St Michael's
CofE Primary Academy

Principal: Mrs Kate Jackson
Lower Street
Tettenhall
Wolverhampton
WV6 9AF
01902 558845

1st July 2025

Keeping Our Children Safe Online – The Dangers of Snapchat Use

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you today to share some important information about the social media app *Snapchat* and the potential risks it poses to young children. As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding, we want to ensure all parents and carers are aware of the concerns surrounding the use of this app, particularly among primary-aged children.

Snapchat is designed for users aged **13 and above**, and it is important that we, as a school community, support this age restriction to help protect our children from content and interactions that are not suitable for their age or maturity level.

Snapchat allows users to send messages and photos that disappear after viewing, share "stories" visible for 24 hours, use playful filters, and share their live location via "Snap Map." While these features may seem fun and harmless, they also come with serious risks that we urge you to consider carefully.

Potential Dangers of Snapchat

1. Inappropriate Content
Children may be exposed to sexually explicit images, violent material, or other harmful content that is not filtered or monitored effectively within the app.

2. Cyberbullying and Harassment
The disappearing nature of messages makes it easier for bullying to occur without evidence. Children may be subject to name-calling, embarrassment through photo sharing, or hurtful rumours.
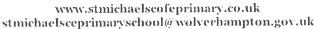
3. Stranger Contact and Grooming Risks
One of our **greatest concerns** is that Snapchat can allow children to be contacted by people they do not know. In some cases, these strangers may pose as peers and attempt to build relationships that lead to requests to meet in person – a serious safeguarding risk. Please be particularly alert to this issue.

4. Location Sharing via Snap Map
Unless privacy settings are adjusted, a child's exact location can be visible to others on their friend list, which increases their vulnerability to unwanted attention or contact.

5. Disappearing Messages

Although Snapchat messages are designed to vanish, they can be **screenshotted or saved** without the sender's knowledge, leading to possible misuse or sharing of private content.

How Parents Can Help

Open Communication
Talk regularly with your child about their online activity. Discuss what apps they are using, who they are talking to, and what to do if they feel uncomfortable.

Monitoring
While giving children some independence is important, it is equally vital to supervise their online presence. This includes checking friend lists, viewing shared stories, and discussing recent conversations.

Privacy Settings
Ensure your child's settings limit who can send them messages, view their stories, and see their location. These settings are essential in keeping unwanted contact to a minimum.

Reporting
Teach your child how to report inappropriate content or users both within Snapchat and, if necessary, to the police or a trusted adult.

Setting Boundaries
We strongly encourage you to set clear rules about app use, including time limits and turning off location sharing altogether.

Working Together for Safety

The digital world is evolving quickly, and as a school, we are committed to working with families to promote safe and responsible online behaviour. Your involvement and vigilance are key to protecting your child from online risks.

If you would like further advice or support regarding online safety, please do not hesitate to contact the school or visit trusted resources such as **www.thinkuknow.co.uk** or **www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety.**

Together, we can help ensure our children enjoy the benefits of technology without being exposed to unnecessary dangers.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our children safe.

Yours sincerely

Helen-Marie Navratil

Vice Principal