



I've heard of a Snapchat streak but what is it?

Snapchat is a madly popular app among young people. Snap Streaks are like mini marathons or the 'keepy uppy' of messages. **What it does** – it allows users to send photos and videos to their contacts and create 'streaks' which are like keeping a conversation of Snaps going between people. If you are the one to break a streak you may be made to feel bad. There is pressure to keep going and add more consecutive days during which two people send Snaps to one another. For each day they send a Snap, the Streak gets longer (it has a little icon of a flame and the number of days it has continued. Only the two senders can view this. Guilt at breaking the streak often keeps kids in there.

Why do young people love streaks?

Competitive kids like to beat their rivals with longer streaks. Others feel too guilty to break the streak because their friend will be upset. Streaks can also provide a sense of intense friendship. A lot of young people want to get streaks to show that they have a very close relationship with someone.

Some feel devastated that their friends have streaks with others but not with them, or they feel pressured to stay in a streak because this contact has previously had a long streak with some other friend.

How does Snapchat actually work?

Snapchat is a messaging app that allows users to share content, such as photos, texts and videos, i.e. 'Snaps'. Snaps can only be viewed for a matter of seconds before disappearing from users' screens.

(But of course there is an app to trap the image that someone has invented. So it is not true that it all disappears and is therefore safe to share intimate images.)

Users can send a 'Snap' directly to one other contact, or post it on your 'Story' where it can be viewed by all of your contacts. Your contacts are able to view this for 24 hours before it is deleted from your account.

What can parents or carers do?

Have a quiet chat with your child. Explore which apps they like using, ask them to show you how Snapchat works – talk together about the advantages and disadvantages plus how users can protect themselves. Explain that it is all fun but if they ever feel worried or unhappy they can come to you. Keep the dialogue door open. Never threaten to take away their mobile phone, this is a sure way to prevent them coming to you if they get into difficult territory.

Why not make your own Snapchat profile? Play around a little and look at the safety features offered. Have your child show you how to use it.

You can see what you like about features of the app and gain a better understanding of why your child may like using it. Joining your child in their world makes talking about it easier.

See my other resources on Snapchat and features such as location sharing via maps.



More things Snap...

Do snapstreaks put too much pressure on children? [More](#)

Are snapmaps a risk? Police [warn](#), users their locations can be revealed. [Advice](#) on settings.

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