Instagram – Guide for Parents and Carers

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, and can add their own comments about it, creating a comments thread for each item.

The default setting allows anybody to view and comment on a user's photos and videos. However, privacy settings 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.

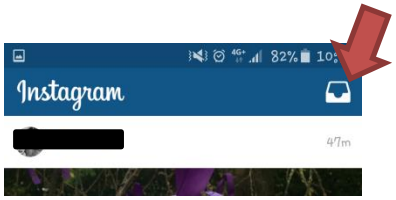
Should I be concerned about Instagram?

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. Conversations that take place between users can contain inappropriate content and therefore can be unsuitable for younger users.

Like many other sites and apps, Instagram is popular for 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 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.

Part of the appeal of Instagram is developing a big following and having a public profile 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 and initiate an ongoing conversation with them about keeping themselves safe when using social media.

A recent feature added to Instagram is "Instagram Direct" 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 'inbox 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. Unknown people can then 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.

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, and 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?

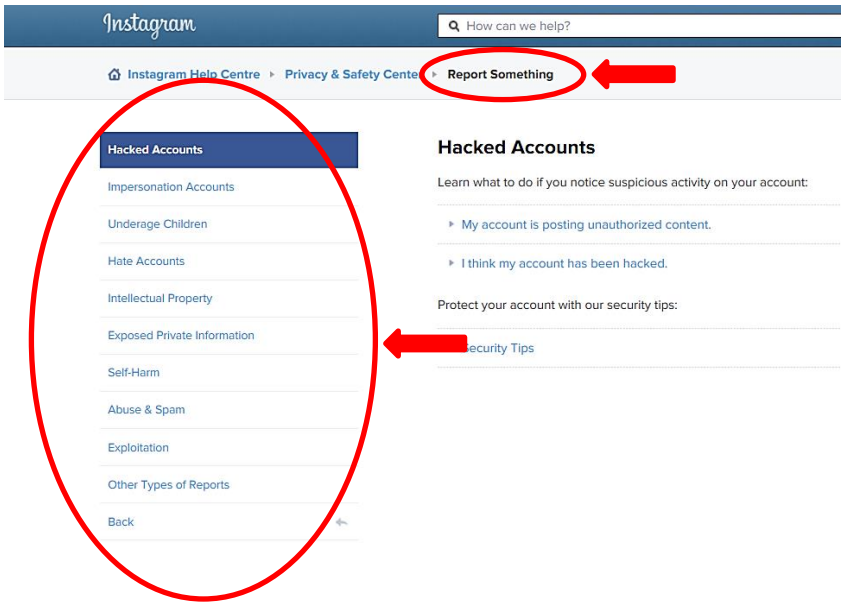
Instagram allows users to see who is on their followers list. They also have the option to approve or ignore a 'follow request' in the Activity section which can be found by clicking this button .

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) (e.g. nudity, spam, self-harm) - you can report it.

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



You can find detailed advice on how to report various issues to Instagram on the Instagram website (see https://help.instagram.com/165828726894770/).

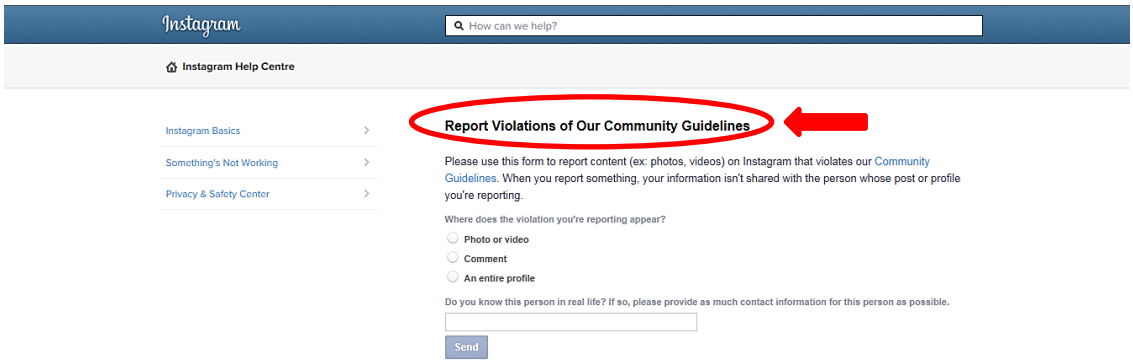
How to report a post if you have an Instagram account:

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

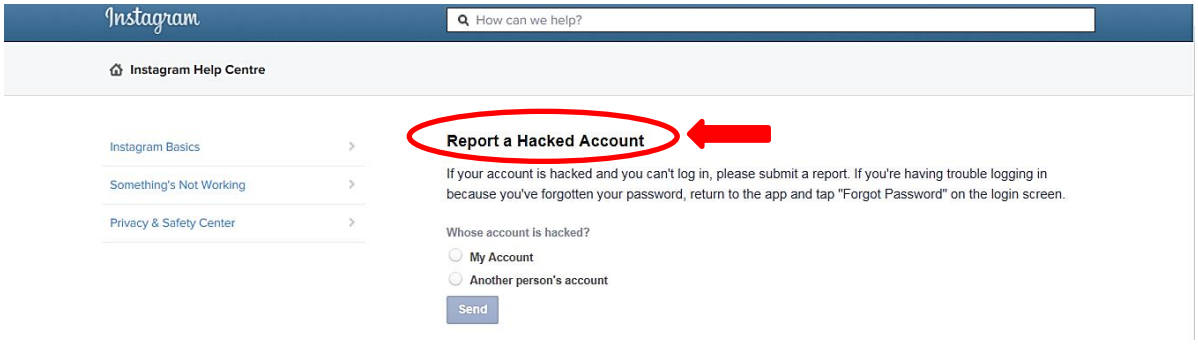
If you don't have an Instagram account, you can make a report via the website, at https://help.instagram.com/contact/383679321740945.



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.

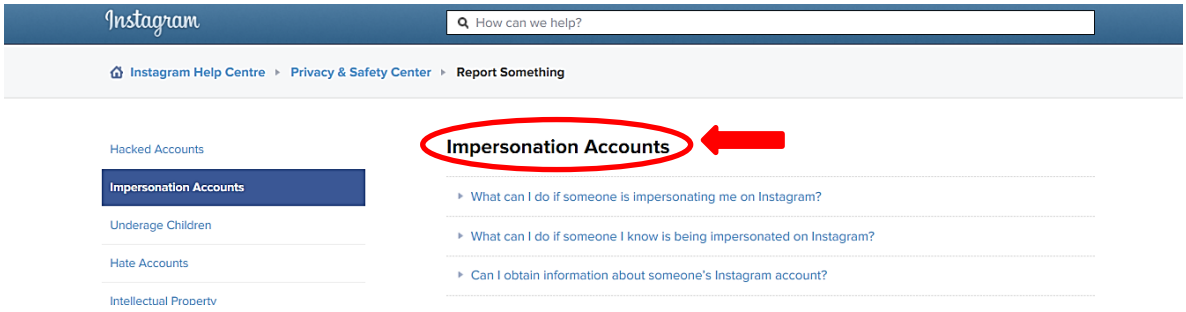
Hacked Accounts

If you think your child's account has been hacked, report it through the website via https://help.instagram.com/contact/740949042640030



Impersonating Accounts

If someone created an Instagram account pretending to be your child, report it to Instagram here:
https://help.instagram.com/contact/636276399721841



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

For more information and support on children's safety online visit the CEOP parents and carers website - www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.