Instagram

A QUICK-GUIDE FOR PARENTS & TEENS

ConnectSafely

→ What is Instagram & why do teens love it?

Instagram is a social media app used to share photos, videos and messages. Whether it's through Stories, Feed, Live, IGTV or Direct, teens use Instagram to celebrate big milestones, share everyday moments, keep in touch with friends and family, build communities of support and meet others who share their passions and interests. It runs on the Apple iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch as well as Android phones and tablets.

Is there a minimum age for Instagram? ←

The minimum age is 13, in compliance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. Instagram doesn't ask users to specify their age, and there are many younger children who use the service, often with their parents' permission. Instagram will delete underage accounts if they're notified and can't verify that the user is over 13.

13

→ What are the risks?

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Instagram, the main things parents worry about are typical of all social media: mean behavior among peers, inappropriate photos or videos that can hurt a teen's reputation or attract the wrong kind of attention, overuse, and of course, privacy. Parents are also concerned that people their kids don't know can reach out to them directly. Teens can learn to manage these risks, which is why we wrote this Quick-Guide and our longer Parent's Guide to Instagram (*ConnectSafely.org/Instagram*).

Are there tools to protect privacy & safety on Instagram? ←

Yes. Teens can start by making their account private so that only people they approve can see their photos, videos and posts. There are also tools to block people and report inappropriate posts. On page two of this guide you'll find tips on how your teen can increase their privacy, block bullies and harassers, and delete offensive comments and report other people's inappropriate posts.

Make the account private.

Young teens can (and should) make their accounts private by tapping on the profile button on the bottom right (icon of a person) and then the options button on iOS or the 3 vertical dots on Android. Scroll down to Private Account and move the slider to the right. The slider will turn blue once the account is private.

Block bullies & harassers.

Teens can block anyone who is bothering them, such as repeatedly tagging them in photos they don't like or sending them a lot of direct messages or trying to engage them in a creepy conversation. A person you block can't tag you, contact you directly or mention you in comments. To block a user, go to his or her profile, tap the three dots at the top right and select Block.

Report problematic posts.

You can report other people's inappropriate photos, videos, stories, or comments – or users who violate Instagram's community guidelines. Just click on the three dots next to the username, then Report. You can also report comments by swiping left on the comment you want to report and selecting why you think it's inappropriate.

Manage comments.

Teens control who can comment on their photos and videos. In the "Comment Controls" section of the app settings, they can choose to: allow comments from everyone, people they follow and those people's followers, just the people they follow, or their followers. Teens can also remove comments entirely from their posts. On iOS, swipe left on the comment to delete it. On Android, tap the comment and hold.

Track your time on Instagram.

Like adults, teens sometimes lose track of time so Instagram now has tools to help understand and manage the time you spend on the app. You can set daily reminders to get an alert when it's time for a break, you can mute notifications and there is also a feature to let you know you're "all caught up" on what your friends and communities have posted. You can access these controls by tapping "Our Activity." At the top, you'll see a dashboard showing your average time for that app on that device. Tap any bar to see your total time for that day.

For More Information & Help

ConnectSafely has an in-depth Parent's Guide to Instagram at *ConnectSafely.org/Instagram.* Instagram also has its own Privacy and Safety Center at *Help.Instagram.com,* along with lots more advice on how to use the app.

Disappearing stories.

Instagram Stories aren't necessarily private, but they do disappear after 24 hours from public viewing unless you add them to highlights. Neither teens nor adults should ever post anything that is inappropriate, harmful or that can get you into trouble, but if you just want to post something silly that won't be part of your "permanent record," Stories might be your best option.