



Safety guide to Instagram

What: Instagram is an online photo/video-sharing social networking app. Users can share pictures/videos/messages and broadcast live either publicly or privately.

Minimum age: 13 years old.

Positive aspects: Accounts can, and should, be set to private. Users can communicate with family and friends in a quick and fun format. Instagram allows users to share pictures, videos and stream live to their followers.

Safety concerns: If your account is not set to “private”, anyone can follow you which can be a safety issue. Do you want strangers seeing what your children are doing? Followers can also leave comments which can lead to cyber bullying and self esteem issues. GPS can add location to where a picture was taken/uploaded and this can be a big safety issue. Followers can save pictures to a collection or can save by taking a screen shot. Users can send and receive private direct messages and pictures, pictures sent in these private messages can “disappear”.

What parents can do: Monitor and follow your child’s account. Go through your child’s followers to assure that no strangers are following or communicating with your child. Some parental controls can restrict camera use which is also an option for safety. Discuss appropriateness of pictures and how easy they can be saved and shared on Instagram.

Scott's Tips:

“With all the fun that Instagram allows to have with pictures and sharing, it is easy to see why this program is so popular. But with the fun we can not drop our guard on safety. Parents talk to your children about who they allow to follow their accounts. Kids should not have any strangers following them and that includes popular influencers. Although someone may be popular on Instagram, they are still a stranger and should not be following your child.”

Be Safe

Scott Driscoll

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Tips:

- ◆ Accounts should be set to private.
- ◆ GPS should be disabled from working with Instagram.
- ◆ Under “settings” you can set comment controls. This allows you to block comments, block comments from only certain users, hide offensive comments and manually add words that you want to block.
- ◆ Under “Your Activity” you can see how much time your child is spending on Instagram. Also under “Your Activity”, parents can set a time limit on how long their child can be on Instagram and when this time expires they receive an alarm as a reminder.
- ◆ As with many social media sites, Instagram has a lot of influencers and popular accounts on Instagram. Talk to you children and review who they are following to make sure who they are following is appropriate.
- ◆ A popular feature is Instagram Television, IGTV. Users can upload videos which could be viewed by anyone. Most videos are fun and entertaining but there are those that are not appropriate for younger users.