Instagram

Young people use Instagram to share images and videos; this guide gives advice on ways to stay safe if young people choose to use the app.

What is it?

Instagram is a service which allows the user to take and edit photos and videos and then post them online. It can also be used to share photos and videos on other popular services such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr and Foursquare.

To create an Instagram account, the app has to be downloaded. It is available for free on iOS or Android phones and tablets, Windows Phone 8 and later versions. Once an Instagram account has been set up, it can also be accessed through the Instagram website on other devices.

Young people enjoy taking photos and sharing them with added comments, which might use hashtags (#). A user can 'like' someone else's picture or video by clicking on the 'heart' icon or double tapping the image. Users can add their own comments about it, creating a comments thread for each item.

Instagram Stories

Instagram allows users to create 'stories'. Stories can comprise of videos and photos that appear on a user's profile for 24 hours, and disappear after this time. This does not necessarily mean the story is completely removed from the internet, however. Videos and images shared by a user can be recorded with another device. They can also be screenshot by other users and can be saved or shared, without the user's permission or knowledge.

Instagram Live

Like many other popular apps, Instagram have introduced a 'live streaming' feature. This allows users to create and upload videos in real time. Live videos are then instantly uploaded to Instagram, and can be seen by a user's followers (people the user has allowed to view their profile if they have a

private profile) or by anybody (if they have an open profile). Followers or other unknown users can comment on the videos as they are being viewed. These videos do not show on the user's profile. As with all content on Instagram, imagery can be screenshot or recorded and can remain on the internet despite the live video ending.

The default privacy setting within Instagram allows anybody to view and comment on a user's photos and videos. However, privacy settings (see page 3) allow the user to decide if they want only their 'followers' to see their photos and videos, and the comments about them.

Does Instagram have any age restrictions?

Instagram's Terms of Use state that all users must be at least 13 years old (this is to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act in the United States). If a UK user is younger than 13, they have failed to comply with the Terms of Use, but they are not breaking the law.

Users do not have to submit their age when registering an account. Therefore, children below the age of 13 (with or without their parents' permission) can use Instagram without restriction.

If Instagram is informed that a user is under 13, the account may be deleted.

Should I be concerned about Instagram?

The main things that worry parents and carers about Instagram are typical of many social media services. Cyberbullying and inappropriate photos or videos being created and shared by users is a concern for lots of parents. Comments, images and videos can be sexual in nature and this may be innappropriate for younger users.

Like many other sites and apps, Instagram is popular with both adults and children and there is concern that strangers can contact young people directly. Be aware that some young people share their usernames for other social media accounts they may have on their public Instagram account, e.g. their twitter handle or Kik username, which means that unknown users can then trace them on these websites/apps.

Instagram also features 'direct messages', known as "DM's" in which users can send each other, and up to 15 other people, private messages instead of posting pictures to all of their followers. Direct messages are accessed through the 'arrow symbol' in the top right of the main photo feed.

Instagram Direct is automatically private. This could be seen as a safer function in which photos are shared with fewer people, however there are concerns around direct messaging that should be considered. Unknown people can send a user a direct message, image or video. These messages will appear in a Request Folder until the unknown person is approved. The user can choose to ignore the unknown person and then their messages will be blocked. Any direct messages from a known user will appear in the Direct Messages folder.

Part of the appeal of Instagram is developing a big following and having a public profile which means that anybody can 'follow' that person. A private account means that people can request to follow a user, who then needs to 'approve' them. You should ensure your child has their profile set to private so only people they have approved can view their images and videos. Try to initiate an ongoing conversation with them about keeping themselves safe when using social media.

Bot accounts

Anyone over the age of 13 can create an Instagram account. This has allowed some organisations opportunity to create 'fake' profiles that can be controlled by a 'robot'. Typically, these profiles feature an attractive male or female profile picture. They will request to follow a user and then have a link displayed in their profile. This leads the user to a site where links can be malicious or encourage users to share their personal information, which can then be sold. Bots can also be commissioned or bought to attain more followers on Instagram. This can give other users the impression that a person or business has many followers and encourage other people on Instagram to follow the person or brand.

For more information relating to the risks children and young people face online, visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

How do privacy settings work on Instagram?

By default, anybody can see an Instagram profile, photos and videos. However, users can use privacy settings to share photos and videos with their followers only.

To set posts to private from the Instagram app:

Apple iOS

1. Go to profile by tapping
2. Tap
3. Turn on the **Private Account** setting

Android

1. Go to profile by tapping
2. Tap
3. Turn on the **Private Account** setting

Windows Phone

1. Go to profile by tapping
2. Tap **Edit Profile**
3. Turn on the **Posts are Private** setting by checking the box and then tap the check mark to save changes

Please note:

- Profile photos, usernames and the bio screen will always be public.
- Users are able to block and remove followers on Instagram. The person who is blocked won't be informed about this.
- Shared private Instagram posts sent to social networks (e.g. Twitter) can be seen by the public unless you have set up your privacy settings on those social networks too.
- Be aware that anybody is able to send photos and videos directly to an account without being a follower.

Remember to look out for location-sharing which users can enable with the 'Add to your Photo Map' feature. It is set 'off' by default. We strongly recommend that young users do not change the setting to 'on'. This is because when it is on, this feature publishes the location in which a photo or video was taken, which is risky information for a young person to share publically.

Who are my child's friends on Instagram?

Instagram allows users to see who is on their followers list. They also have the option to approve or ignore a 'follow request' in the Activity section which can be found by clicking the button shown below.

If your child uses Instagram, talk to them about the people they follow on Instagram. Try to find out how they know them, how often they interact with them, and what's interesting about the pictures they post. Then ask them about their own profile. What do they like about posting on Instagram? Who follows them, and how do they know them? Remind them that if you have only met someone online, you can never be sure that they are who they say they are.

How do I report to Instagram?

If you see a post or profile that's not following Instagram's Community Guidelines (see https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119) you can report this directly to Instagram.

The reporter's identity is not shared with the person whose post or profile they are reporting.

You can see https find detailed advice on how to report various issues to Instagram on the Instagram website ://help.instagram.com/372161259539444

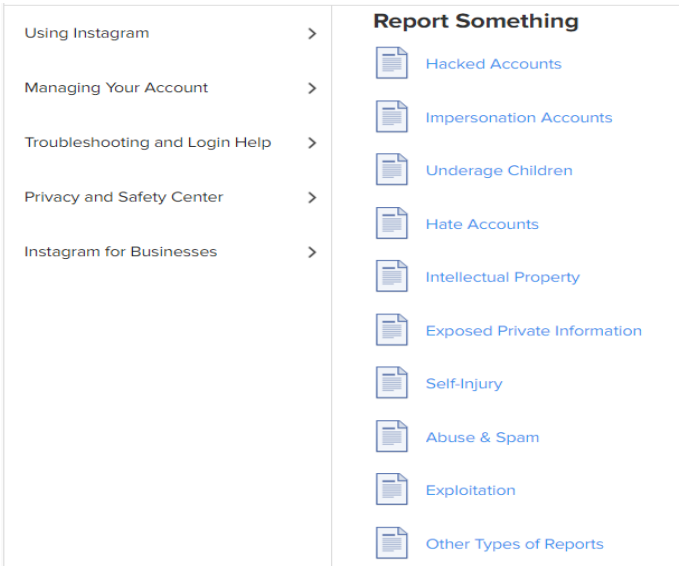
How to report a **post** if you have an Instagram account:

1. Tap (iOS and Windows Phone) or (Android) below the post
2. Tap **Report Inappropriate**
3. Follow the on-screen instructions

To report a **profile**:

1. Tap (iOS), (Windows Phone) or (Android) in the top right of the profile.
2. Tap **Report Inappropriate** (iOS and Android) or **Report for Spam** (Windows Phone)
3. Follow the on-screen instructions

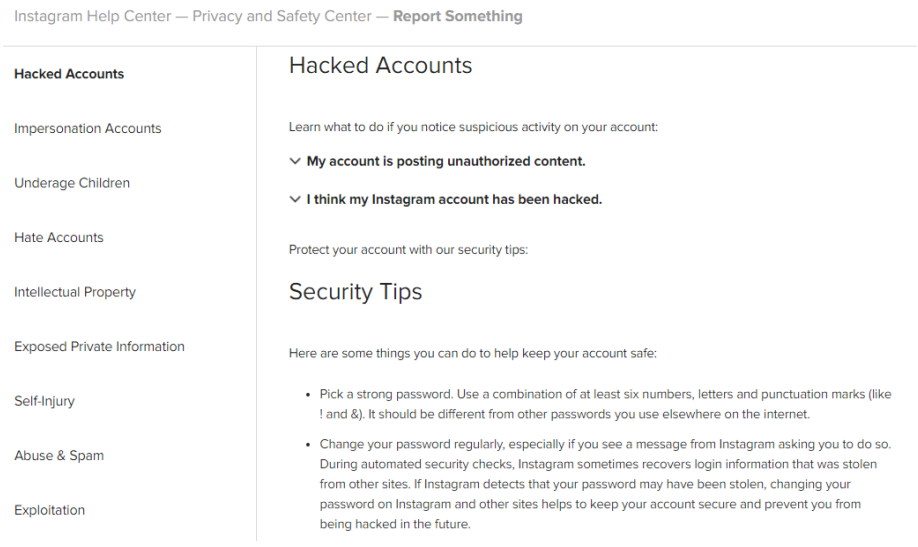
If you don't have an Instagram account, you can make a report via the website, at https://help.instagram.com/contact/383679321740945.



If you or anyone else sees images of sexual child exploitation on Instagram, you should follow the instructions above to report it. Do not share the image or comment on it.

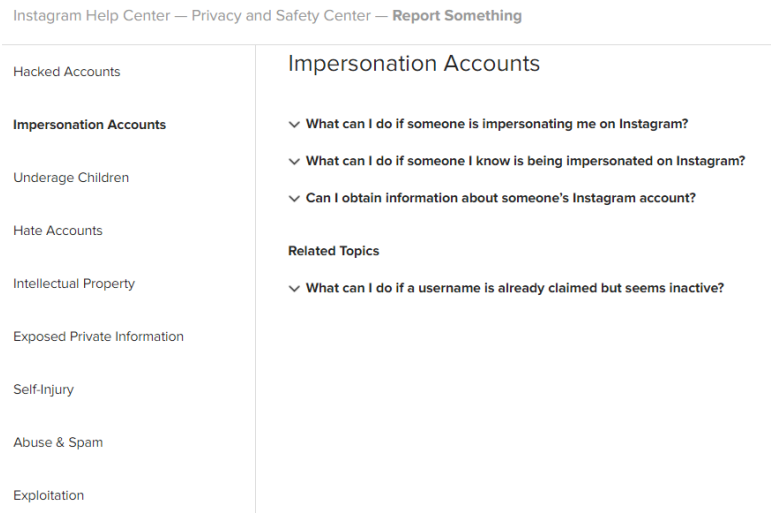
Hacked Accounts

If you think your child's account has been hacked, report it through the website via https://help.instagram.com/368191326593075/?helpref=hc_fnav.



Impersonation Accounts

If someone created an Instagram account pretending to be your child, report it to Instagram here: https://help.instagram.com/446663175382270/?helpref=hc_fnav.



How do I block someone on Instagram?

Users can block followers from contacting them on Instagram. This makes the user appear to be offline to the blocked individual on their contact list.

You can block someone using the Instagram app, but not on the web.

1. Tap their username to open their profile
2. Tap (iPhone/iPad), (Android) or (Windows)
3. Tap **Block User**

To unblock someone, follow steps 1-2 above and then tap **Unblock User**.

If you can't find the person you want to block or unblock, they may have deleted their account or their profile may be unavailable to you.

You can find out further information on the Instagram website on how to block people (see https://help.instagram.com/426700567389543/).

How can I disable an Instagram account?

Profile photos, videos, comments, likes and followers are removed when a user chooses to delete their account permanently.

To delete an account:

1. Leave the Instagram app and log into instagram.com from a computer

2. Click username in the top right and then select **Edit Profile**
3. Click **I'd like to delete my account** in the bottom right

If you have any concerns about grooming, sexual abuse or exploitation on Instagram or on any online app or site, Report to CEOP (the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.

Having regular conversations with your child about their online lives is an important part of keeping them safe online. For information about how to best start these conversations and guidance on other popular apps, visit our Thinkuknow parents and carers website www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

We endeavour to keep our parents guides as up-to-date as possible, however due to the changing nature of social media, the information and advice in this guide may date over time. The information within this guide is correct as of May 2017.