



Snapchat | A Heads up for Parents

Jonny Timms, Deputy Head (Pastoral)

We are aware that many of our senior boys are on Snapchat. Recently a friend showed me the Discover feature, which grabs content from a variety of sources such as Cosmopolitan, Buzzfeed, CNN among many others and makes it accessible to anyone.

More often than not, the stories include explicit sex and sexist messaging. When I looked into this further, I found the stories from Cosmopolitan especially offensive. But what makes this even more worrying is that there is no way to remove or block the Discover feature on the app. Snapchat has an age limit of 13 years. Regardless of the age limit, the fact is content creators in Discover have a lot of explicit material - much of it offensive for anyone to read, let alone children.

So what to do? Last summer a 14-year-old boy and his mother filed a lawsuit against Snapchat regarding the Discover feature. The suit accuses Snapchat of violating the Communications Decency Act of 1996, which is supposed to help regulate explicit content on the web. In addition to civil penalties, the lawsuit asks Snapchat to put in-app warnings about possible sexually explicit content. However, there has been no word yet if any action has been taken. For now, we urge parents to be aware and understand the slight risks that using this app may have.

Snap Map Feature

Snapchat has launched a new feature recently. Snap Maps allows users to see the location of their contacts and allows others to accurately pinpoint where you are. There are three possible privacy settings:

- Ghost mode, where only you can see your position
- My Friends mode, where any contact can see your location
- Select Friends mode, just those who you choose can see you

ChildNet have posted a thorough explanation of Snap Maps and how to ensure users stay safe. Well worth a read to share with anyone you know who uses the app.

Further reading: [Introducing Snap Maps \(ChildNet\)](#)