Information Security Advisory Notice: SnapChat

Schools are requested to share the following information with parents and pupils regarding the use of SnapChat.

SnapChat is a popular social media app often used by children and young people. The app's terms of use request that users be 13 years or older but frequently younger children have been found to be using the app.

The addition of a mapping feature within the app now makes it possible to find videos and images which were posted from locations in and around schools. Users of the service can enter the name of a school and find content which has been shared publicly at that location using the "Our Story" feature within the app.

Parents and pupils are advised that they should avoid posting via the "Our Story" feature within SnapChat. This will prevent content from being displayed publicly and locations disclosed on the SnapMap. Posts made using this feature are automatically linked to a named location, such as a school, and are discoverable via search.

Children and Young People often wish to increase their "friends" on SnapChat and label their posts with their username. This allows anyone who can view the post to add the child and become their "friend". This behaviour is potentially dangerous and can lead to inappropriate contact from adults on SnapChat. To protect themselves, users should only add friends they actually know.

SnapChat can be used positively to communicate however users should be aware of the risks of sharing information publicly, disclosing their location on the SnapMap and of sharing their contact details publicly.

The following general guidelines should be used to keep safe online:

1. Don't post any personal information online – like your username, address, email address or mobile number.
2. Think carefully before posting pictures, videos or live streaming of yourself. Once you've put content of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it. It's not just yours anymore.
3. Keep your privacy settings as high as possible
4. Never give out your passwords
5. Don't befriend people you don't know
6. Don't meet up with people you've met online. Speak to your parent or carer about people suggesting you do
7. Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are
8. Think carefully about what you say before you share something online
9. Respect other people's views, even if you don't agree with someone else's views doesn't mean you need to be rude
10. If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the service or app, turn off your device and talk to a trusted adult. If anyone contacts you online in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult.

In some apps, your details might be shared with other people who are not your friends, but friends of someone else you are sharing with. Be aware, if you don't know someone its best to leave the conversation and remove that person from your friends/contacts list.