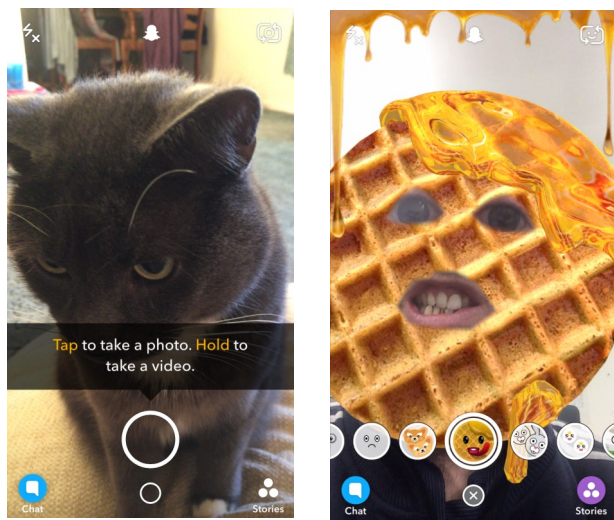
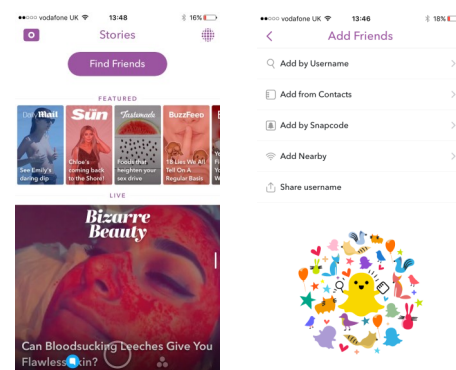


What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a messaging App which allows users to send pictures or videos to each other which 'disappear' after being viewed. Users can set a maximum length of time that the pictures are visible for (up to 10 seconds), although users can also set a series of images which can be viewed for 24 hours called a Story.



You can edit the picture in the app by 'drawing' on it, adding a filter (called Lenses) to change the way you look into something different and you can also include text in the picture. Snapchat gives you the ability to save your own 'Snaps' but currently won't let you save others (although there are other ways they can be saved)



While most of the content available in the app is user generated, some news agencies and companies use Snapchat to advertise products and services through the Discover feature. It is used by a huge number of celebrities, who you can add as 'friends' to ensure you see every Snap they share

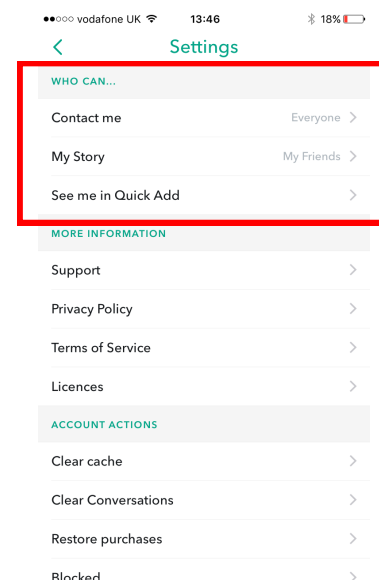
Do age restrictions apply?

Yes, you need to be over the age of 13 to set up an account. Any app or site which collects any personal information (Name, email, pictures) requires users to be over 13 due to legislation in the USA. It's important to remember that when a Snap is sent to anyone, it is stored on Snapchat's servers until they delete it—which they don't guarantee will happen once it has been viewed

Are there any privacy settings/controls?

Snapchat gives you the ability to share your 'Stories' with everyone and allows anyone to try to add you as a friend. The app also gives you control over some of it's features. By default, only your Friends can see your 'Story' and only your friends will be able to send you snaps. Both of these options can be changed to 'Everyone'

Another feature which many users forget when they send Snaps is the 'Replay Snap' function. This allows you to look at a Snap you have already seen recently, and look at it again. You only get one Replay per day, but in the USA you can purchase additional Replays. This is something they've trialled in the UK in the past.



Things to think about

Snapchat gives users some amazing technology but also a great deal of responsibility as the App can be easily mis-used:

Sexting

One of the biggest issues we find with Snapchat is the sharing of indecent images. Adults and Teens have used the App to send pictures of themselves in a state of undress or completely naked because they think the picture will vanish after 10 seconds. But there are some pictures which should never be taken.

Taking, sending or saving an indecent image of anyone under the age of 18 is against the law and comes with some potentially life changing repercussions but just because a child or young person has sent one of these images to someone doesn't mean they'll go to jail. If someone has sent an image to someone, and that person is using it as a way to blackmail them, they need to tell a trusted adult. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help

Never Really Gone

Many teens forget how easily someone can take a screenshot of the picture on a phone, meaning that 10 second picture can stay around forever. Although Snapchat will warn the user that a Snap has been saved, it's too late to unsend it. Once someone has a copy, they can show anyone they like or send a copy to their friends which can be incredibly distressing to the person in the Snap. Never send anything on Snapchat that you wouldn't be happy for someone to keep a copy of or that you'd be OK for a parent or teacher to see.

It's also important to know that some users have sent offensive Snaps, or used it to bully their peers because they think the evidence will disappear. As with any form of online bullying, it's important to save a copy to show someone—screenshotting that horrible Snap will help people understand what is happening

Talk about appropriate sharing

We think that children and young people know what they can take a picture of, but have we ever spoken to them about it? It's easy to think that because they are experts at using the technology we won't need to talk to them about how they actually use it. Give some guidance around when, where and what they can photograph, and consider setting some photo-free zones at home—bedroom, bathroom, toilet being just a few rooms which may not be the best place for pics to be taken

Want to learn more?

Snapchat: A How to Guide for Parents from Internet Matters:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/snapchat-safety-a-how-to-guide-for-parents/>

Snapchat Support:

<https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB>

Sexting: What you should know from Internet Matters

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/sexting/>

If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, you can call Lincolnshire Police on 101 or, in an emergency, dial 999