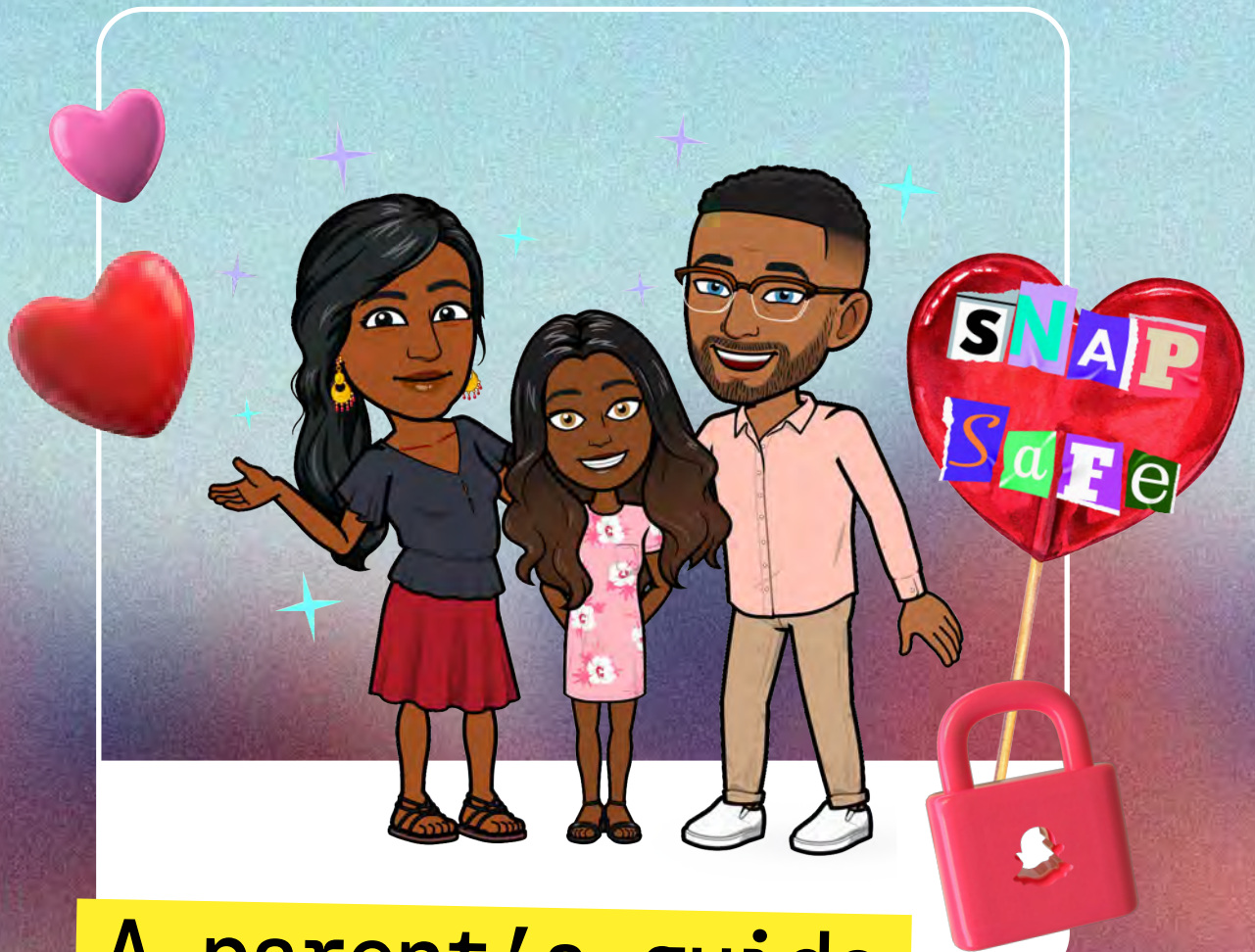


# SNAPSAVVY



A parent's guide  
to online safety

SNAPCHAT 

 Childnet



# A MESSAGE FROM



## BRIDGET LEA

VP & UK GENERAL  
MANAGER, SNAP INC.

We all live a significant part of our lives online, young people especially, so being digitally savvy is now a life skill that we all need. This means that as parents, we need to feel confident to be able to discuss not only the benefits of being online, but also the risks, so that our teens feel equipped to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.

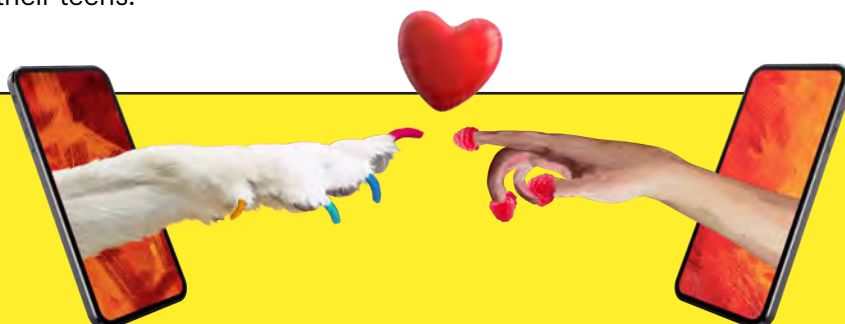
We know that online safety is something that parents are increasingly aware of and want to know more about. Initial insights from Snapchat's 2024 Digital Well-Being Index, which surveys teens, young adults and parents about how they are faring online, shows that 44% of UK parents check in regularly with their children about their online activities, an increase of 8 percentage points compared to last year.

However, the research also tells us that teens are less likely to tell their parents about more serious online risks, and 1 in 5 (21%) UK parents don't know how to monitor their teens' online activities. Therefore, we need to work even harder to both help parents better understand the online world and support them in having meaningful conversations about online safety with their teens.

Snapchat is and has always been designed to be different to traditional social media, created to enhance relationships with real friends and family. There's no unvetted feed of content and there are no public likes, removing social pressures to be perfect. As a platform that is popular with young people, we feel a great responsibility to help make Snapchat safe for all members of our community.

It's why we have partnered with Childnet, the UK online safety charity, to create a guide filled with helpful advice and tips to support parents. These include guidance on navigating positive online safety conversations with teens, gaining a deeper understanding of how teens use Snapchat, and raising awareness of the tools and extra protections we have for teens, as well as the safety features available to parents.

We're proud that Snapchat is ranked the happiest platform when compared to other apps, and we're committed to continuing to collaborate with parents, carers, and Snapchatters to help people have positive experiences online.



# A MESSAGE FROM



**WILL GARDNER OBE**  
CEO AT CHILDNET

At Childnet, we work with children and young people every day, talking about their lives online and how to stay safe, look after themselves and others, and, crucially, what to do if they are unsure or worried about something or someone online.

Whether they go online to talk to their friends, to research and find out more, or even to inspire change, the internet can be a brilliant place for young people. However, young people also tell us about the things they see and experience online which aren't age-appropriate, may be harmful, and that worry them.

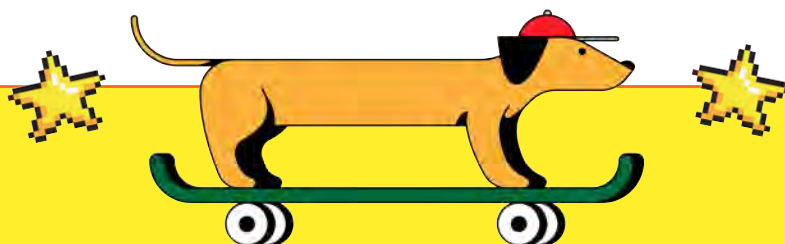
Our Safer Internet Day 2023 research found that at least 80% of 8-to-17-year-olds would be most likely to talk to a parent, carer or guardian if they experienced situations online that made them feel worried, bullied or uncomfortable.

We know that starting these conversations can have a real impact on young people. As a result of Safer Internet Day 2024, which stimulated a national conversation about staying safe online, we saw almost a third of children speaking to their parent or carer about something or someone that had been worrying them online.

Talking with young people about what they do, see and experience online is a key part of supporting their safety, reminding them they can talk to you if, for example, someone or something online is making them feel uncomfortable. There are also tools which can help support child safety, such as the parental controls, available on many of the apps and devices your children are using.

The online world is constantly evolving and changing and, with young people at the forefront of this change, it can feel daunting for parents and carers to keep up. Although as parents we can't always be experts on the online world, we can still play a key role in supporting children online. By keeping conversations with your teenagers open and non-judgemental, and allowing them space to teach you about the apps and trends they are seeing online, you have already put yourself in the best position to help them make the most of their time online.

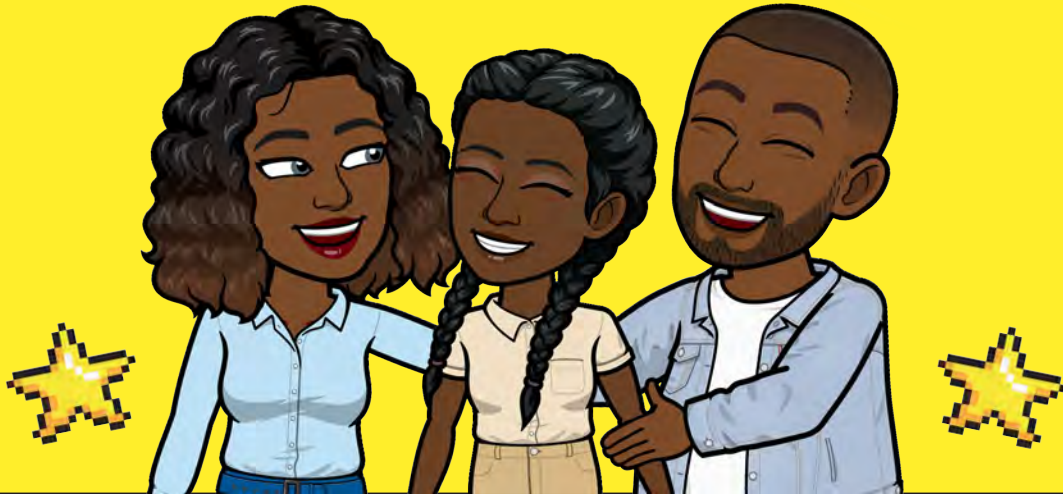
This guide is designed to support parents and carers with these important conversations about online safety, with specific guidance from Snapchat about the safety settings available on the app that have been created to help teenagers have a safer experience on the service.



# NAVIGATING TEENS' LIVES ONLINE



Having open and honest conversations with your teenage children can be difficult, and **we know with topics such as online safety, it can be easy to feel out of your depth.** We all want young people to get the most out of being online, and as their parent or carer you are in the perfect position to support them whilst also making sure they are aware of possible risks.

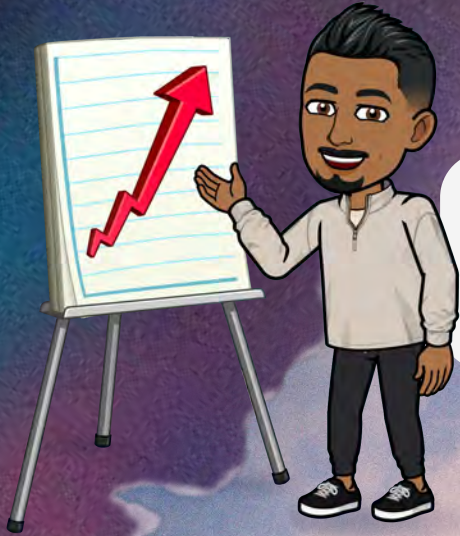


Snapchat has released initial UK insights from its annual Digital Well-being Index which surveys teens, young adults and parents to understand their experiences online and how they are navigating online safety. The study, conducted in June 2024, covered respondents' experiences on all apps, platforms and services – not just Snapchat.

**It's reassuring to know that 44% of parents say that they regularly check in with their teen about how they spend their time online,** an increase of 8 percentage points compared to last year. That said, the research also told us that **teens were less likely to tell their parents about more serious online risks.**

These results show that it has never been more important for parents and carers to understand how their teens are using the internet, and feel confident to have open and positive conversations about online safety. **If we can get teens and parents talking, we think it can make a real difference.**





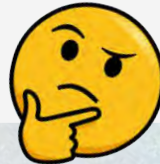
**44%**

of parents now regularly check in with their teens about their online activity.



**62%**

of those aged between **13 and 17** say they had sought help after encountering an online risk, highlighting teenagers themselves are also becoming more aware about online safety. But teens are less likely to report serious issues.



**21%**

of parents admitted they were unsure how to effectively monitor their children's online activities.





# TOP TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY



## 1 TAKE AN INTEREST IN YOUR TEEN'S DIGITAL LIFE AND LET THEM KNOW YOU HAVE THEIR BACK

Regularly check in with your teen about their online activity and what apps they are using. Having a conversation with your teen at a place or time you both feel most comfortable will help you both open up, whether that's in the car or walking around the shops. Let them know that you're there for them and they won't get into trouble if they have any concerns, questions or want to talk about something they have seen or experienced online. If your teen is about to have their first independent experiences online, ensure you set appropriate boundaries from the outset, and make a habit of checking in regularly.

## 2 FIND OUT HOW YOUR TEEN'S FAVOURITE APPS WORK

Ask your teen if they can show you how to use their favourite apps so you can familiarise yourself with how they work and which features your teen uses most. Talking about the positives of being online and remaining open-minded might help prevent your teen from becoming defensive or secretive.

## 3 EDUCATE ABOUT PRIVACY SETTINGS

Talk to your teen about the importance of protecting their personal information, particularly their devices and passwords. Help them understand the risks and potential consequences of sharing sensitive details online (such as their full name, address, school, or other contact information), and the need to set and maintain strong privacy settings.



**4 AGREE ON BOUNDARIES AS A FAMILY**

No one likes being told what to do, but agreeing guidelines for behaviour online, social media usage and screen time is important. Asking your teen what they feel is appropriate and coming to a compromise, will help them feel part of the decision-making process and help to ensure you are striking a healthy balance when it comes to technology use. You can also decide a timeframe for a review of these boundaries, so your teen knows that these can evolve as they get older.



**5 USE PARENTAL CONTROLS BUT RESPECT THEIR PRIVACY**

Parental controls are important safety features available on most social media apps and devices that allow parents or carers to supervise their child’s activity online. It’s important to be open with your teen about using these features.

Talk to them about why parental controls are important and reassure them that you still want to respect their privacy.

Snapchat’s **Family Centre** allows you to see who your teen is friends with and who they’ve recently been communicating with, without revealing the content of their conversations. You can also find further support on Childnet’s Parents and Carers **resource sheet**.

**6 HELP YOUR TEEN BECOME AWARE OF MISINFORMATION**

Talk to your teen about recognising misinformation, scams and clickbait, and the importance of verifying information with credible sources. Encourage them to question content that seems too good to be true or overly sensationalised.



# HELPFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS



Starting the conversation about online safety with your teen can be the hardest part, so in partnership with Childnet, we have suggested some questions you can use as conversation starters to help you communicate with your teen about these issues with confidence.

## BE POSITIVE



What apps or websites are popular with your mates right now?

How do you find videos/profiles/games you like online?

## INVOLVE THE FAMILY

Has anyone heard of the new app..., do you know what it is?

Are there any updates/new features to your favourite apps? Can you show me how they work?

What would you do if...? (e.g. you watched a worrying video, you were sent a mean message)

Are there any new phrases, slang, emojis or features that you or your friends are using?





**LET THEM TAKE THE LEAD**

What have you heard about...online? (e.g. sharing photos, bullying)

Have you ever come across something online that made you feel uncomfortable?

What did you do about it?

**TRY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS**

I'd like to talk about... with you, is this something you've heard about before?

Are there any questions you want to ask me about...?

**UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE AT HAND**

I can see that something is on your mind, can I help?

Can we talk about...?

Remember, I'm always here to help no matter how big the problem might feel.



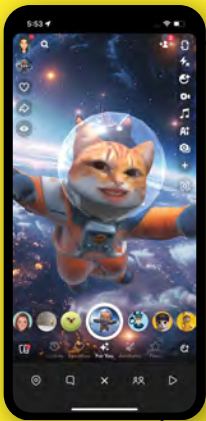


# SNAPCHAT 101

Snapchat is primarily a private, visual messaging service designed for people aged 13 and above. It's very popular with young people who use it to chat with their friends and family, similar to the ways they interact in real life. People also use it to watch content from their favourite creators and express themselves using Snapchat's fun and interactive Augmented Reality lenses.

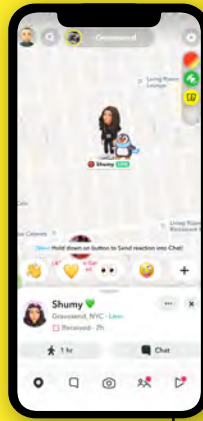
At Snapchat, our goal is to provide a safe and positive experience, and we purposely designed Snapchat to be different to traditional social media. Its core features are designed to reflect the fun and spontaneity of in-person conversations. Snapchat doesn't open to a public news feed powered by an algorithm, and instead opens to a camera to encourage creativity. Some of the key features include:

## CAMERA



Like a typical camera on your phone, Snapchat's camera is an easy and visual way to share what's on your mind with the people that matter most to you. Our AR (augmented reality) lenses allow you to add fun or educational layers onto your photos or videos, overlaying text, stickers and more on the world.

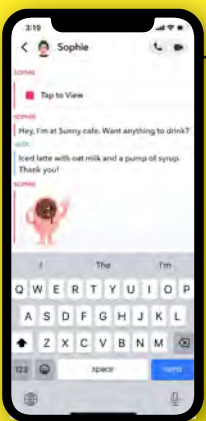
## MAP



The map is a fun, interactive way to share your favourite places and to see what your friends are up to, but only if they choose to share their location with you. It can also be used as a safety feature, for example, if Snapchatters are walking home late at night. Location-sharing on Snap Map is turned off by default for all users - and users additionally have to enable location sharing with Snapchat on their device.



## CHAT



The chat function is a messaging service that allows you to talk to friends and family with text and pictures. Before social media, our fun, spontaneous, and silly interactions with friends only lived in our memories! Snapchat is designed to mirror that dynamic, to help people feel comfortable expressing themselves without feeling pressure or judgement.

Chat will show when your friend has viewed your message and is typing. It will also notify you if someone takes a screenshot of your Snap, or saves a Chat message. Chats delete by default after 24 hours to reflect real-life conversations, but you do have the option to save chats. You can also make voice and video calls and join group conversations.

## MY AI



My AI is our friendly AI-powered chatbot. My AI can answer a burning trivia question, offer advice on the perfect gift for a friend's birthday, help plan a hiking trip for a long weekend or suggest what to make for dinner. We've developed My AI to abide by our Community Guidelines, give age-appropriate responses, and have connected it to our Family Centre where parents now have the option to restrict engagement.



# HOW DOES SNAPCHAT WORK TO PROTECT ITS YOUNGER USERS



As a platform popular with teenagers, we feel a tremendous responsibility to help keep our community safe. We offer extra protections for under 18s to help keep the focus on connecting with close friends, preventing unwanted contact from strangers, and providing an age-appropriate content experience. Here are the key things to know about Snapchat safeguards:



## FAMILY CENTRE

Our in-app suite of parental tools allow parents and carers to see who their teen is friends with and who they've been recently communicating with, without seeing the content of teens' messages. We like to think of it a bit like your teen having their friends round at your house, but you aren't eavesdropping on their conversations.

Family Centre also allows parents and carers to easily and confidentially report accounts that may be of concern to them, as well as the ability to restrict My AI and check the age their teen signed up as.



## PROTECTIONS AGAINST UNWANTED CONTACT

We intentionally try to make it very difficult for young people to be contacted by strangers. We keep friends lists private and, by default, don't allow any users to be messaged by someone they haven't added as a friend or don't have in their phone contacts. If a teen under 18 accepts someone as a friend that they do not share any mutual friends with, we send pop-up warnings to make sure they want to be in contact, and remind them to only communicate with people they trust. We prevent delivery of a friend request altogether when it comes from someone we detect is a bad actor, resulting in the removal of that account. Snapchatters can also easily block, report, and remove people from their friends list if they no longer wish to be in touch with them.



## STRONG DEFAULT SETTINGS

By default, we apply safety and privacy settings for teens to strict standards, turn location-sharing off, and send all Snapchatters regular reminders to check their privacy settings.



**QUICK AND SIMPLE REPORTING TOOLS**

Teens and parents can easily report safety concerns in the app. Even though content deletes by default on Snapchat, if we find illegal content proactively or learn of it through a report, we retain that content for an extended period in case the police want to follow up. We also offer the option to submit a report off-app via [help.snapchat.com](https://help.snapchat.com).



**ZERO TOLERANCE**

If we discover **severe offences** on Snapchat, we disable the violating account and work to prevent the user from getting back on Snapchat. This includes blocking new friend requests from other accounts created on the same device. We have a clear set of **Community Guidelines\*** which outline what is and isn't allowed on Snapchat and help people to use our services safely.



**AGE APPROPRIATE CONTENT**

To help teens have an age-appropriate experience, we moderate content and work to proactively find and remove illegal and potentially harmful content before it can be recommended to a wide audience. This includes applying additional moderation to our public content platforms.



\*Community Guidelines





# HOW TO GET STARTED ON FAMILY CENTRE

## In Snapchat

1

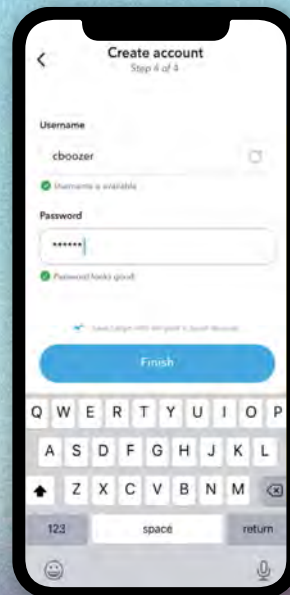
**To use Family Centre,** parents must have a Snapchat account. Start by **downloading Snapchat** from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store to your mobile phone.



Scan to download

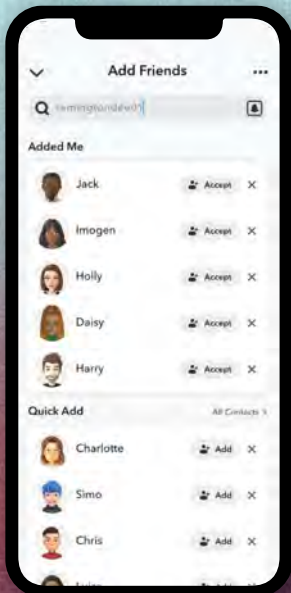
2

**Open the app and tap 'Sign Up'** to create an account. Once you enter all the relevant information as prompted, you can **create your Snapchat username.**



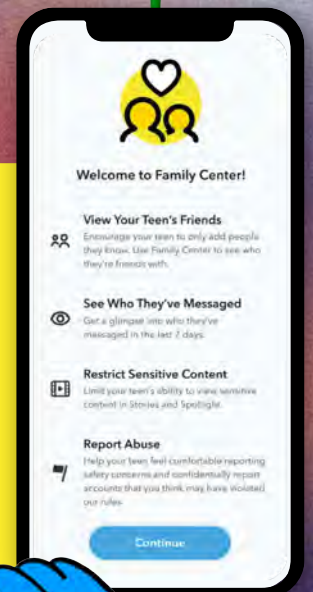
3

**Ask your teen for their username,** so you can add them as a friend. Once you have their username, you can search for it using the **search bar** at the Camera screen's top-left corner.



4

**Once your teen has accepted your friend request,** you'll be ready to get started.

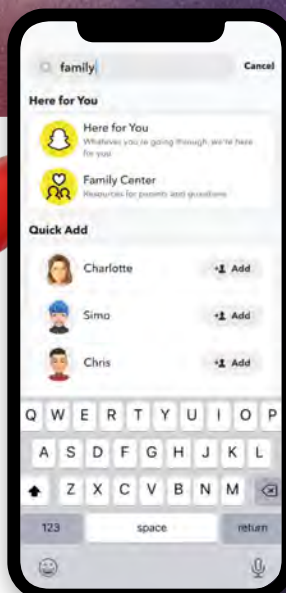


5

**There are 2 ways to access Family Centre on Snapchat:**

**1** You can use the **search bar.** Search relevant terms such as **"safety", "family" or "parent"** and Family Centre will appear.

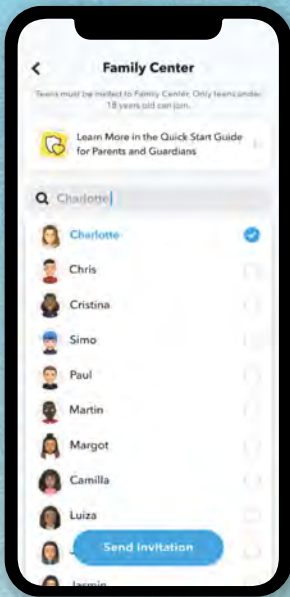
**2** **Head to Settings** (gear icon), located at the top-right corner of your Profile Page (located at the top left corner across all tabs), where Family Centre has a permanent home.





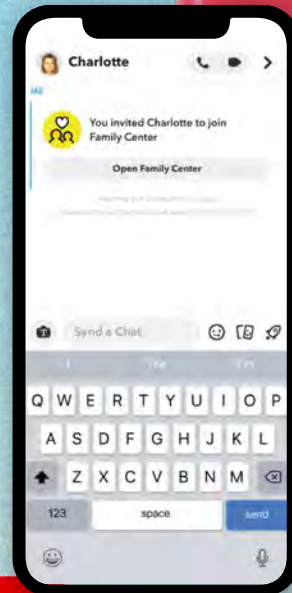
6

**Once you open Family Centre,** you'll need to **invite your teen** to join. Your teen will receive an invitation, and they **must opt in** to participate.



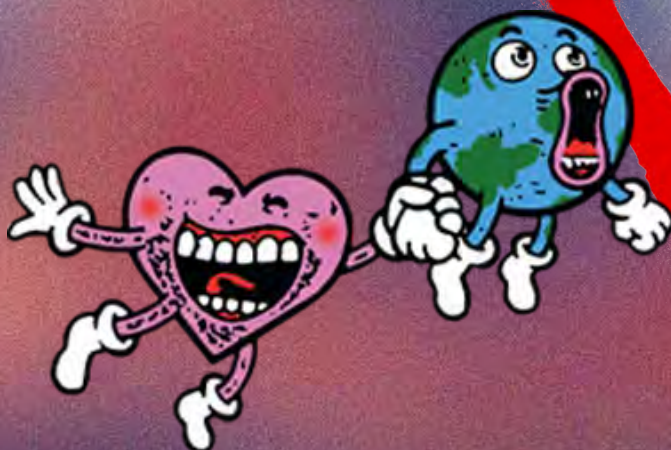
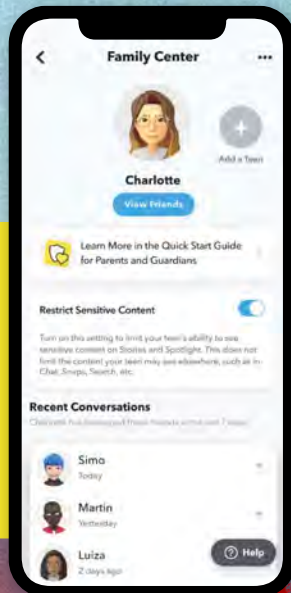
7

**Teens need to tap 'Accept',** and you'll both be notified that the **status of the invitation** has been updated.



8

**Now, you can use Family Centre** to see who your teens are talking to and start enjoying Snapchat as a family!



At Snap, we routinely enhance Family Centre to reflect feedback from our community, parents, and experts, as well as support new family-friendly features on Snapchat. You can find our latest updates to Family Centre on our dedicated parents site: [parents.snapchat.com](https://parents.snapchat.com)



Scan for more tools and resources for parents



# END NOTE

This guide has been developed using insights and expertise shared by Snap Inc. including the Communications, Trust and Safety, Policy and Legal teams. The guide also draws on insights and expertise provided by Childnet, the online safety charity.



## Resources

Other resources used to develop this guide include:

### Snapchat's Digital Well-being Index 2024

Early UK insights from Snapchat's Digital Well-being Index which surveys teens, young adults and parents across six markets about how they are faring online. The study, conducted in June 2024, covered respondents' experiences on all apps, platforms and services – not just Snapchat.



Snapchat's parents microsite



Childnet tips for talking to teenagers about online safety



Childnet's conversation guide for parents and carers



Childnet advice for parents and carers

For further information and support, please see the following resources:

### UK Safer Internet Centre

The UK Safer Internet Centre is a partnership of three leading charities; Childnet, the South West Grid for Learning and the Internet Watch Foundation.

### Samaritans

Call: **116 123**

Samaritans is a charity organisation that seeks to listen and help people talk through their concerns and worries.

### Mind

Call: **0 300 123 3393**

Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing mental health problems.

### PAPYRUS

Call: **0 800 068 41 41**

**Prevention of Young Suicide HOPELineUK**

PAPYRUS is a confidential support and advice service for children and young people.

SMS: **07860039967**

**SNAPCHAT** 