



Our Ref : LSM/OBA/17

July 2017

Dear Parents

Re : Snapchat and Snap Map

Welcome to the final online safety bulletin for this academic year. In this bulletin we look at safety issues surrounding Snapchat and Snap Map. Snapchat is the most popular app young people use to communicate with each other. They use it to instantly message and create 'stories' and maintain 'streaks'.

Last Wednesday Snapchat launched an update to the app which introduced a new feature '*Snap Map*'. This new feature allows users to share their location with all their friends or a few selected friends. It has been made very attractive to users by creating Avatars and ActionMojis to represent users; it puts the avatar in a car if they are driving and in a plane image if they are flying on holiday, follows the route and even details the miles per hour they are travelling. It is a very precise app.

Although fun, there is a worrying side to this app, as I am sure you can appreciate.

- Does your daughter know all her 'friends' in real life?
- Do you want information about your travel plans made public?
- Parties and large events are visible by the amount of avatars in the area.
- The media have highlighted how it could be used by stalkers and bullies.



Users can disable Snap Map by turning off 'location sharing' on their phone settings or still enjoy Snap Map, but prevent their location being visible by going into '*Ghost Mode*' on the app.

This new app gives a very precise map location of the user and I would encourage you to discuss the app with your daughter about the importance of using it and consider which friends they are sharing information with. Finally, please be aware the minimum age to use the Snapchat app is 13.

Please click on the links below for a Parents' Guide to Snapchat and Snap Map.

Parents Guide to Snapchat: <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/parents-a-guide-to-snapchat/>

Parents Guide to Snapmap: <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/snap-map/>

Wishing you a very happy and safe summer.

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