Parents' Guide to Instagram

Section 1: Getting Started

What is Instagram?

Instagram is an online social networking service that lets you share photos and apply a variety of filters to them. This started in 2010 as a photo-sharing platform viewable only amongst its user base and has since expanded to include a wide variety of social media, including Twitter and Facebook. The Instagram application is distributed worldwide through the Apple Store and Google Play.

Instagram photos are easily recognizable because the pictures have a square shape reflective of the Instamatic and Polaroid photos the program was modelled after.
Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012 and quickly continued to grow in popularity. In December 2012 a new Terms of Service was released by Instagram, which gave them the resale rights for all photographs. The instant public outcry forced them to retract the terms and retract their publishing rights to the photos.

Creating a Instagram Account

Odds are pretty good that your child knows what Instagram is and even uses it on their phone to share photos with their friends. Instagram is available for anyone 13 years and up, so it's not hard for anyone to have an account on it.
Signing up for an Instagram account is easy and takes only a few minutes. Unfortunately all that you need is an Android or Apple based phone.
Go to the Apps section of your phone and do a search for Instagram. Once it appears select and load it, then select sign up. Once you do this you will be able to share your photos with others online.

Once an Instagram profile has been created, anyone can browse them and follow other Instagram users. There is an option to make an Instagram profile private, and similar to Facebook, users have to send a request to connect to that person. However, as is the case with dating sites and other social networks, online predators use fake names and fake profile photos to make them appear to be someone they are not.

Instagram Followers

Once a connection has been accepted they become a follower. All followers have access to both the user's profile information and photos. For unsuspecting children who don't know any better, this means they have access to their first and last name and phone number.

Section 2: Instagram Privacy

Security of your child is important to you, no matter what their age. Now that they have an account here are some areas that you should find important.

Instagram picture sharing

Once the account is created it is vital that you, as a parent, discuss limits and restrictions with your child. Let them know what you expect of them and occasionally review their photo stream so you can be sure that they aren't posting or receiving inappropriate photos.

1. Choose a secure password, don't use common words, birthdays or cities. To increase the security of the password use a mix of numbers and symbols with upper and lower case letters.
2. Ensure that the photo sharing is set to Private this will prevent the photos from going out publicly where anyone can view them. You can set the Privacy setting through the Instagram interface by going to Settings and scrolling down to the setting labelled "Photos are Private" or "Photo Privacy" and ensuring it is turned on.
3. Work with your child to select an appropriate profile photo that you can both agree on. It's best to avoid using an actual photo of them and instead find something that best represents your them or their interests.

The photos may not be going out publicly but everyone that has chosen to follow your child can still view them. If you want to see who is viewing their photos, then go to Settings on the Instagram interface. You will see a number of Instagram followers, tap the number and it will list out the follower. By tapping on each name you can view their profile. If you wish to block them tap on the menu button and the option to report them for spam or to block them. Once they are blocked or reported they will no longer see your childs photos and your child will no longer see them.

Just setting the privacy on Instagram may not be enough. If the account is connected to Twitter, Facebook or another form of social media you will have to ensure that each of those programs are also set to private and will not share the photos.

Photo Map

Another thing to be aware of is the Photo Map. This creates a map of where each photo was taken. If your photos are already set to private, then no one, not even the followers can see the map.

If you are worried about the photomap being made public it is easy to remove, just ensure that the "Add to Photo Map" option is set to off.

If there are already several photos tagged into the photomap you can remove them by doing the following;
1. Go into the profile and select the Photo Map button
2. Select a photo from the map and zoom into it
3. Select the edit button and tell it to unpin the photo and proceed to tap on each photo. It will ask you if you wish to confirm the deletion.

Delete Instagram Pictures

There will always be those moments of regret when something was posted that really shouldn't have been. Sometimes they are accidentally posted, other times they were of the spur of the moment. Unfortunately the pictures cannot be unseen, but you can remove them from the feed.
1. Go into the profile
2. Below the profile details there should be all of the photos that have been shared in Instagram. They will either be displayed as a grid or on a scroll bar, depending upon your system.
3. Just to the bottom right of the photo you will see a menu button, select it and a pop-up menu will appear.
4. Select Delete from the menu, confirm deletion and the photo is gone from the feed.

Cyber Bullying

As with any social network, whether virtual or real, bullying is something to be on the look-out for. As a parent ensure you monitor your child"s Instagram use.

Good sources of guidance and help

The Child Exploitation Online Protection Unit (CEOP) www.ceop.gov.uk
If you are under 18 use the "Your Chance to Talk" form on the "Child Power" section of the ASA website: *http://www.swimming.org/u16/child-power-your- voice*
Childline 0800 1111 www.childnet.org.uk- An NSPCC support service for young people.
There4me - Another support service provided by the NSPCC is There 4 Me. Using this website, children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, using an application similar to Instant Messenger (IM). WWW.there4me.com
Stop it Now freephone 0808 1000 900
The local police or Children Services – their number appears in the phone book.
The NSPCC helpline 0800 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
The Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk