



Clarity Independent School

25th March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

E-Safety Newsletter (Spring term second half 2026)

As we approach the Easter break, we hope you and your families have a lovely, restful time together.

As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping your children safe online, we wanted to share some important information about two areas that often come up in our e-safety monitoring: **streaming services** and **Snapchat**. With more screen time often happening during the holidays, it's a great opportunity to review your online safety settings and have conversations with your children about staying safe online.

Streaming Services: Keep Your Child Safe

Age ratings matter – streaming services like Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime contain content that may not be suitable for children.

Quick Actions for Parents:

✓ Set up parental controls

- Create separate children's profiles with age restrictions
- Block content rated 12, 15, or 18+
- All major platforms have built-in parental control features

✓ Monitor what they watch

- Check viewing history regularly
- Have conversations about appropriate content
- Open media parcels together

✓ Watch out for documentaries

- Age ratings don't always reflect suitability of subject matter
- True crime and documentaries about violence/adult themes can be distressing
- "Educational" doesn't automatically mean "appropriate for children"

Snapchat: Know the Risks

Minimum age: 13 – but even teenagers face significant dangers on Snapchat.

5 Key Dangers:

1. Disappearing Messages

Creates false sense of security – content can still be screenshot or saved

Can be exploited by people with harmful intentions

Difficult for adults to monitor safety, as the messages disappear before supervising adults are alerted to their content

2. Location Sharing (Snap Map)

Shows your child's exact location to friends or strangers

ACTION: Turn off location or use "Ghost Mode"

3. Contact from Strangers

Children can receive messages from people they don't know

Predators often use Snapchat to contact young people

ACTION: Set privacy to "Friends Only"

4. Inappropriate Content

"Discover" section contains highly sexualised or inappropriate content

Adverts may not be suitable for children

ACTION: Discuss appropriate content and monitor usage

5. Mental Health Impact

"Streaks" create pressure and anxiety

Filters harm body image and self-esteem

Intensifies fear of missing out (FOMO)

What Parents Should Do:

✓ Check privacy settings together:

- Set all "Who Can..." options to "Friends" only
- Turn off location sharing (Ghost Mode)
- Disable "Quick Add"

✓ Have regular conversations:

- Stay calm and non-judgmental
- Ask who they're talking to
- Ask: "Can you show me how Snapchat works?"
- Ask: "Have you seen anything uncomfortable online?"
- Explain WHY things are risky, don't just say "no"
- Agree rules together
- Discuss what to do if uncomfortable
- **NEVER share personal info, photos, or meet online contacts**

✓ Monitor usage:

- Keep devices in communal areas

- Watch for time spent on app
- Look for behaviour change

✓ **Warning signs:**

- Secretive about phone
- Messages at unusual times
- Upset or anxious about phone
- Talking about unknown people

If you have any concerns about your child's online activity, or if you need help setting up parental controls, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to support you in keeping your child safe both in school and online.

Yours sincerely

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about STREAMING SERVICES



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Streaming services are platforms that allow users to watch cartoons, documentaries and movies online immediately (often referred to as SVoD: streaming videos on demand). Ofcom reported that children and young adults prefer streaming services to traditional TV. With two-thirds of UK households subscribing to at least one streaming service, parents must understand how to manage screen time, set age restrictions and ensure safe viewing.

COSTLY

Subscription services can be costly. As the main source of entertainment, most households have at least one streaming platform, and each platform has its own monthly subscription fee. Services are charging more for ad-free viewing, and better quality and resolution; however, there is a cheaper option with adverts. Due to price increases, Netflix and Disney+ reported a sharp increase in users subscribing to their ad-supported tier in 2025.



EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Excessive screen time contributes to sedentary behaviour and can negatively impact physical and mental health. Ofcom found that 4- to 15-year-olds averaged 2.5 hours per day across all video-sharing platforms, not including gaming. The vast range of content available, combined with features such as autoplay, makes it easy for children to watch for extended periods of time.



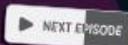
ILLEGAL STREAMING

Sharing passwords or using modified Fire Sticks to access streaming content without permission is illegal. Most streaming services have now put measures in place to detect account sharing. When account sharing is identified, platforms will offer an opportunity to pay for an added member or will ask the user to verify who they are.



BINGE WATCHING

Features such as autoplay make it easy for viewers – especially young people – to continue watching episodes without a break. This can foster unhealthy and addictive patterns, such as consuming a vast amount of content in one sitting. With binge watching come a lack of social interaction, lack of physical exercise, and often late nights and sleep disruptions which impact their mental and physical wellbeing.



AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most streaming platforms allow users to set up a profile for each family member, with the option of putting specific restrictions in place. These include adding a profile lock or PIN, controlling autoplay of previews and next episodes, and limiting content based on age ratings. Nonetheless, these restrictions aren't foolproof. Content which is rated as suitable for an age group may still include themes, language, or images which children and families find inappropriate.



HARMFUL STEREOTYPES

Many platforms track viewing habits, time consumed, and preferences, and generate recommendations to encourage your child to keep watching. This results in your child being in a 'loop' whereby they think the 'recommended' shows would be something they would enjoy rather than thinking critically for themselves. This can shape their beliefs, values, and understanding of the world from a young age without even realising it.



Advice for Parents & Educators

SET UP INDIVIDUAL PROFILES AND ADD PINS

Almost all streaming services allow users to set up individual profiles where each family member can have age restrictions put in place for the content they can view. Adult profiles can be protected through the use of PIN. Keep this private. Use the options of putting specific restrictions in place such as controlling autoplay of previews and next episodes, and limiting content based on age ratings.



TALK ABOUT ALGORITHMS

Talk to your child about how streaming services track what they watch, and base adverts and recommended shows/movies on previous viewing. Encourage them to critically think about whether the recommendations are suitable and how they want to spend their time. Discuss stereotypes with your child and challenge them to think about what they watch and how this may influence their beliefs.



MONITOR AND TALK OFTEN

Discuss with your child what they are watching, find out which programmes are trending, and watch them yourself. Have a little look at their watch history to check the content of what they're watching. Some platforms have been known to recommend or autoplay older or graphic content after a child's movie has been played. While some tv shows or movies may have a suitable age rating, your child may still find the content scary, or it may explore themes you don't want to explore with your child yet.



SET TIME RESTRICTIONS

Many streaming services offer the opportunity to buy movies, or add additional features to your subscription such as sports channels, as well as play games. This can increase the amount of time young people spend sitting idly in front of the screen. Some platforms (e.g. Apple TV+) allow you to set screen time restrictions. If the streaming service doesn't allow you to set screen time limits, set a family rule and stick to it.



Meet Our Expert

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.



See full reference list on our website

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAP STREAK

97

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

With over 900 million active monthly users and billions of 'Snaps' sent each month, Snapchat is a popular messaging app among children and young people. It allows users to share fun, spontaneous pictures and videos with friends and family while using playful filters. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures, videos and messages are only viewable for a short period of time.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may share unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and deepfake-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Snapchat boosts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 🌟 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

SEXTORTION

Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then somehow capture those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

SNAPCHAT+

Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to new and exclusive features. In June 2025, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lens+, giving subscribers access to hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for playing, creating, and sharing Snaps. These paid features may encourage young users to spend money to access exclusive content, increasing the risk of overspending or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

ACCESSIBILITY

Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or tablet without downloading the app. This can make activity harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unsupervised communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's disappearing messages feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB

Created with guidance from Common Sense Media, Snapchat has developed a Family Safety Hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'Nudity and Sexual Content' category. In this category, there's the option to report somebody for threatening to leak sexually explicit images, or 'nudes'.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy settings as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain why some settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.

Meet Our Expert

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#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat>

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