

# A Parent's Guide To Snapchat

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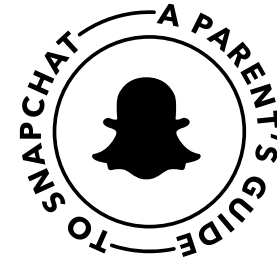


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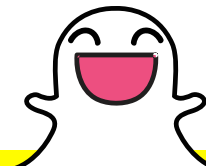
In conjunction with:

[ConnectSafely](#)



Snapchat is about communicating with friends and family, living in the moment, and having fun.

Our goal is to accommodate the broadest range of self expression while balancing the need for Snapchatters to be able to use our service safely and enjoyably.



# Top 5 Questions Parents Have about Snapchat

## 1. Why do teens love Snapchat?

Teens love Snapchat because they love talking to their friends. Snapchat is a spontaneous and creative way to communicate with unique features that are just plain fun – Snapchatters can send images and short videos called “Snaps” that can be drawn on or modified with tools like Filters, Stickers and Lenses. Snapchat is playful and “in the moment,” a refreshing change from the world of social media, where you often become the sum of everything you’ve shared.

## 2. What’s the appeal of having your messages disappear?

Snapchat’s ephemerality mirrors real life conversations. When you go to lunch with a friend, the conversation doesn’t last beyond the meal – and Snapchat has managed to recreate that light, low-pressure feeling. Because Snaps aren’t on display anywhere forever, there isn’t the reputation anxiety or image-curation fatigue people feel in other services.

## 3. Does Snapchat have a minimum age?

Yes, the minimum age is 13, in compliance with the U.S. Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Snapchat asks for a date of birth at sign-up, and if the birth date indicates that the user is under 13, they’re not allowed to create an account.



## 4. What are the risks in using Snapchat?

Some adults worry that Snapchat’s ephemeral nature will encourage people to Snap without thinking about the consequences, but most people don’t use Snapchat that way. They use it because it’s a fun, visual way to communicate that lets them be silly without worrying about what comes next. However, as with all digital media, there are risks in broadcasting personal information like location to strangers, and to posting content that violates Snapchat’s Community Guidelines. And Snapchatters should know that there are ways for others to capture virtually any digital content, including Snaps.

## 5. What’s the best way to help teens stay safe on Snapchat?

A positive experience on Snapchat ultimately depends on how it is used. It is important to talk to Teens about being thoughtful while using social media. Remind your Teens that they should speak to a trusted adult when they see something that concerns them, and to avoid meeting up with strangers, even if they have an online friendship with them. Parents should also make sure their Teens’ privacy settings on Snapchat are set to “My Friends” only, as explained in this guide.



# Snapchat's Features

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## **Snaps.**

Snaps are videos or photos taken in the Snapchat app. Snapchatters can layer text, emojis, doodles, and more on top of their Snaps, and choose how long they want the Snap to be displayed. Snapchatters can then send the Snap to one of their friends or to a story.

## **Stories.**

After Snapchatters take a Snap, they have the option to add it to a Story or to create a new one. My Story is a feature that lets Snapchatters string Snaps together into one longer narrative. Snaps in My Story appear in chronological order, and can be viewed for 24 hours. Our Story allows Snapchatters who are at the same event or a specific location to contribute Snaps to the same public community narrative, offering unique perspectives on events happening in real time. Custom Stories allow Snapchatters to create Stories with select friends or at a certain location.

## **Snap Map.**

Snap Map makes it easy to see Snaps and Stories of events, breaking news, and more from around the world. The Map also lets Snapchatters see where their friends are, as long as these friends choose to share their locations with them. Location sharing with friends via the Map is optional and is off by default; however, if you submit a Snap to Our Story, it may appear publicly on the Map in the exact location it was taken. Snapchatters can enable Ghost Mode in their settings at any time, which will cause them to disappear from the map.

## **Discover.**

Discover is a way for Snapchatters to explore Stories from established publishers and popular users. Discover also includes a curated selection of Stories happening around the world.

## **Chat.**

Snapchat also allows for video and text chat. Like Snaps, chats are deleted by default. But Snapchatters always have the option to save a message they'd like to keep. Just press and hold on a message to save it in the Chat screen.

## **Lenses, Filters, and Stickers.**

There are a ton of ways to decorate Snaps. Lenses add real-time special effects and sounds to a Snap. Filters offer unique design overlays that Snapchatters can add to their Snaps, like the current time or weather. Geofilters are a popular way to customize Snaps with art specific to locations or events around the world. Stickers are colorful images and cartoons that Snapchatters can add on top of their Snaps or send in chats.

## **Memories.**

Memories is a private collection of Snaps and Stories that Snapchatters create and choose to save. Snapchatters can also create new Stories with Snaps they've saved to Memories.

## **My Eyes Only.**

Snapchatters have the option to move Snaps from their Memories into My Eyes Only. The only way to access Snaps in My Eyes Only is by entering a passcode. If Snapchatters forget their My Eyes Only passcode, not even Team Snapchat can help access or recover Snaps in My Eyes Only.

## **Snapcash.**

Snapchat partnered with Square, Inc. to allow Snapchatters to link their Snapchat and debit card accounts for making "peer-to-peer" payments (for things like paying someone back for movie tickets, lunch, etc). Snapcash is not for users under 18.



# Tips for you and your kids

## **Manage your privacy settings.**

The default “My Friends” privacy setting allows Snapchatters to send and receive media from only Snapchatters they have added to their friends list. We recommend that any minor using Snapchat does not change their privacy setting from “My Friends” to “Everyone.” For more information, visit [Snapchat Support](#).

## **Create an account.**

Snapchat’s for everyone, not just for teens! Parents might find that creating an account gives them a new and fun way to communicate with their kids. You can learn more about getting started by visiting [here](#).

## **Personal Information.**

Remind your kids to be careful about sharing any personally identifiable information. Information like phone numbers, home addresses, and financial and medical information should never be shared.

## **Saving Snaps.**

Even though Snaps aren’t saved by default, it’s always possible for someone to save a Snap before sending it, or for a Snapchatter on the receiving end to take a screenshot. One can even take a picture of a Snap with another camera or use other tools to save a copy. It’s important to remind kids to never send Snaps that are illegal, could get them in trouble now or in the future, or would be embarrassing if seen by people like grandparents or college admissions officers.

## **Protect passwords.**

Like all services, make sure your kids have a strong and unique password, and they don’t share it with anyone. They should also enable two-factor authentication, for an additional layer of security. If someone else has your teen’s password, it’s possible for the other person to impersonate your teen or compromise your teen’s account. For more information, [click here](#).

## **Device-level controls.**

Android and iOS operating systems offer parental controls for mobile devices. Use these to manage your child’s phone usage as needed.

## **Keeping it real.**

Snapchat is a service designed for your real friends, but there are still ways for your kids to find people they don’t know (such as finding Snapchat usernames or Snapcodes on other services). Remind your kids that it’s not safe to meetup with a person they meet online.

## **Bullying.**

Bullying violates Snapchat’s Community Guidelines and is not tolerated on the platform. Make sure to talk to your kids about why bullying is wrong. Also remind them to talk to you or any other trusted adult if they are ever on the receiving end of bullying or unwanted content. For more advice on talking to your kids about cyberbullying, [click here](#).

## **Nudity.**

Aside from violating Snapchat’s Community Guidelines, teens need to know that storing or exchanging nude or sexually explicit images of anyone under 18, including themselves, can be a serious crime. For more on this, [click here](#).

**Please see [Snapchat Support](#) for more information.**



# Safety Concerns?

If your child's settings are receiving abusive Snaps from another user, they should block the user and report them to Snapchat's Safety team.

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## **Blocking other Snapchatters.**

Snapchatters can block someone from sending them Snaps. For more information on how to block another Snapchatter, click [here](#).

## **Report abuse.**

Contact Snapchat's Safety team to report abuse by navigating to [Snapchat Support](#). If you believe someone is at risk of harm, immediately contact local law enforcement.

## **Deleting Snapchat accounts.**

As long as you have the username and password to a Snapchat account, you can delete it by going to [accounts.snapchat.com](https://accounts.snapchat.com).

# Closing thoughts for Parents

Snapchat is one the most popular messaging apps that kids use, but new apps are popping up all the time. That's why it's important to talk to your kids and to help them develop critical thinking skills about staying safe in their digital lives. Safety is typically more about how you use an app than what particular app you use.

As parents, it's important to keep the lines of communication open and to work together to figure out what's appropriate for your family in terms of safety, privacy, reputation and time management. It generally just works better to talk with your kids about their favorite tools - with genuine interest, not fear - because they're more likely to come to you when they need help, and you're much more likely to be kept in the loop about all the cool technology that they use and you get to learn about.



