

Safer Internet Day

Tips for encouraging open discussion about digital life

Make your interest clear

Ask to see your child's favourite games and apps which will help you spot issues

Be open, honest, and appropriate to their age

When answering questions about puberty, relationships, etc.

Remind your child they can always talk to you

Even when they view harmful content, talking about it openly will help

Discuss that not everything we see online is real

Use examples from your own online world, like posts that show perfect houses

Try to remain calm

Your initial reaction could stop a child from speaking openly about what they've seen

Create a family agreement

About device use including when to use devices, parental controls and why it's good to talk

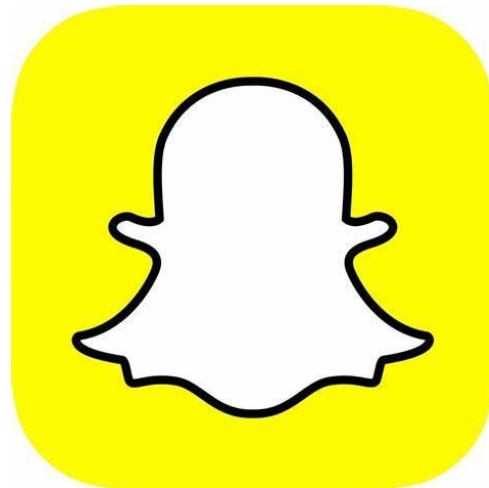
Keep talking

Online Safety Newsletter

October 2023

Snapchat

Snapchat is used by 58% of 12-15 year olds according to the latest OFCOM data. The main concept of the mobile app is that any picture, video, or message (aka snap) you send is available to the receiver for only a short time before it becomes inaccessible.



What are the risks?

Strangers can make contact

Anyone in the world can contact your children through Snapchat unless their settings are changed only to allow their friends to contact them (people on their friend list).

This is not on by default.

No age verification

Snapchat requires users to be 13 years old to use their app. However, Snapchat does not verify this age so it is easy to lie about ages to get around this check.

Hard to monitor

Since the snaps received are only available for a short amount of time, it becomes impossible to track what has been received from friends, family and even strangers.

Sexting and suggestive pics

As snaps delete after a short amount of time, teens believe the tool is safer for sending sensitive pictures. However all snaps can be screenshotted by the receiver.

Our [snapchat checklist](#) will help students use the app correctly.

Staying safe online

Advice to share with your child

Tell a trusted adult if something upsets you

Take breaks from being online

Don't chat with strangers

Ask permission before downloading anything

Avoid sharing private photos

Don't give away personal information

Double check your news sources

Take notice of age restrictions

Stick to trusted apps

Be suspicious of new information

Show respect to others

Be honest with parents and carers

Questodio

Questodio is parent and carer control app that helps you control and monitor how teenagers use their smartphones. The app is downloaded on both your device and your child's and allow for more control of how they use their device.



Reduce screen time

Questodio has the option to set a screen allowance for each day. When the allowance runs out, certain apps will become locked (this can be customised), allowing only essential apps to be in use.

Track calls

Questodio allow you to see all ingoing and outgoing calls and messages including length of the call and how many messages have been sent. Contacts can be blocked that you do not recognise.

Locate family

Questodio allow you to track the location of all registered phones. Notification can be set up when they arrive at key locations such as school and home.

Web and app protection

Questodio Block inappropriate apps, games and websites. On attempting to access this content, an alert will be sent to your device.

Pricing

Questodio has provided a **30 day free trial** for all parents and carers who wish to try the tool. No payment is required to access the trial

Basic (£39.95/year) – One device with most features

Complete (£69.95 / year) – Unlimited devices and includes call tracking



Starting a conversation about life online

Be positive and open-minded about the internet

Talk early and often

Make conversations about the internet part of your daily routine

Create a safe space for conversations

Talking face to face can sometimes be difficult, so talking while walking alongside or while in a car might be easier. Make sure there are no distractions

Keep it relevant

The way your child uses the internet will change as they grow older. So, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have to get a feel of the challenges and experiences they face online

Be proactive

Create an agreement together on how the internet will be used, including time spend online, who your child can communicate with, appropriate apps and games and safety tools to report and block harmful content

What is Threads?



Threads was launched by Meta (creators of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) in July and is similar in design to Twitter. As with Twitter, users can share text posts (with images and videos) and then other users can respond to create a thread. You need to have an Instagram account to login to Threads and you must be at least 13 years old to create an Instagram account.

For everyone 13 – 17 years old (in the UK), their account will automatically be set as private when they join Threads. As with Instagram, users can choose specific words to filter out of replies as well as hide comments that may be offensive. Users can also unfollow, block and report a profile. Any accounts that you have blocked on Instagram will automatically be blocked on Threads as well. Users can also change their settings on Threads so other users are unable to mention them in replies.

Chat GPT and Bing



Chat GPT allows users to ask questions and generate human like response to those questions. As of last week, this tool is now built directly into Bing's search engine. Students should not use this for completing homework or coursework. Below are the issues with using tools like Chat GPT.

Stifling creativity

If children rely on AI tools for everything, this will affect their ability to solve problems independently.

Inaccuracy

AI tools build their responses from sources online, which might not always be accurate. Answers could contain errors or inaccuracies.

Reinforcing bias

AI tools build their responses from sources online, which could be biased. This could potentially reinforce some stereotypes around gender, race and disability.