INTERNET SAFETY CONCEPTS
— EDUCATE. EMPOWER. PROTECT. —

Empowering Smart Online Choices

A Parent and Educator Guide to Instagram

Understand the benefits. Recognize the risks. Support safe and responsible use.



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo- and video-sharing social platform where people post photos, Stories, Reels, and messages. Users can follow accounts, comment on posts, and explore content recommendations. Content can spread quickly through screenshots, shares, and reposts, even beyond the original audience.

Minimum Age 13 years old

Users must meet Instagram's minimum age requirement.

Age requirements and protections may vary by country and account type.

Positive Aspects

- Creativity and self-expression through photos, videos, and creative tools.
- Staying connected with friends and family.
- Learning new skills, hobbies, news, and interests.
- Discovering supportive communities.
- Sharing art, sports, school projects, and positive causes.

Potential Risks

- **Oversharing personal details:** May reveal too much information about your life.
- **Unwanted contact and fake profiles:** Strangers may try to connect or pretend to be someone they are not.
- **Cyberbullying and harmful comments:** Negative, mean, or hurtful messages.
- **Scams, impersonation and suspicious links:** Fake giveaways, phishing, and attempts to steal personal information.
- **Sextortion and pressure to send private images:** Someone may try to pressure or manipulate you into sharing nude or sexual images.
- **Edited images, social comparison and body-image pressure:** Unrealistic content can affect self-esteem and mental health.
- **Location clues in photos:** Photos may reveal where you live, go to school, or places you visit.
- **Excessive use and sleep disruption:** Too much time on social media can interfere with sleep, school, and overall well-being.

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

Talk openly without judgment.
Have regular conversations about online experiences, both the positive and negative.

Set family expectations.
Discuss rules for posting, who to follow, and screen time limits that work for your family.

Review privacy and message settings.
Go through settings together and help them understand the options and what they mean.

Know warning signs, but keep communication open.
Look for changes in behavior, mood, or online activity, and make sure they know they can come to you for help.

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Privacy Settings
Control Who Can See You

- Set your account to private.
- Review your followers and remove accounts you don't know.
- Limit comments, mentions, and tags.
- Review Story and Live audience options.
- Turn off location sharing and avoid posting real-time location.
- Remember: private accounts do not prevent screenshots, so content can still be shared.

Account Security
Keeps Your Account Safe

- Use a unique, strong password.
- Enable two-factor authentication (when available).
- Never share your login codes.
- Avoid suspicious links, giveaways, and verification requests.
- Secure your recovery email and phone number.
- Log out of shared devices.

Good to Know

- Instagram Teen Accounts have built-in protections for teens.
- Exact settings can vary and features change over time, so check current settings.
- Privacy tools can reduce your exposure, but they cannot guarantee safety or stop screenshots and re-sharing.

Practical Tips for Using Instagram Safely

1. **Think Before You Post**
   Would you be comfortable with family, school, or a future employer seeing it? Posts can be copied and shared.
2. **Check Who Follows You**
   Accept only people you know. Be cautious of new accounts claiming to be friends.
3. **Protect Your Personal Information**
   Keep school, address, phone number, daily routine and live location private.
4. **Manage Comments, Tags and DMs**
   Limit who can contact, tag or mention you. Use Hidden Words and restricted interaction tools where available.
5. **Block, Report and Save Evidence**
   Block or report abusive accounts. Preserve relevant messages or screenshots before blocking when safe. Tell a trusted adult about threats or pressure.
6. **Use Teen Accounts and Family Center**
   Review Teen Account protections, supervision options, content controls and time limits together with teens. Parent supervision features vary by age and region.
7. **Keep Social Media in Balance**
   Set reasonable limits, protect sleep and make time for offline friends, school and activities.

Official Instagram Resources

Instagram Safety Center
Help, guides, and resources for a safer experience.
help.instagram.com

Family Center & Supervision
Tools to help parents support their teens.
familycenter.meta.com

Instagram Teen Accounts
Information about Teen Accounts and built-in protections.
about.fb.com/news/2024/09/instagram-teen-accounts/