

# Robert Browning, Snowsfields and Tower Bridge Primary Schools

We learn and succeed together



 [@robertbrowning.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@robertbrowning.bsky.social) [@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social) [@snsprimary.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@snsprimary.bsky.social)  
Find us at: [www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk](http://www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk)

## Newsletter 29th November 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are all really looking forward to all the festivities planned over the next few weeks, all around our schools we can hear the sound of children singing Christmas songs! Please check the dates for your diary box each week for any updates.

We are increasing the number of followers we have on the social media platform Bluesky. If you haven't already please follow your school:

Robert Browning: [@robertbrowning.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@robertbrowning.bsky.social)

Snowsfields: [@snsprimary.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@snsprimary.bsky.social)

Tower Bridge: [@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social)

Talking to your child about keeping safe online is an essential conversation to continue to have. Internet Matters have lots of information to support you including parental control guides [Parental controls](#) & [privacy settings guides](#) | [Internet Matters](#)

If your child missed their flu vaccine at school, please see the family information page of the newsletter on page 9 to see when and where to catch up with their vaccine.

Have a lovely weekend, the school gates open at 8:45am, please speak to a member of the Leadership Team on the gate if you need support bringing your child to school on time.

### [Applying for a Reception place](#)

If your child was born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, you must apply for a primary or infant school place for September 2025. You will need to apply online. Please click on the link here: [eAdmissions](#)

As you know, The Magna Groups are now running the after school club facility for Snowsfields and Tower Bridge pupils. Should you wish to register your child please follow the link below to register: <https://magna.childcare-online-booking.co.uk/>



Dates For Your Diary



### Tower Bridge

Thursday 5th December - Year 5 Lantern Parade 4pm  
Thursday 12th December - KS1 Performance to parents 10am and 2pm - see school page  
Tuesday 17th December - EYFS Winter Performance  
Tuesday 17th December - Class Parties - wear your own clothes  
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner  
Friday 20th December - Festive Jumpers  
Friday 20th December - Break Up  
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

### Robert Browning

Thursday 5th December - Year 5 Lantern Parade 4pm  
Wednesday 11th December - KS1 Performance to Families  
Tuesday 17th December - EYFS Winter Performance  
Tuesday 17th December - class parties - wear your own clothes  
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner  
Friday 20th December - Festive Jumpers  
Friday 20th December - Break Up 1pm  
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

### Snowsfields

Thursday 5th December - Year 5 and Choir Lantern Parade (after school)  
Friday 13th December 10am - KS1 Christmas Show  
Tuesday 17th December 10am - EYFS Winter Performance  
Tuesday 17th December - class parties - wear your own clothes  
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner  
Friday 20th December - Wear a festive jumper  
Friday 20th December - Break Up at 1pm.  
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

Term Dates for 2024-2025 are on the Federation website

[Term Dates – The Bridges Federation](#)

Term time holidays will not be authorised.

Other important dates for this year can also be found on the school website here:

[Diary – The Bridges Federation](#)





*end of term*  
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Thursday 12th December**

- KS1 Performance to parents with small children 10am

**Thursday 12th December**

- KS1 Performance to parents no small children to attend 2pm

**Wednesday 18th December**

- Christmas Dinner

**Tuesday 17th December**

- EYFS Winter Performance 9.30am
- Class Parties (wear own clothes)

**Friday 20th December** - wear Festive

Jumpers and Break Up 1pm

**Year 4, 5 and 6 SCHOOL  
DISCO**

Thursday 12th December -  
3.45 - 5.00pm  
Tickets cost £3

Children may bring their own clothes with them to change into after school.



winter  
**RAFFLE**

We will be selling raffle tickets in the mornings and afternoons from next week for the Winter Raffle. There are lots of lovely prizes on offer including:

- Unicorn Theatre family ticket
- toys,
- toiletries,
- gift sets
- books

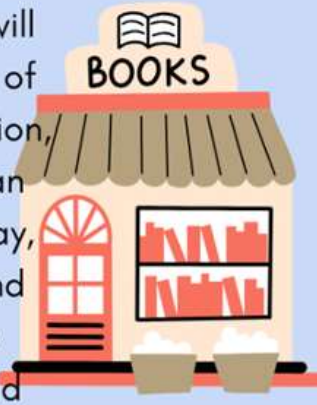


More prizes to be announced soon.

Tickets cost £1 per strip and we will draw the winners on Friday 20th December in the last assembly of the term.

**Pop-Up £1 Book Shop**

On Tuesday 10th December, our school library will host a pop-up book shop. A fantastic selection of new and pre-loved books, all in excellent condition, will be available for just £1 each. Each child can purchase up to two books. During the school day, children will have the opportunity to browse and choose their books. Please send your child to school with a maximum of £2 which they should hand to their class teacher.



**WE TOOK  
OVER  
TOWER  
BRIDGE**

So as you know, we took over. We did different activities including giving tours; meeting the Bridge Master; learning about historical artefacts and lots more. We learnt how the jobs on the bridge have stayed the same and changed since the Victorian times and we were able to answer lots of questions. We also got to dress up as Victorian people and the King! We had our own security lanyard; got to use the walkie talkies and created our own souvenir store to sell items to the visitors that day.



## *Dance at Robert Browning*

This term Orange Class, Green Class and Purple Class have been enjoying their dance sessions with Chantal.



## *Early Years Learning*

The children were set a design challenge linked to the story 'Peace at Last'. They each had to design and make a bed for Daddy bear. The children also had a go at painting the 'Owl Babies'.



## *Blue Class*

Blue Class had a great trip along the River Thames, looking at bridges!






# Snowsfields Primary School




A cat went to  
eat codfish and  
got chased by  
a dog and got  
lost in the  
forest

## Golden Time

Choosing time is fun time in Sunshine class! It is also an opportunity for the children to consolidate their learning through creative and engaging activities.



As part of their maths provision, children use concrete resources like counters, cubes, and number lines to help them grasp key mathematical concepts.




Rainbow class children are in need of a fitness trampoline (92 cm in diameter) for their soft playroom. If you have one in good condition that you could donate, we would greatly appreciate it!

## DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY Frozen Yoghurt



Thank you to Edge London Bridge and Mace for organising some art workshops for our year 6 class.



Rainbow class had a lovely time in their design and technology lesson making healthy frozen yoghurt!





Our school value this week is:  
T - Teamwork

Reading Raffle Winners



Our core value this week  
is: Kindness

Reading Raffle  
Winners



Times Tables  
Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:  
**S - Sharing knowledge, skills  
and ideas**

Reading Raffle  
Winners





	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	9	11	750
Year 2	11	7	1375
Year 3	8	15	475
Year 4	12	15	100
Year 5	3	20	325
Year 6	2 ½	8	925

**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 18/11/2024: 94.22%**

**1st Place Attendance: Year 6  
1st Place Punctuality: Year 2**



**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 18/11/2024: 94.25%**

**1st Place Attendance: Y2  
1st Place Punctuality: Y3**

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	17	6	92.27%
Year 2	0	5	100%
Year 3	15	4	94.44%
Year 4	20	8	91.67%
Year 5	2	8	99.29%
Year 6	32	13	88.97%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	14	10	<b>625</b>
Year 2	22	13	<b>125</b>
Year 3	0	5	<b>1300</b>
Year 4	17	12	<b>325</b>
Year 5	16	9	<b>425</b>
Year 6	8	9	<b>775</b>

**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 18/11/2024: 94.80%**

**1st Place Attendance: Y3  
1st Place Punctuality: Y3**

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## ATTENDANCE UPDATE

**Being in school and having the best attendance possible underpins all the many benefits of school for your child, such as their learning, wellbeing and wider development. We want to work with you to ensure that attendance for pupils at the Bridges Federation is the best it can be.**

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable full time education. This means making sure your child is in school every day except when

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from your child's school for them not to attend. You should only ask for this in exceptional circumstances. Generally, a holiday will not be classed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Your religious body has a day especially for religious observance.

### **If my child needs to be absent from school, what do I need to do?**

You should contact us as early as possible (no later than 10am) on the first day of absence to explain why. If you do not, we will contact you to find out where they are.

### **My child is ill. What should I do?**

If your child is ill, read the NHS's 'Is my child too ill for school?' advice to help you decide whether they can go to school. Contact us as soon as possible to let us know that they will be absent.

### **Do I need to provide medical evidence to support my child's illness related absence?**

We may ask for medical evidence when your child is absent due to illness. This may be in cases where:

- Your child is regularly absent due to illness, to assess how we can help by putting support in place.
- We have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation has not resolved the issue.

If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the NHS App.)

To avoid disruption to your child's attendance, medical and dental appointments should not be booked during the school day whenever reasonably possible.

### **My child is struggling to attend school. What can I do?**


The first step is to talk to us about why your child is missing school, and what help we can give. You should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible whilst waiting for help and support to be put into place. Information on who you can contact for help, including the school's senior leader responsible for attendance, can be found in our attendance policy on the website. We follow the expectations laid out in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>


<https://thebridgesfederation.org.uk/home/attendance/>



# Family support



## FITNESS & WELLNESS FOR WOMEN



- BREATHING
- STRETCHING
- DANCING
- YOGA TECHNIQUES
- AND MORE

**Venue**  
The Lewington Community centre  
9 Eugenia road  
Rotherhithe SE16 2RU

**TUESDAYS STARTING 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024 10AM - 11:30AM**

crèche will be provided

For more information  
02035369609, 07394662602  
Admin@parentskills2go.com  
Parentskills2go.org

Connect with Us  
@parentskills2go



Southwark Young Carers

We support young people living in Southwark aged 8-24, who provide unpaid care or support to a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition or a substance misuse issue.



For further information, please contact our Hub: youngcarers@imago.com





## Free Workshops for Parents and Carers

Do you want more guidance on how to talk to your children, teens and young people about vaping, alcohol or drugs? Do you want to be informed on the current themes and trends we come across working with young people in the borough?

Substances are more accessible today than ever before. For parents, carers or anyone responsible for children and young people, it can feel overwhelming and difficult to know how to respond.

We're offering FREE online workshops for parents and carers in Southwark, to give advice and guidance to help you navigate this quickly changing landscape.

**We'll cover:**

- Current trends amongst young people
- Strategies for talking to young people about substances in an open and supportive way
- Practical advice on how to keep your children safe from the dangers of substance misuse

For further information contact:

- Email: [Southwark.YoungPeople@cgl.org.uk](mailto:Southwark.YoungPeople@cgl.org.uk) or scan the QR code for a direct link to the eventbrite page.
- You can call us on: 020 3404 7499



## The Nest - Wellbeing Hub

The Nest operates a drop-in service every **Saturday between 10:30 and 14:30**. Therapeutic practitioners and support workers can offer 1:1 emotional support, information & advice and signpost you to the appropriate services.

[Drop-In Service | The Nest](#)



## BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM

(6 WEEKS ONLINE PROGRAM)

Understanding Autism & How to support Your Children At Home or Early Years Setting

Starts Monday 16th September, 2024  
6:00pm-7:30pm

For more information  
02035369609, 07394662602  
Admin@parentskills2go.com  
Parentskills2go.org

Zoom details will be sent after registration

Connect with Us  
@parentskills2go

## HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE THEIR FEARS AND WORRIES

NOV-DEC 2024



5 WEEK ONLINE GROUP FOR PARENTS/CARERS AIMED AT HELPING YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN OVERCOMING ANXIETY WHILST DEVELOPING THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND BRAVE BEHAVIOURS.

THIS COURSE IS BASED ON CBT EVIDENCE-BASED GUIDED SELF-HELP TECHNIQUES.

**WEDNESDAY 1-2PM**  
13TH NOV, 20TH NOV, 27TH NOV, 4TH DEC, 11TH DEC

TO SIGN UP, PLEASE CONTACT ROSA OR ANNA:

[ROSA.KORNFEIN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK](mailto:ROSA.KORNFEIN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK)  
07999 402 360

[ANNA.GEISSMANN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK](mailto:ANNA.GEISSMANN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK)  
07912214700





Family  
info

Parent Skills 2Go  
Community Interest Company

# VOLUNTEER WITH US & GET SKILLED UP

## FREE TRAINING PROGRAM

**TRAINING DATES:**  
4TH OCTOBER 2024:  
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM TRAINING (ONLINE)  
19TH OCTOBER 2024:  
TEAM BUILDING & CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
8TH FEBRUARY 2025:  
READING & STORYTELLING DELIVERY/PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES  
6TH & 13TH MAY 2025:  
COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR VOLUNTEER  
4TH JULY, 2025:  
ANNUAL & MANDATORY SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**  
ALL VOLUNTEER TRAINING IS FREE TO ATTEND. HOWEVER, YOU NEED TO COMMIT TO A MINIMUM OF 15 TO 18 DAYS OF YOUR TIME TO VOLUNTEER WITH US (EXPENSES PAID)

For more information:  
02035369609, 07394662602  
Admin@parentskills2go.com  
Parentskills2go.org

Connect with us:  
@parentskills2go  
@parentskills2go

Impact on Urban Health

Parent Skills 2Go in partnership with SOUTHWARK ADULT LEARNING SERVICES

# ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

CLASSES ARE STARTING!

Come to test your level on **WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2024**  
Time :10am - 1pm  
Venue: The Lewington Community centre  
9 Eugenia road  
Rotherhithe SE16 2RU

CRÈCHE WILL BE PROVIDED (FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS)

For details and to register: 02035369609, 07394662602  
Parentskills2go.org

Impact on Urban Health

NSPCC What are the PANTS rules?

PANTS

- Privates are private +
- Always remember your body belongs to you +
- No means no +
- Talk about secrets that upset you +
- Speak up, someone can help +

[Let's talk PANTS with Pantosaurus! | NSPCC](#)

NHS South London Children and Young People's Community Immunisation Service

## Missed your flu vaccine?

Live or go to school in the borough of Southwark? Aged 4-16?  
Come down to a flu catch-up clinic and protect yourself this winter!

Saturday 23 November, 10:00 - 14:00  
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

Saturday 30 November, 10:00 - 14:00  
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

Saturday 7 December, 10:00 - 14:00  
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

No need to book an appointment.  
Call 020 8614 5496 for more information.

Enjoy FREE access to classes

Sign in or download the Southwark Leisure App and click on the 'free online classes' button.

Over 20 adult class programs, Kids Born To Move classes, 2000 plus workouts, plans and challenges. Stream from the web, your mobile and TV.



Family  
fun

DRAWING ROOM

### Family Studio

A space for families to draw, make and experiment alongside an artist!



Over the autumn our Family Studio sessions will be on the first Sunday of the month.

Sunday 8th October  
Sunday 3rd November  
Sunday 1st December

Drop in between 12-4pm

All Free! All Welcome!

Drawing Room  
New Tannery Way  
Bemondsey  
London  
SE11 5WS  
(Just off Grange Road)

[www.drawingroom.org.uk](http://www.drawingroom.org.uk)

PE & SCHOOL SPORTS NETWORK

# FREE GIRLS FOOTBALL

EVERY MONDAY (17:00-18:00)

@ BURGESS PARK ASTRO TURF

WILD CATS (AGES 5-11)  
WOLF PACK (AGES 12-14)

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL CLUB (AGES 15-18)

SQUAD

SWEEPSTAKES: SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER!

## BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Autumn is here again, and our programme of FREE afterschool sports coaching at Marlborough Sports Garden is back! Check out our incredible range of free sports coaching sessions for your children! All levels are welcome at our free sessions - they are a great way of trying out a sport, honing skills, and staying active and sociable with friends after school! See below and on our website for our full autumn programme 2024.

#### Tuesdays:

- Touch Rugby: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by LSBU
  - Girls' Football: 3.45-5pm for ages 5-11 (girls only), delivered by [Clubs United](#)
  - Roller-skating to music, **advanced**: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Empower CIC](#)
- Please note: Unfortunately, this time we cannot provide equipment for everyone, so please bring your own rollerblades or roller-skates, helmets and pads.

#### Wednesdays:

- Beach Tennis: 3.45-4.30pm for ages 5-7 and 4.30-5.30pm for ages 8-11, delivered by [Deacon Beach Tennis](#)
- Basketball: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, provided by [London Basketball Association](#)
- [Samira Soccer Schools](#): 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11

#### Thursdays:

- Beach volleyball: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Deep Dish](#)
- Roller-skating to music, **beginners**: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Empower CIC](#)
- Cricket: 3.45-5.15pm for ages 8-11, delivered by [Surrey Cricket Foundation](#)
- Wall Ball: 3.45-4.30pm for ages 8-11 and 4.30-5.30pm for ages 11+, delivered by [Lil' Wall Ball](#)

Please register for afterschool sports here: <https://tinyurl.com/bostautumn2024>



## Free Tickets!



Our school is in a partnership with the Unicorn Theatre and they are offering free tickets for local families to see their shows!

To book to see a show, please email us at [creativehub@unicorntheatre.com](mailto:creativehub@unicorntheatre.com) stating the following information:

1. Name of the school your child attends

2. Name of show you'd like to book for

3. How many adult tickets and child tickets do you need

If you need help booking, please ask your child's teacher!

The Unicorn's friendly team will then email dates for you to choose, confirm your booking, along with your E-tickets!

See What's On!  
[www.unicorntheatre.com/whats-on](http://www.unicorntheatre.com/whats-on)

Supported by the Buffini Chao Foundation!



Bankside Open Spaces Trust

## WEEKLY SPORTS SESSIONS!

AT MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN

FREE

Get the free After School Sports sessions - every Tuesday for ages 5-11.

Find adult events to watch every week from beach volleyball, tennis, swimming, etc.

All sessions are free to attend. To register please visit [www.banksideos.com](https://www.banksideos.com) and follow the booking link to scan the QR code below.

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

### WEEKLY SPORTS SESSIONS

MONDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER - FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER

Day	Session	Time	Age Group
Monday	Tennis	10:00-11:30	5-11
Monday	Table Tennis	11:30-13:00	5-11
Monday	Badminton	13:00-14:30	5-11
Monday	Table Tennis	14:30-16:00	5-11
Monday	Table Tennis	16:00-17:30	5-11
Tuesday	Table Tennis	10:00-11:30	5-11
Tuesday	Table Tennis	11:30-13:00	5-11
Tuesday	Table Tennis	13:00-14:30	5-11
Tuesday	Table Tennis	14:30-16:00	5-11
Tuesday	Table Tennis	16:00-17:30	5-11
Wednesday	Table Tennis	10:00-11:30	5-11
Wednesday	Table Tennis	11:30-13:00	5-11
Wednesday	Table Tennis	13:00-14:30	5-11
Wednesday	Table Tennis	14:30-16:00	5-11
Wednesday	Table Tennis	16:00-17:30	5-11
Thursday	Table Tennis	10:00-11:30	5-11
Thursday	Table Tennis	11:30-13:00	5-11
Thursday	Table Tennis	13:00-14:30	5-11
Thursday	Table Tennis	14:30-16:00	5-11
Thursday	Table Tennis	16:00-17:30	5-11
Friday	Table Tennis	10:00-11:30	5-11
Friday	Table Tennis	11:30-13:00	5-11
Friday	Table Tennis	13:00-14:30	5-11
Friday	Table Tennis	14:30-16:00	5-11
Friday	Table Tennis	16:00-17:30	5-11

Fun Football Sessions for Every Girl

WILD CATS FOR GIRLS AGED 5-11

SQUAD FOR GIRLS AGED 12-14

Register here: [www.banksideos.com](https://www.banksideos.com)

FUN FLIPPERS

## Swimming Lessons

Evelyn Lee Gardens and Pool, (The Garden SE1), Marlborough Grove, London, SE1 5JT

Times available: Wednesday 1-4 pm, Saturday 9-11 pm

Baby & Pre-School Swimming

Swim: Acrobatic (for all ages & abilities)

Private Lessons

Disability, SEN & Adult lessons

Aqua Aerobics

Holiday Courses

Maximum group sizes of 4-2 per class

Weekend & Private Birthday Parties

Contact: Jules: 07850082775 [jules@funflippers.co.uk](mailto:jules@funflippers.co.uk)

[www.funflippers.co.uk](http://www.funflippers.co.uk) Facebook.com/funflippers

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AGES 5-12

## SEND SATURDAY SPORTS CLUB

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY FROM 9:30 AM

SOUTHWARK

Activities include: ARTS AND CRAFTS, STORY AND PLAY, MUSIC AND DANCE, BASKETBALL, TABLE TENNIS, VOLLEYBALL, NETBALL, FOOTBALL, RUGBY, HOCKEY, GOLF, TENNIS, BADMINTON, TABLE TENNIS, BOWLS, AND MORE!

Contact: 0203038606, 07304082602

[www.send.org.uk](http://www.send.org.uk)

The Leighton Community Centre, 9 Regent Road, Norbiton SE20 2NU

Parent Skills

## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: ARTS AND CRAFTS, STORY AND PLAY, MUSIC AND DANCE, BASKETBALL, FOOTBALL, RUGBY, HOCKEY, GOLF, TENNIS, BADMINTON, TABLE TENNIS, BOWLS, AND MORE!

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays  
Starting Tuesday 16th September 3.30pm-5pm

Contact: 0203038606, 07304082602

[www.send.org.uk](http://www.send.org.uk)

The Leighton Community Centre, 9 Regent Road, Norbiton SE20 2NU

GO JAGS

## SOUTHWARK JAGUARS PLAYERS WANTED

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER OR CHILD INTEREST CONTACT WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF THE OPENING



## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAP STREAK

97

DAYS

# SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION  
13+

Snapchat is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent 'disappears' 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

#### PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have stolen photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's own research found that 65% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'SnapMap' – a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

#### MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has a hidden photo vault called 'My Eyes Only'. Users can conceal sensitive photos and videos from parents and carers in this folder, which is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two playing cards. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, stories and the My Eyes Only folder.

#### SCREEN TIME ADDICTION

Snapchat prioritises user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). The app also has sections called 'Discover' and 'Spotlight', which show tailored content to each user. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the user, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images or images – as sending continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

#### ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' filters on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy in younger users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Center' lets you view the details of the child's account, their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You must invite a child to the Family Center for them to join. To keep the child's location hidden on the app, go into settings and turn on 'Show My Location' and 'Hide My Location', and ensure they know not to share their location with anyone.

#### BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with a child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user – such as harassing or malicious messages, sexting or impersonating as someone else.

#### FAMILIARISE YOURSELF

Before you allow a child to download Snapchat, download it yourself and familiarise yourself with the app. Snapchat has produced a parents' guide to the app to help you understand how it works and any permissions they have to check. A link for this can be found in the box on the right.

#### ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you mature an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how reliable they are, talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're hard into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and honestly about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

#### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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