

# Instagram Parent Guide

## A quick guide to what you need to know

Age Rating: **13+**



### What is Instagram?

**Instagram** is one of the most popular **social media platforms** in the world. It is primarily used for **photo and video sharing** but also has features such as **direct messages**, **'Stories'** – posts that only last for 24 hours – and a **'shop'** feature that takes you to a **brand's shop**.

Although it's for users aged **13+**, Instagram doesn't have a strict **age verification process**.

### What are the risks?

Instagram is an **engaging platform** and can be a **great introduction** to a wide range of exciting subjects. But many people have cited Instagram as having a **negative impact** on their **mental health**, **body image** or sense of **personal wellbeing**.

There's a risk of **people commenting below posts** with **offensive content**.

**Influencers** using Instagram might also **push children or young people using the app to buy items they promote**.

### What are the safety features?

You have the option to **make your account private**. This **stops** people from **being able to view your posts unless you allow them to follow you**.

Users **under 18** are still able to make their accounts public, but **they'll be prompted** by Instagram to think about **making their account private**.

Instagram introduced a **new feature** this year preventing adult users from **direct messaging** someone **under 18 unless that user follows them**.

They've also introduced a **'limits'** feature to use if your account is receiving a **high volume** of **unwanted comments or messages**.

Their **'hidden words'** feature allows users to **filter out direct message requests** that **contain abusive language**.

You can **report** users for **posting harmful or upsetting content**. You can also **block users** from **contacting you or being able to view your posts**.

### What else should I know?

Recommend that your child **keeps their account private**. If they do choose to keep it public, make sure they are **aware that anyone using the app will be able to see what they post**.

Talk to them about the **reporting and blocking features** so that they **know what to do** if they **encounter upsetting content, comments or messages**.

Have a **conversation** about the **amount of editing** often **involved in Instagram posts** and **encourage your child to think critically** about the posts they see. Make sure they feel comfortable coming to you if they ever have a problem.