

Cotham School

Online Safety Newsletter

Academic Year:
2024/2025

Term: 5
Date: 19/05/2025



Newsletter Topic:

1. What is: Online Bullying
2. Social Media Focus: Snapchat Family Centre



What is: Online Bullying?

Online bullying, often referred to as cyberbullying, is a form of bullying carried out through electronic media devices. Statistics show that approximately a quarter of children will experience some form of online bullying, while just under a fifth of children will bully others. Many children who experience online bullying are also subjected to face-to-face bullying.



Bullying in any form can be traumatic for a child, but the online aspect makes it particularly pervasive, as there is no escape. The most common type of online bullying is name-calling.



700



Who is at Risk?

Any child can be at risk of bullying, but certain factors may increase vulnerability:

- Children perceived as different in some way (e.g shy, introverted, or with low self-esteem).
- Popular children may also be targeted due to jealousy from others.
- Children may be more vulnerable due to their race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.



Signs and Effects of Online Bullying

The signs and effects of bullying vary, but common indicators include:

- **Avoidance behaviors:** Fear of going to school or feigning illness.
- **Emotional changes:** Loss of confidence, nervousness, distress, withdrawal, or anxiety.
- **Changes in habits:** Disrupted sleeping or eating patterns.
- **Social changes:** Shifts in friendships or wariness of others.
- **Tech-related changes:** Reduced use of devices, avoiding certain games/apps, or changing who they interact with online.



ONS Centre for Crime and Justice - Statistics

Bullying and online experiences among children in England and Wales: year ending March 2023

- Daily online activity is widespread (92.6%) and prolonged (58.1% spend 3+ hours daily).
- Significant interaction with strangers—35.0% accept unknown friend requests, 19.2% chat with strangers, and 4.4% meet them.
- 9.5% of teens aged 13-15 receive repeated sexual messages.
- 34.9% experience in-person bullying; 19.1%, online. Many victims don't report it.



Support for Children Being Bullied

As parents or caregivers, it's crucial to support children who are being bullied. Here are some tips:

- **Open Communication:** Encourage children to share their online activities and any issues they face, such as bullying.
- **Education:** Teach children what bullying is and how to recognize it. Some may mistake it for banter or playful behavior.
- **Report and Block:** Ensure children know how to report and block users on the platforms they use. Teach them to take screenshots for evidence if needed.
- **Involve the School:** Schools often have anti-bullying programs and can provide additional support and resources.



Support for the Bully

It's equally important to support children who exhibit bullying behavior, as there is often an underlying cause:

- **Start the Conversation:** Talk to your child without judgment or accusations. Try to understand why they are behaving this way.
- **Discuss Impact:** Help them understand the consequences of their actions, especially online, where empathy can be harder to convey.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If the behavior persists or your child refuses to engage, consider seeking help from a professional. Schools can often provide guidance and resources.



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Social Media: Snapchat

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app developed by Snap Inc. It allows users to send photos, videos, and messages (called “Snaps”) that disappear after being viewed. The app is known for its focus on ephemeral content, creative filters, and augmented reality (AR) features.



Age Requirements: 13+.

Key Features:

- Snaps
- Stories
- Chats
- Filters
- Discover Page
- Snap Maps
- Memories
- Streaks

Safety and Privacy Features:

- View and location sharing control
- Report and block
- Ghost mode - hide location
- Parental control tools
- 24h data deletion
- 2FA security
- AI Moderation
- Safety center resources.

How to: Set up Family Centre

Snapchat’s Family Centre offers tools to help parents guide their teens’ online interactions and ensure their safety. With these parental controls, you can see who your teen is chatting with and set Content Controls to foster important safety discussions. Family Centre is designed to balance parental oversight with teens’ privacy, mirroring real-life relationships. Parents can also report concerns directly to our Trust and Safety team, who are available around the clock to keep users safe.

To get started, parents need a Snapchat account. Follow these simple steps to download the app and set up Family Centre today!

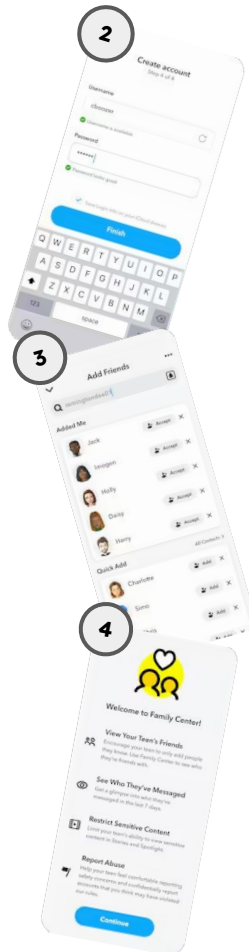


1. Get Snapchat from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

2. Open the app, tap “Sign Up”, and follow the instructions to set up your username.

3. Ask your teen for their Snapchat username and search for it using the search bar at the top-left corner of the Camera screen.

4. Once they accept your request, you’re ready to set up Family Centre.



5. There are two ways to access Family Centre on Snapchat:
- a. You can use the search bar. Search relevant terms such as “safety”, “family” or “parent” and Family Centre will appear.
 - b. Or, head to Settings (gear icon), located at the top-right corner of your Profile Page (located at the top left corner across all tabs), where Family Centre has a permanent home.
6. Send an invitation through Family Centre for your teen to join.
7. Teens need to tap ‘Accept’, to confirm participation.
8. Now, you can use Family Centre to see who your teens are talking to and set Content Controls.

