

# Cotham School

## Online Safety Newsletter

Academic Year:  
2025/2026

Term: 3  
Date: 10/02/2026



### Newsletter Topic:

1. What is: Fake News
2. Social Media Focus: Snapchat Family Centre

### What is Fake News?

Fake news is deliberately created false or misleading information, which can include photos, videos, or manipulated real content. It is crucial children learn to identify real news from fake to avoid unintentionally spreading or believing falsehoods.

### Types of Fake News

Fake news varies based on the creator's intent:

- **Clickbait** – Exaggerated stories created to attract clicks and ad revenue.
- **Propaganda** – Biased or false stories meant to push a political agenda.
- **Poor Journalism** – Unintentional mistakes; reputable sources issue corrections.
- **Misleading Headlines** – Shocking headlines that twist a true story.
- **Imposter Content** – Fake stories published under the name of real news sources.
- **Satire/Parody** – Humorous content not meant to be taken seriously.

The term “fake news” is broad and disputed.

Official UK communication prefers:

- **Disinformation**: Deliberately false stories intended to mislead.
- **Misinformation**: False stories shared without intent to deceive.

### What are the Risks?

Fake news isn't just harmless gossip—it can have real consequences for young minds:

- **Shock Value**: Uses sensational headlines to provoke reactions, spread quickly online (e.g. false celebrity deaths, fake giveaways).
- **Embarrassment**: Created to mislead or mock; young people may share hoaxes and face ridicule.
- **Influence Behavior**: Designed to shape opinions and actions, and can weaken trust in media or institutions.

### How to Spot Signs of Fake News

Teach your family these practical steps to identify fake news:

- **Check the Source**: Is the story from a trusted, fact-checked outlet like a major news network or local paper?
- **Check the URL**: Look for odd domain names, misspellings, or impersonations of real websites.
- **Verify Facts and Images**: Confirm supporting data and use Google Reverse Image Search to check if photos have been altered.
- **Research the Website**: Use the Internet Archive to see how old the site is and cross-check the story with credible outlets.

### How to Support Your Child

#### Report Suspicious Content

You can submit feedback directly to Google or use the “Report Post” feature on social media platforms like Facebook and X.

#### Provide Reassurance

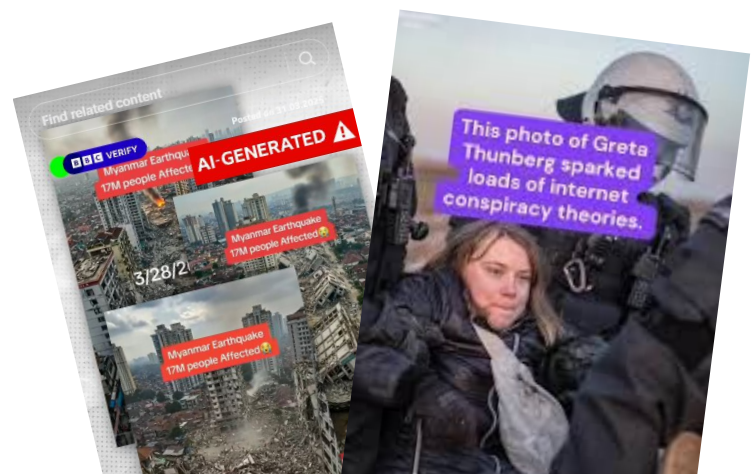
If your child is upset or embarrassed by fake news, offer calm support. Remind them that not everything online is true, and use the experience as a chance to talk and learn together.

#### Develop their Digital Literacy Skills

Encourage your child to think critically by asking:

- Why was this story written?
- Is it trying to influence my opinion or actions?

Help them learn to question content and respond thoughtfully, not emotionally.



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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!

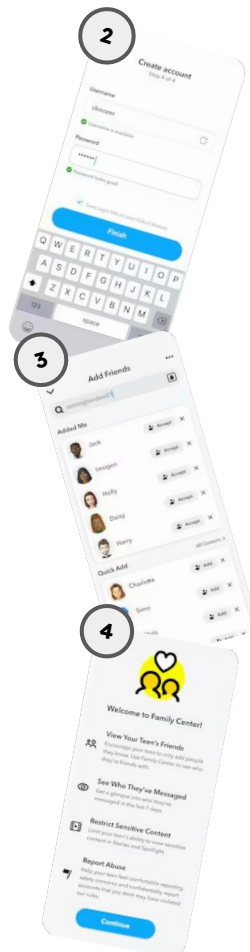


1. Get Snapchat from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

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.

