

A special series from Aye Mind looking at popular social media platforms.

# Social Media Series - Snapchat

Snapchat is a popular messaging platform (13+), where users can send 'snaps' (photos/videos that are available for a short period of time). It's used by 69% of 18-24 year olds ([Ofcom, 2024 a](#)).

Some key features include:

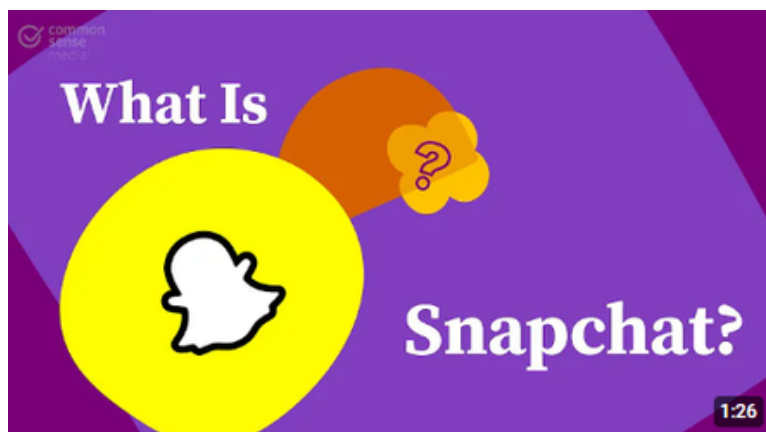
- **Spotlight feed** - Short videos from other users, shown using algorithms
- **Stories** - Users post photos/videos for followers to see that last 24 hours
- **Snap map** - Lets users share live location with others on the app
- **Streaks** - Measure of someone's activity with another user - have to exchange snaps daily to maintain the streak
- **Filters** - Applied to photos/videos to enhance or augment features like appearance and voices.



## How it's used

Some examples of how children and young people use Snapchat:

- Most favoured platform to message friends, including sending disappearing images/videos, video calling ([Ofcom, 2024 b](#))
- For 'lighter' news
- To play games and quizzes
- Be creative and have fun
- Talk to My AI, Snapchat's chatbot, the second highest reaching generative AI tool among children online in Britain (30%) ([Ofcom, 2024 a](#))



Watch this [short video](#) from Common Sense Media

## Potential Benefits

- Way to relax, have fun, explore hobbies
- More about connecting with others, rather than follower counts and 'likes'
- Source of information
- Helps a child or young person develop sense of community, peer support, way to express themselves

*(This list is not exhaustive)*



## Potential Harms

- **Location sharing** from the Snap map
- **Unwanted contact** from adults/other users - 82% rise in online grooming crimes against children in last 5 years, 73% involved Snapchat or Meta ([NSPCC, 2023](#))
- **Pressure to chat** and use the app via 'streaks'
- **Inappropriate/harmful content**
  - Disappearing content can lead to sexting and bullying
  - Exposed to harmful content via discovery feed e.g. sexually explicit content, graphic content
- **Body image issues** and concerns via filters
- **Potential negative impact on sleep**
- **Privacy concerns**, including via My AI chatbot

*(This list is not exhaustive)*

## Helpful Tips & Resources

Try Snapchat for yourself - what do you like about it? What do you think some of the risks/downsides might be?

Chat with the child or young person you're supporting about Snapchat - what they like about it, their favourite feature, who they chat to on there.

- Be aware of Snapchat's safety/privacy settings
  - [E.g. Safer Internet Centre Social Media Guide](#)
  - [Internet Matters Snapchat Privacy Guide](#)
  - [Snapchat's Safety Guide](#)
- Teach or support the development of digital literacy, including critical thinking skills
  - [E.g. Digital Matters /relevant RSHP resources](#)
- Know where and how a child or young person can get help and what to do if they see anything that upsets them.
  - [E.g. Online Harms Resource - Useful Websites, Helplines & Reporting.](#)
  - [Professionals free Online Safety Helpline - 0344 381 4772](#)

