



 **King Edward Primary School**  
St Andrew Street, Littleworth  
Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 2RG

 **Headteacher:** Mrs Emma Estell

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you well. As we approach the festive season and the probability of children getting new devices, I wanted to take a moment to address an important issue regarding the safety of our children online, specifically concerning the use of Snapchat.

We have become concerned at the number of online safety incidences using Snapchat with our children. Please remember this is an age 13+ app so our children should not be using this. This is because they are not yet mature enough to deal with situations that may arise as part of using the app and this age restriction is to keep them safe.

We have done much online safety work in school but are still finding that children are putting themselves and others in vulnerable situations.

### **Keep Your Child Safe on Snapchat**

What is Snapchat? Snapchat is an app for sending photos and videos (known as 'Snaps'), and text messages. The 'Stories' feature lets users share photos or videos with all their contacts at once. Snaps disappear after being opened, usually within seconds, and Stories disappear after 24 hours. Images and messages aren't automatically saved on phones. The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13, but it's easy to sign up if you're younger.

### **What's the problem?**

There's a risk of seeing sexual content and of bullying.

Your child's location could be shared automatically with their contacts, which could put them in danger if they have strangers as 'friends' on the app. A new 'Meet Up' feature allows people to get directions to another user's location if they're sharing their location.

There's a risk of children being 'groomed' by strangers into sharing pictures and information about themselves.

### **4 Steps to Help Your Child Use Snapchat Safely – remember they need to be 13!**

\*Tell your child to only use it with real friends Encourage your child not to talk to people they don't know in real life and not to share personal information such as what school they go to or where they live with people they don't know offline.

\*Use privacy settings By default, only 'friends' your child has added on Snapchat can contact them directly and see their story or location. Encourage your child to keep those default settings. To check and change the settings:

- Tap the person icon in the top-left of Snapchat, then the cog in the top-right.
- Scroll down to the 'Privacy Control' section and tap the relevant options (e.g., 'Contact Me' and 'View My Story').



- Under 'See My Location', enable 'Ghost Map' to turn location sharing off.
- Under 'See Me In Quick Add' you can stop your child's profile from being suggested to strangers as a potential 'friend'.

\*Talk to your child about image sharing and being careful about what they share. Remind your child to think carefully about the images they share and with whom. Before they share anything, tell them to ask: "Would I be happy for other people to see this?" Make sure your child knows the risks of taking, sharing, or viewing naked or sexually explicit pictures of themselves or another child. This is known as 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' or 'sexting' and is illegal, even when the person doing it is a child.

\*Make sure your child knows how to use reporting and blocking functions

\*To report a Snap or Story, press and hold on it, tap 'Report Snap', then explain the problem.

\*To remove or block a friend, swipe to the right to go to the 'Chat' screen, then tap and hold on the person's name. Tap 'Manage Friendship', then choose 'Remove Friend' or 'Block'.

Thank you for your attention to this important ongoing matter. Let's work together to keep our children safe online.

Best wishes

Emma Estell  
**Headteacher**