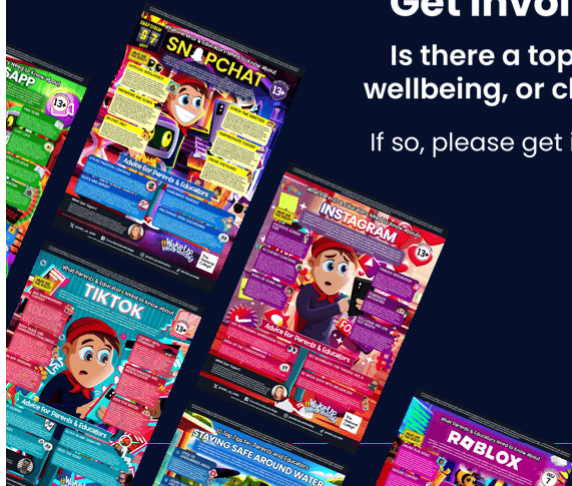
DISPLAY

Get involved in #WakeUpWednesday

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If so, please get in touch with us at: hello@nationacollege.com

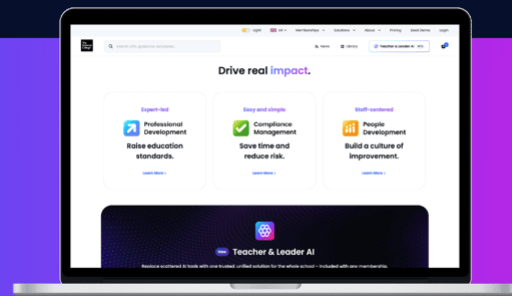
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The National College, Isaacs Building, 4 Charles Street, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S1 2HS, United Kingdom, 0333 090 6536

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