



Fact sheet

# SNAPCHAT (For parents)



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## What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is an application which is free to download on iOS and Android devices that allows users to send images and videos ('snaps') to each other. Snaps can be viewed for up to 10 seconds before they 'dissolve'.

Operating the app requires use of the device's data plan or a wireless internet connection. Images can be drawn on using a whiteboard-style tool and can be given a caption. Snapchat also gives users the ability to put special effect filters and emojis over images or videos to create different looks or themes.



## What is the age restriction for Snapchat?

The age classification for Snapchat is 13 years and over, although much of the content may be inappropriate for that age group. If children under the age of 13 sign up for an account they are given access to 'SnapKidz' which is a limited version of the app where users are not able to send images to other users. It is important to note that these classifications are set by the app's creator and are not overseen by an independent body.

## How are kids using Snapchat?

Snapchat is used by many young people to connect with their friends and to send photos to each other. However, Snapchat can be used for inappropriate purposes and it is important to sit down with your child and explain to them that it is not okay to share images that are rude, offensive or sexualised.

## Should I be worried if my child is using Snapchat?

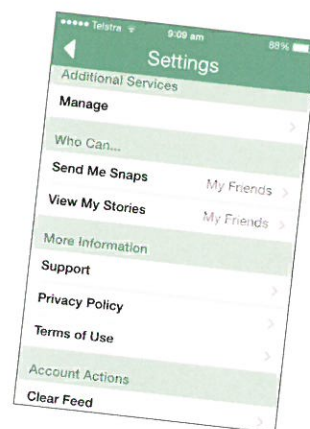
Any application when used incorrectly has the potential to cause harm. It is important that you communicate openly with your child about how they may be using an application and the legal and ethical ramifications of inappropriate use. Children and young people also need to be aware of the risks of communicating with people they don't know via any mobile application.

## Does an image really delete on Snapchat?

There are many ways an image can be saved, even on Snapchat. iOS and Android devices have a feature which allows the device to take a photo of what is on the screen (screenshot). Snapchat notifies the sender if an image they have sent has been captured, however there are also other ways images can be saved without the sender being notified, so it is important to encourage children to think before they send a snap.

## What are the privacy settings on Snapchat?

Snapchat has limited privacy settings so it is important to monitor your child's usage of the application. One privacy setting that is available is the ability to restrict who can send your child photos or videos, 'snaps'. This can be enabled by going into the **Settings** menu, select '**Who can send me snaps**', then select '**My friends**'. This will ensure that only users in your child's contact list can send images.



It is important to read the Snapchat privacy policy as it provides information about how the images and videos are stored and used. Users need to be aware that Snapchat has the right to reproduce, modify and republish photos and videos, and save them to the Snapchat servers, particularly in relation to the 'Live Story' feature.

## Is Snapchat a 'safe sexting' application?

It is important to know that there is no such thing as 'safe sexting' and Snapchat is no exception. Young people need to be aware that as soon as they send an image they have lost control over where it ends up. Sending sexually explicit images of someone under the age of 18, with or without their permission, could be an offence under State and Commonwealth legislation.

## What are the potential problems with Snapchat?

Sharing images that are rude, offensive or sexualised can see young charged under State and Commonwealth legislation which carries serious legal consequences. Ethically, young people need to be aware of the impact that their online behaviour has on their reputation and others.





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Sexting is commonly defined as the sharing of sexualised or naked images via the internet or mobile phone, this includes mobile applications like Snapchat. Children and young people need to realise that as soon as that image is sent they have lost control of it. It is possible that images shared privately between people on social networking services could end up elsewhere online. Taking, sending and saving these sorts of images can also constitute child pornography offences and can have long term legal ramifications on a child's future.

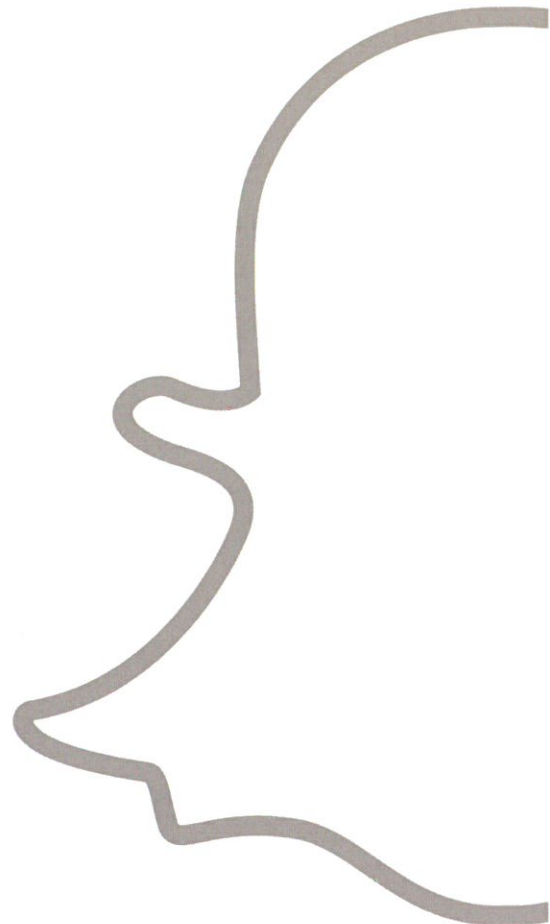
If these images become public, the child in the image can be subject to bullying and cyberbullying. This may happen face-to-face at school or even online with people posting and sharing the image on social networking sites or through instant messenger applications. It is important that parents and carers are aware of the issues associated with various apps and websites so that they can openly communicate with their child about safe and responsible use.

## How do I delete my child's Snapchat account?

After talking with your child about the ethical use of Snapchat and your family's rules around technology, you may feel it's appropriate to delete the Snapchat account.

Open discussions are vital in ensuring your child understands their responsibilities when using technology. Removing technology from your child when they have used it inappropriately is not the best response as it may lead the child to access technology through other means making it more difficult to monitor, supervise or support them if something goes wrong.

However, in some cases it is necessary for a parent to delete an account. To do this, you need to go to <https://support.snapchat.com/delete-account> and enter your child's account username and password. If you do not have your child's password you can submit a deletion request to Snapchat.



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