



A Parent and Carer's Guide to Instagram



In partnership with



LORRAINE
CANDY



parentzone



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INTRODUCTION



A MESSAGE FROM LORRAINE CANDY



“ Hello and welcome to Instagram’s guide for parents and carers. I know social media can sometimes feel confusing or potentially worrying for many parents and carers, but with the right know-how and understanding of how social media works, parents and carers may be able to empower their teen to get the best out of it.

This is a useful toolkit to help you and your teens better understand and navigate Instagram. I’m Lorraine Candy, a parenting columnist, author, broadcaster, and mum of four, including three teens. I’ve spent the past decade interviewing experts in adolescent mental health and researching teenage development, so I’m here to introduce you to some of the new features on Instagram which should reassure you and educate you and your family on social media use.

This guide provides parents and carers with practical information, advice, and tips aimed at teens 13 years and older. It’s been updated with a snapshot of the new measures Instagram has put in place to help manage any issues this particular age group may face.

As teens begin to form their own identity it's normal for them to rely more on interactions with their peers (in person and online). This is a vital stage of development for the teenage mind and helps prepare them for the adult world. But it can be a worrying time for parents as teens become more independent, especially when they start to explore and experiment with the online world—a world that some of us parents and carers aren't as familiar with as we could be.

Our young people spend a huge amount of time connecting and conversing on social media, so to allay everyone's fears, we need as much information as possible. This is where this guide comes in. It shows you specific Instagram safety features that can help make your teens' online journey a more joyous one. This guide explains how teens 13 years and older can curate what they see or don't see and who they interact with, and also steers you through protecting privacy, filtering out unwanted messages or content, as well as provides the tools for managing your teens' time online.

Your teens will face all kinds of challenges as they mature, but you'll feel better if you've given them the tools to stay safe and make informed decisions online. I hope that you find this guide to be a helpful and reassuring resource, and one that will support you throughout your journey of empowering your teens as they explore the digital world. ”

Lorraine Candy

“Mum what's wrong with You: 101 Things Only the Mothers Of Teenage Girls Know” is out now. Published by 4th Estate.

www.postcardsfrommidlife.com/



A MESSAGE FROM PARENT ZONE



“ For many of us, almost every aspect of life is now lived online in some way—from work and education, to entertainment and socialising. And the same is true for children and young people, who are growing up in a digital world that can look very different from the world their parents knew at the same age.

For parents and carers, it can sometimes seem like a daunting task to keep up with their children's digital life, particularly when they reach their teens and are living ever more independent lives. Even when you're using the same apps or platforms as your teenager, they may well be using it in different ways and for different reasons—and for parents, concerns about potential risks to your child's well-being and safety, both online and off, are never far away.

Part of the solution is undoubtedly the safety features that social media companies and other platforms have introduced—and at Parent Zone, we're pleased to see a number of new initiatives from Instagram aimed specifically at helping their teenage users stay safer online. However, safety features are only one part of the story. For young people, being supported to develop digital resilience—understanding that there are some risks online; knowing how to

get help if they need it; learning from experience; and recovering if something goes wrong—is an essential part of developing healthy online behaviours that allow them to benefit from all of the opportunities offered by the digital world.

And parents have a crucial role to play here in encouraging open and honest conversations with your teenagers about what they get up to online. A good starting point is to talk to them about what they like doing online and how their online life could be better.

What do they do online, what are they currently spending most of their time on, what would they like to be doing more of, or what makes them feel good and not so good? By engaging in your teenager's digital life in a positive and constructive way, it'll be much easier for you to talk to them about all the steps they can take to have safer and more positive experiences online. And knowing that you will be there to support them if something doesn't go to plan will also help ensure that your teenager feels able to come and talk to you if they've seen or experienced something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or worse.

We've put together some top tips about how to talk to your teen about online safety—and we also have a wealth of digital parenting resources on our parent hub at parents.parentzone.org.uk. ”

Vicki Shotbolt
Founder & CEO
Parent Zone



Parent Zone sits at the heart of modern family life, providing advice, knowledge, and support to shape the best possible future for children as they embrace the online world.

We run projects that connect the dots between parents, children, and the online world, and are designed to help families make the most of the digital future. Find out more at parentzone.org.uk.

Lorraine Candy's

TIPS FOR PARENTS & CARERS OF TEENS



1

LEARN ABOUT ACTIVE LISTENING

This means really listening, without interrupting, to what your teens say about their social media use and screen time needs.

2

ESTABLISH YOUR RULES EARLY ON

Perhaps set a digital sunset, e.g., the time each night they come offline. Negotiate with them and then review the rules regularly.

3

DON'T ASSUME THE WORST

Sometimes parents may expect the worst out of fear or ignorance. Educate yourself about social media and engage with your teens around it. Stay calm.

4 SIDE-BY-SIDE CONVERSATIONS

Be curious about how screen time on social media affects your teenager. Do you notice changes in their behaviour? If so, talk to them about it calmly—side by side, e.g. in the car, on walks, or shopping trips. It will feel less confrontational for a teen than face to face.

5 HELP YOUR TEEN CURATE A POSITIVE PRESENCE ONLINE

Encourage them to find the accounts that make them feel better about themselves or are indeed useful to them, and balance out time online with time outside—alone, with friends, or with family.





TIPS ON TALKING TO YOUR TEEN



1 TAKE THE TIME

Talk to your teen about what they get up to online and show an active interest in the things that they enjoy—they're more likely to come to you with any concerns or issues they may have if you're also engaged in the positives.

2 USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Start conversations about what your teen gets up to when they're online to help them understand the opportunities and implications of their choices and behaviours.

For example:

- What kind of things do you use the internet for—learning, socialising, gaming, entertainment?
- What are some of the things you like and dislike about being online?
- What are some of the things you think about when you post on social media?
- Do you know all of your followers?
- Have you ever felt uncomfortable about anything you've seen online?

3 CHOOSE YOUR MOMENT

It's often easier to have conversations about potentially tricky topics like online safety when you and your teen are engaged in something else. Try talking to them when you're doing an activity together that you both enjoy, like going for a walk, baking, or playing sports.

4 SHARE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES

Talk about your online life with your children to get the conversation started. You could share something you've enjoyed, for example, or share something you've seen that concerned or worried you, and ask what they would have done in that situation.

5 BE OPEN

Make sure your teen knows that if they come up against any problems online, they can come and speak to you or another trusted adult about it, and that the conversation will be open and constructive.



02 /

WHAT IS INSTAGRAM?



Instagram is a photo, video, and message sharing app with a community of people that use it to connect with each other through their passions and interests. Instagram is especially popular among teens: they use it to capture special moments, relate to one another, and carry conversations in a fun way—using photos, videos, filters, comments, captions, emojis, and hashtags.

Instagram runs on Apple iOS, Android devices, and the web. The minimum age to have an Instagram account is 13.

We require everyone to be at least 13 to use Instagram and have asked new users to provide their age when they sign up for an account. While many people are honest about their age, we know that young people can lie about their date of birth. We want to do more to stop this from happening, but verifying a person's age online is complex and something many in our industry are grappling with. To address this challenge, we're developing new artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to help us keep teens safer and apply new age-appropriate features, like those described in this guide.

Whether it's through Feed, DMs, Stories, Reels, Live, or IGTV, our mission is to bring people closer to the people and things they love. We have Community Guidelines on Instagram, which are our rules. We ask everyone to adhere to the Community Guidelines and we may take action on content and accounts that break them. We know that for everyone in our community to express themselves freely, it's essential to make Instagram a safe and supportive place.

To learn more about safety on Instagram, please visit:

<https://www.instagram.com/creators/guide/tools-for-a-safe-positive-experience/17876204894093335/>



**COMMUNITY
OF PEOPLE
CONNECT TO
EACH OTHER**



**CAPTURE
AND SHARE
SPECIAL
MOMENTS**



**BRING
PEOPLE
CLOSER**



**PUSH
CULTURE
FORWARD**



**SAFE AND
SUPPORTIVE
PLACE**

03 /

MANAGE PRIVACY



Privacy is important. There are a number of tools you can share with your teen that will give them more control over their digital identity and footprint.

One of the first things you want to talk about is whether their account is going to be public or private. We recommend that teens make their account private, which is why anyone under 18 who signs up to Instagram will have the option to choose between a public or private account, with private selected by default.

Understanding that they have control over who sees and interacts with the things they post online will empower teens to be themselves on Instagram, while helping them to stay safe online.

ACCOUNT PRIVACY

We want to strike the right balance of giving young people all the things they love about Instagram, while also keeping them safe. We don't want young people to be contacted by adults they don't know or don't want to hear from, and we believe having a private account is the best way to prevent that from happening.

Having a private account will let your teen control who sees or responds to their content. If you have a private account, people have to follow you to see your posts, Stories, and Reels, and all follow requests need to be accepted by you first. People you haven't accepted also can't comment on your content in those places, and they won't see your content at all in places like Explore or hashtags.

That's why, anyone who signs up to Instagram and is under 18 in the UK will have the option to choose between a public or private account, with private selected by default.

Account Privacy

Choose who can see what you share. You can change this anytime in Settings.

Private
Only accounts you approve can see your photos and videos.

Public
Anyone can see your photos and videos.

Next

DEFAULTED TO PRIVATE ACCOUNT
WHEN TEENS UNDER 18 SIGN UP

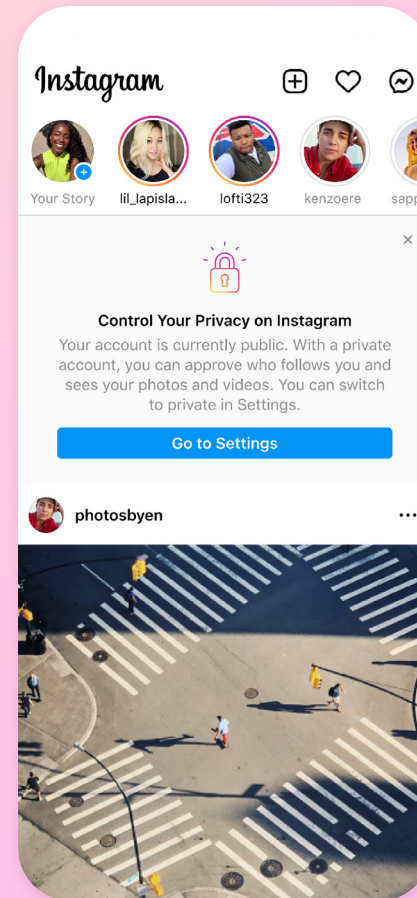
ACCOUNT PRIVACY

For young people who already have a public account on Instagram, we'll show them a notification reminding them that their account is public, and explain how they can switch to private.

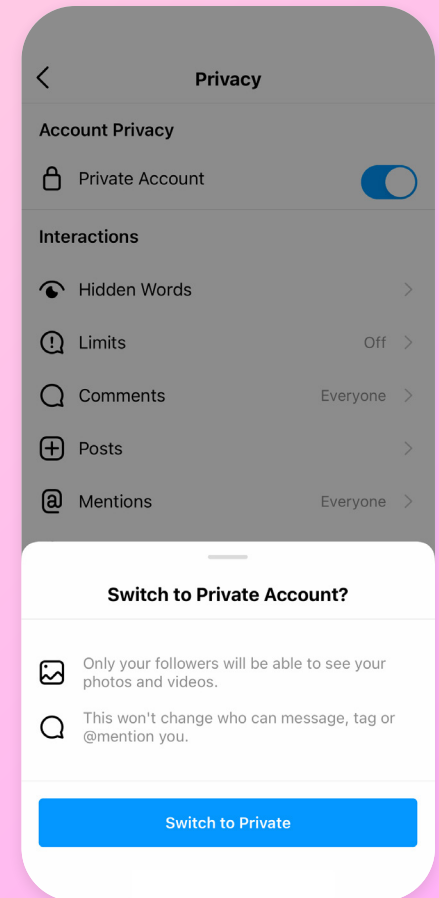
Even with a public account, your teen can remove followers, choose who can comment, and turn off the "Show Activity Status" so that their friends can't see when they are online.

If your teen's account is public, anyone on or off Instagram, with or without an Instagram account, can see the content your teen posts such as on Stories, Feed, or Live, and follow your teen without needing approval.

We know there will still be young people who prefer to have a public account—for example, young creators who are trying to build an audience—which is why we'll still give young people a choice, while doing what we can to highlight the benefits of a private account. If your teen already has a public account, they can switch to private at any time in their Privacy Settings.



NOTIFICATION TO SWITCH TO PRIVATE ACCOUNT



SETTINGS → PRIVACY → TOGGLE PRIVATE ACCOUNT

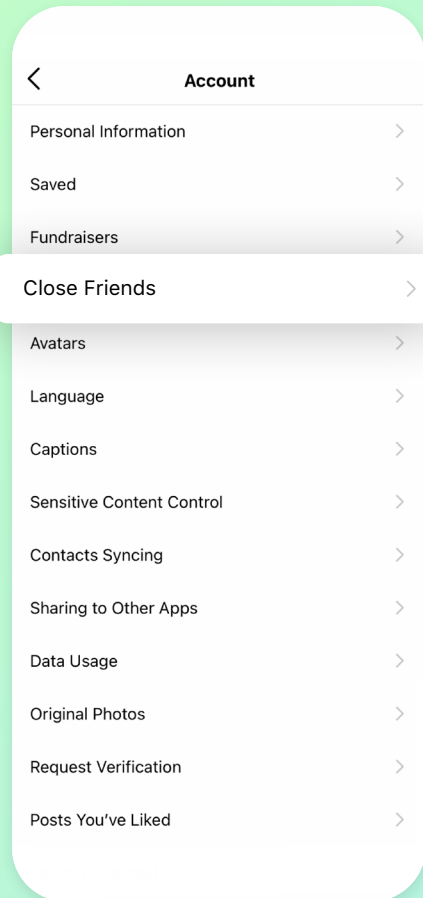


SHARE STORIES WITH CLOSE FRIENDS

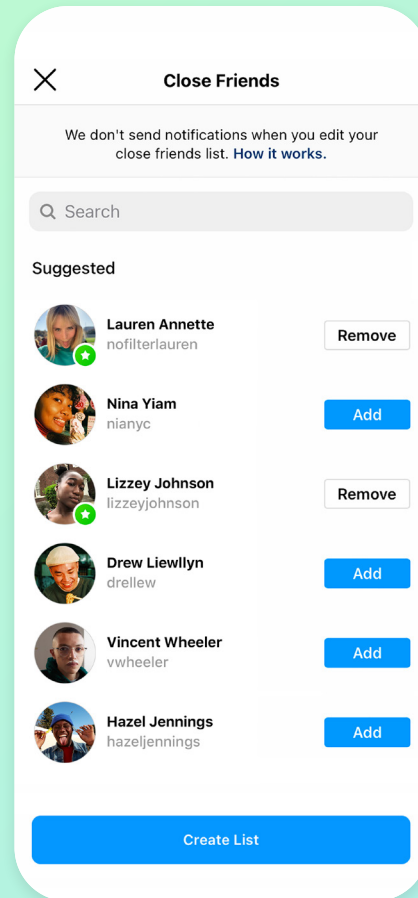
Your teen can create a Close Friends list and share their Stories with only the people on that list.

They can add and remove people from it, at any time, and people won't be notified when they are added or removed from their Close Friends list.

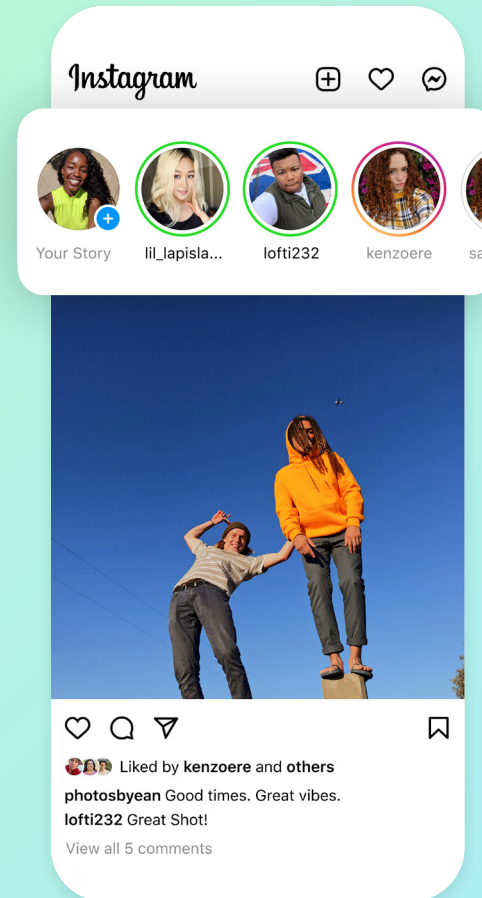
Share Stories with Close Friends



SETTINGS → ACCOUNT →
CLOSE FRIENDS LIST



ADD / REMOVE PEOPLE FROM
FOLLOWER LIST



STORIES SHARED WITH CLOSE
FRIENDS HAVE A GREEN RING



VIEWING STORIES SHARED WITH
CLOSE FRIENDS HAVE A GREEN TAG



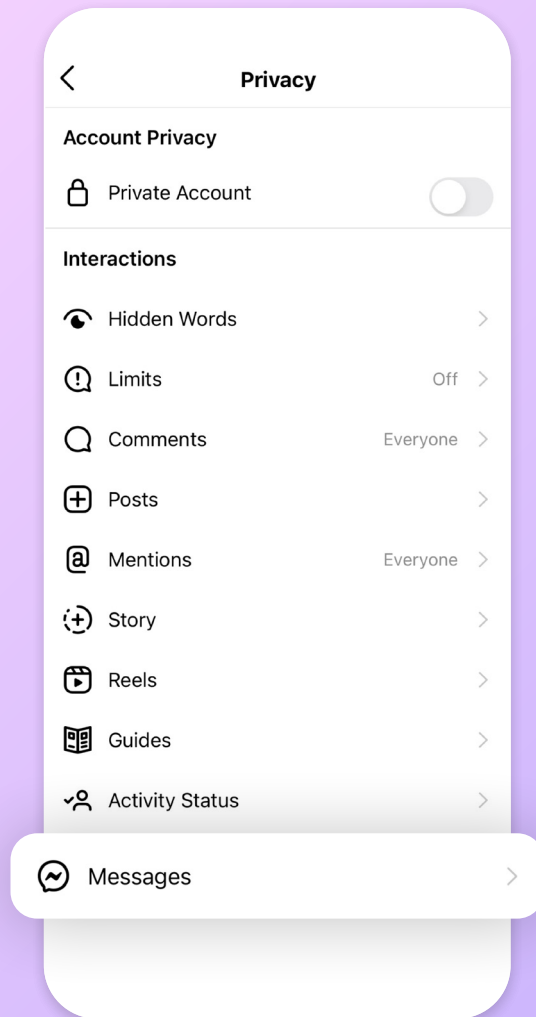
MESSAGE CONTROLS

We want everyone on Instagram—but particularly young people—to have control over who can message them, and we don't want young people to have to receive unwanted messages from people, especially adults, that they don't know.

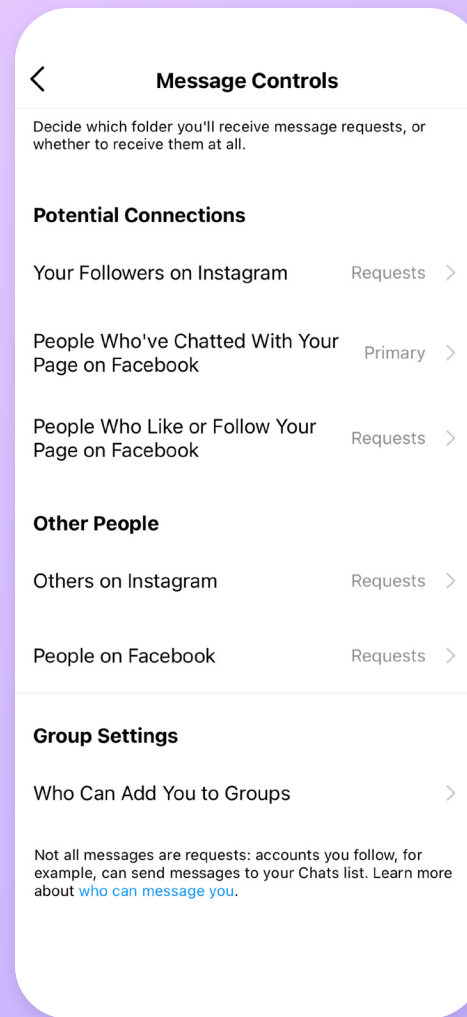
That's why we've launched a series of features to protect young people in their DMs (Direct Messages).

Everyone on Instagram can limit who can send them Direct Messages and who can add them to group chats. That means your teen can choose to only receive messages from people who follow them.

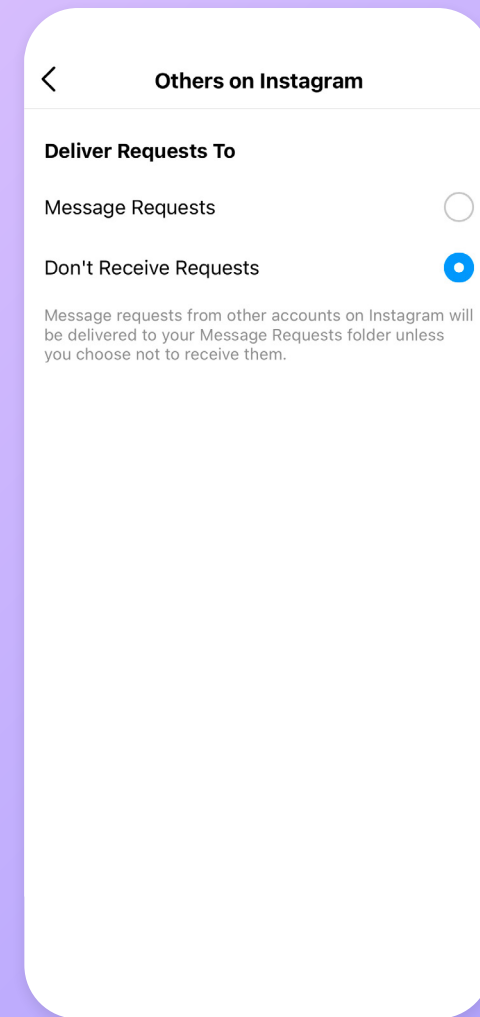
Message Controls



SETTINGS → PRIVACY → MESSAGES



MESSAGE CONTROLS

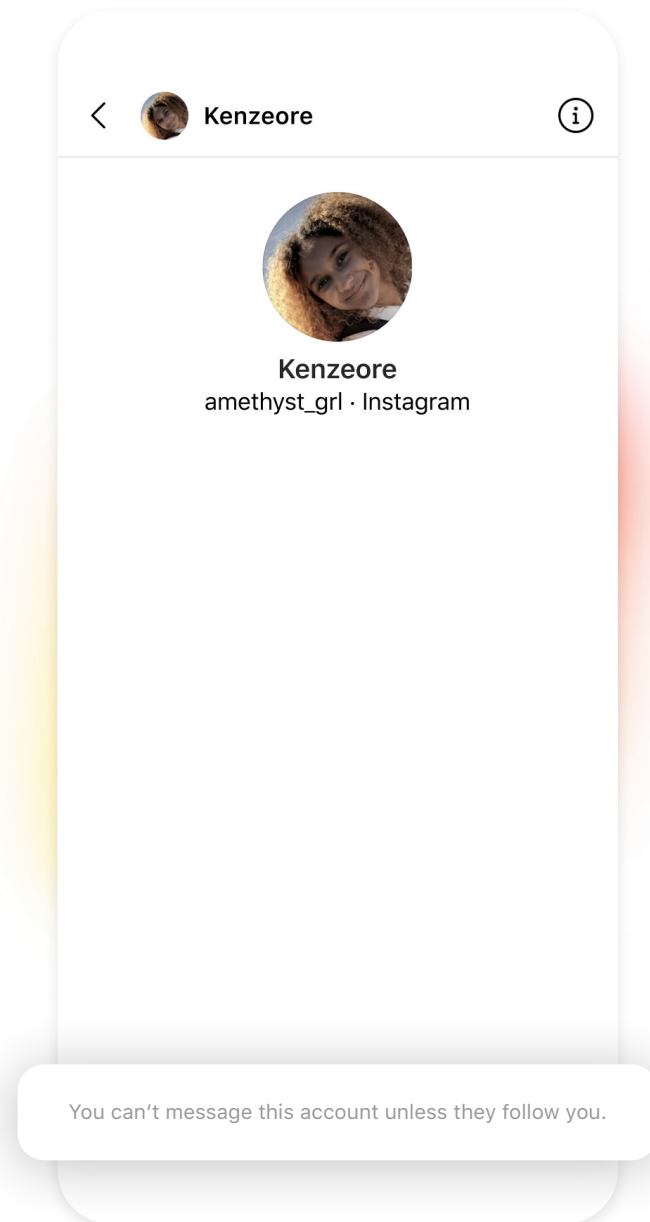


CUSTOMIZE DELIVERY OF MESSAGES

MESSAGE CONTROLS

We've also taken several steps to protect young people from unwanted messages from adults. This year, we introduced a new feature that prevents adults from sending messages to people under 18 who don't follow them.

That means, when an adult tries to message a teen who doesn't follow them, they receive a notification that DM'ing them isn't an option. This feature relies on the age people give us when they sign up, as well as our work to predict peoples' ages using machine learning technology.



PREVENTING ADULTS FROM MESSAGING TEENS
WHO DON'T FOLLOW THEM

MESSAGE CONTROLS

We've also developed new technology to help us find adult accounts that have shown potentially suspicious behaviour—for example, they may have been repeatedly blocked or reported by young people. Our new technology prevents those accounts from finding and interacting with young people's accounts.

Using this technology, [which has already rolled out in the UK/France], we won't show young people's accounts in Explore, Reels, or 'Accounts Suggested For You' to these adults. They also won't be able to see comments from young people on other people's posts, nor will they be able to leave comments on young people's posts. And finally, if a potentially suspicious adult account does find young people's accounts by searching for their username, they won't be able to follow them.

We'll continue to look for additional places where we can apply this technology to protect young people.





LIMIT ADVERTISER TARGETING

We've also made changes to how advertisers can reach young people with ads globally. We'll now only allow advertisers to target ads to people under 18 (or older in certain countries) based on their age, gender, and location. We already limited advertisers to these three categories for some young people in the UK and Europe, but the age threshold has differed from country to country based on various factors, including local GDPR requirements. We're now taking this further, by raising the age to under 18, removing the option to opt in to more personalised ads, and rolling out these targeting limitations to all young people on Instagram globally.

We already give people ways to tell us that they would rather not see ads based on their interests or on their activities on other websites and apps, such as through controls within our ad settings. But we've heard from youth advocates that young people may not be well equipped to make these decisions. We agree with them, which is why we're taking a more precautionary approach in how advertisers can reach young people with ads.

When young people turn 18, we'll notify them about targeting options that advertisers can now use to reach them and the tools we provide to them to control their ad experience.

04 /

MANAGE INTERACTIONS

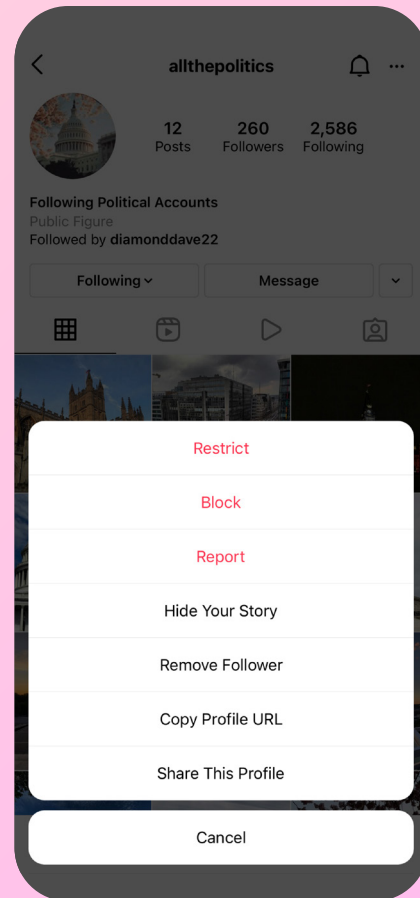


There is no place for bullying and harassment of any kind on Instagram. It's against our policies to create an account, post photos, or make comments for the purpose of bullying or harassing someone else. Let your teen know that if they spot an account, photo, video, comment, or message that is intended to bully or harass someone, they can report it within the app by tapping "...” on the top right corner of the post or profile, by swiping left on the comment, or by tapping and holding the message, and tapping “Report”.

Reporting is totally anonymous; we never share your teen's information with the person reported.

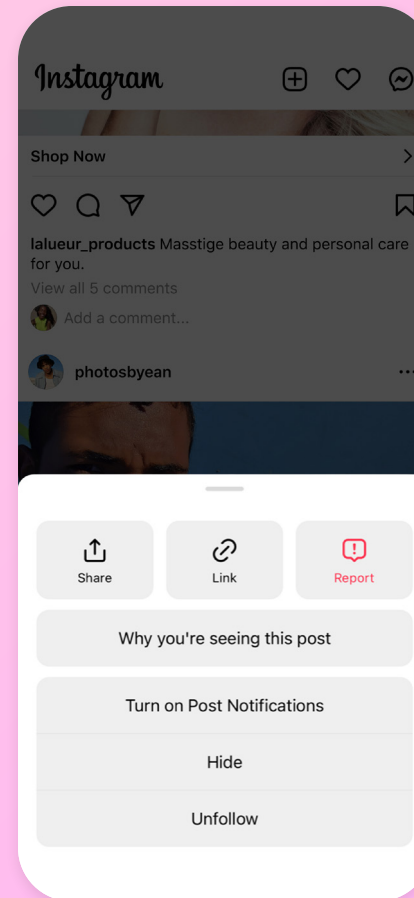
Report Interactions

Anyone can report content on Instagram—from profiles/accounts, to posts, comments, DMs, Lives, Stories, IGTV, and Reels.



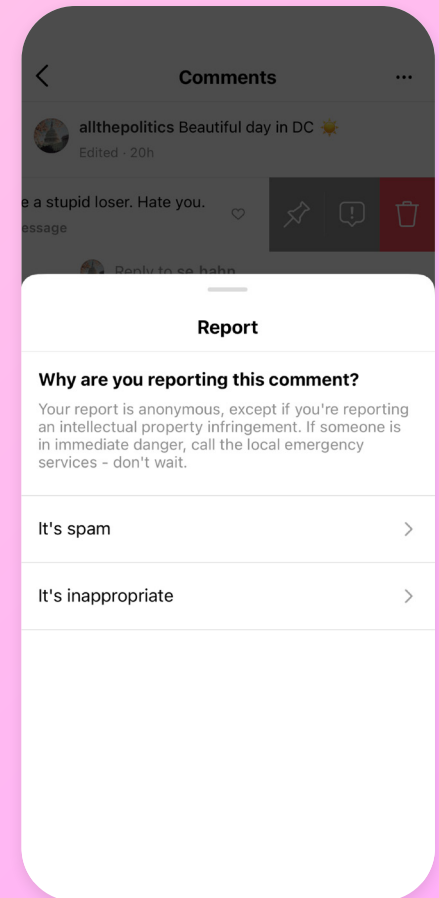
PROFILES:

Tap “...” on top-right corner of profile
→ Report




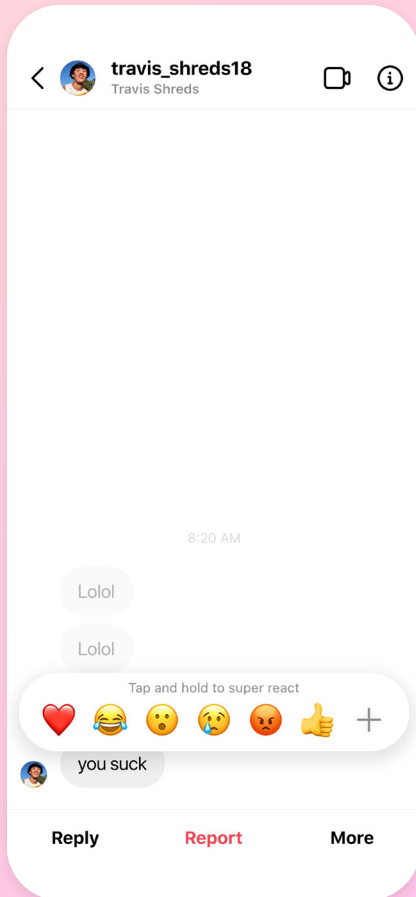
POSTS:

Tap “...” on top-right corner of post
→ Report



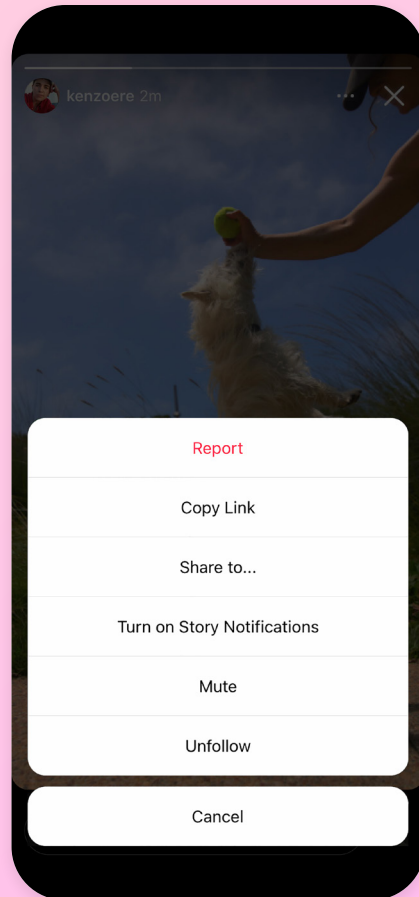
COMMENTS:

Swipe left on comment →
Tap  → Report this comment



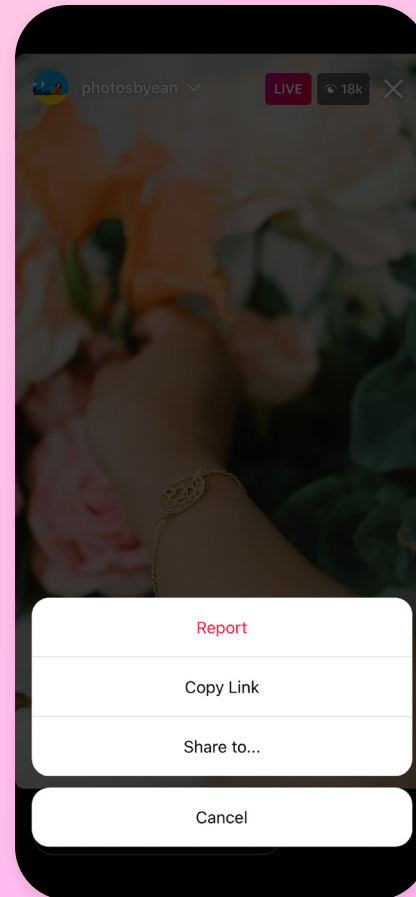
DMS:

Tap and hold individual message → Report



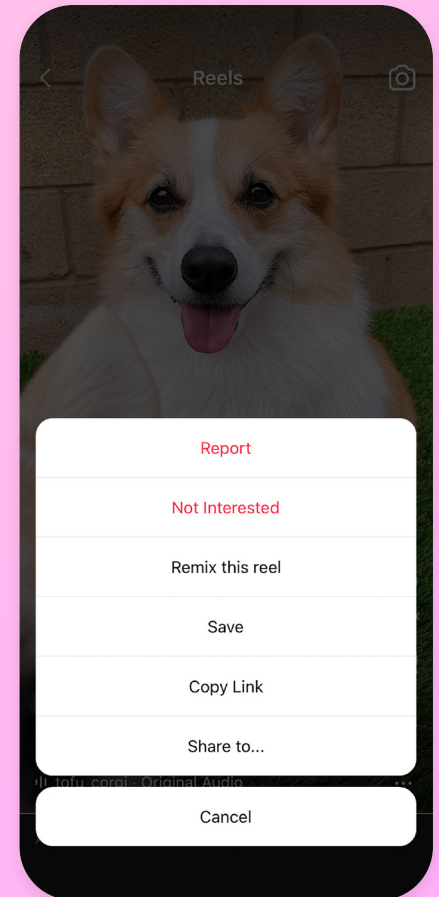
STORIES:

Tap “...” on top-right corner of Stories → Report



LIVE:

Tap “...” next to “Comment” at the bottom of the Live → Report

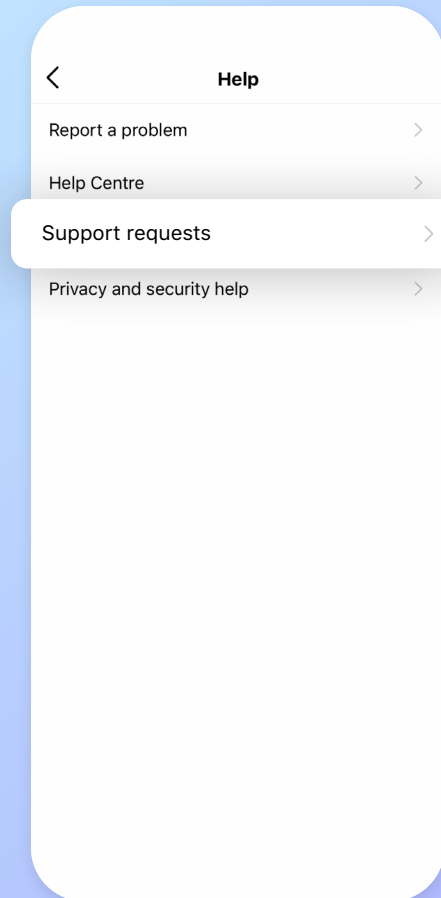


REELS:

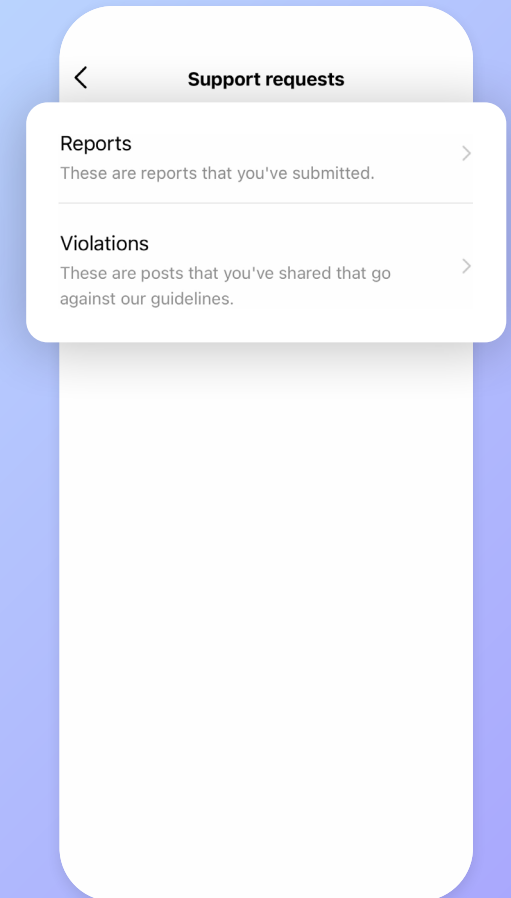
Tap “...” on bottom-right corner of Reel → Report

SUPPORT REQUESTS

Our community now has access to Support Requests—a place where you and your teen can stay current on reports filed and follow updates on any violations by your teen's account. This is aimed at increasing transparency into our processes by ensuring that everyone has access to viewing their reports and violations. This also provides people a dedicated place to appeal decisions they disagree with in an effort to ensure that our processes are fair.



SETTINGS → HELP →
SUPPORT REQUESTS



VIEW ALL
REPORTS AND VIOLATIONS

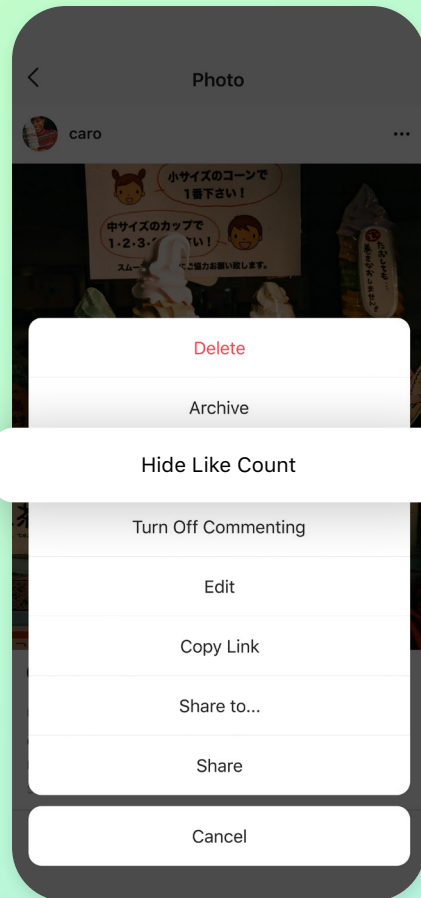


MANAGE LIKE COUNTS

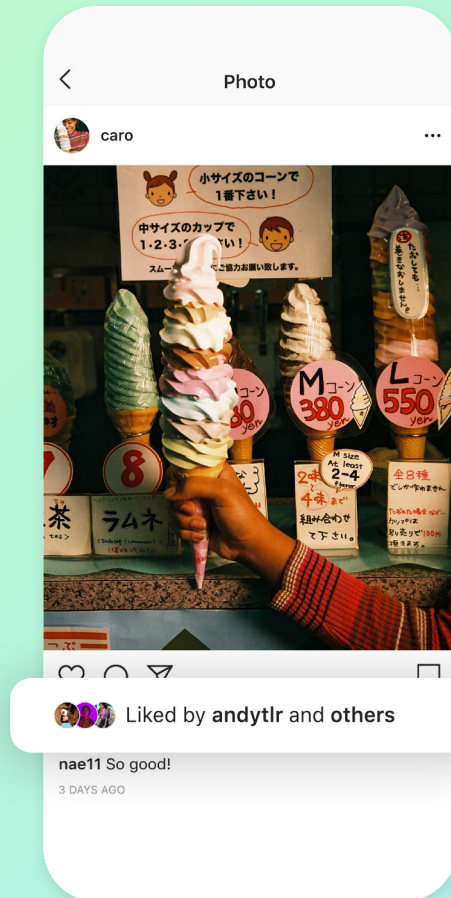
We want people to be able to focus on the photos and videos that are being shared on Instagram, not just how many likes posts get. We also want to give our community control over their own experience on Instagram.

That's why we now give everyone the option to hide like counts on all the posts you see in your feed—and you can do this by visiting the new Posts section in Settings. You'll also have the option to hide like counts on your own posts, so others can't see how many likes your posts get, and you can do this on a post-by-post basis.

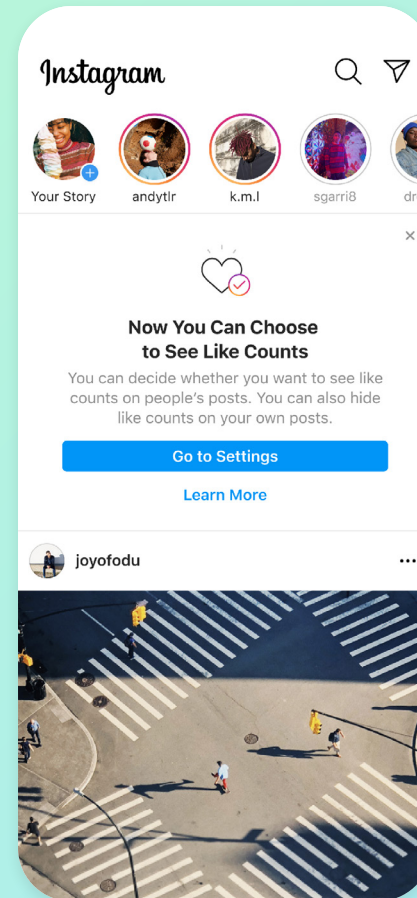
Manage Like Counts



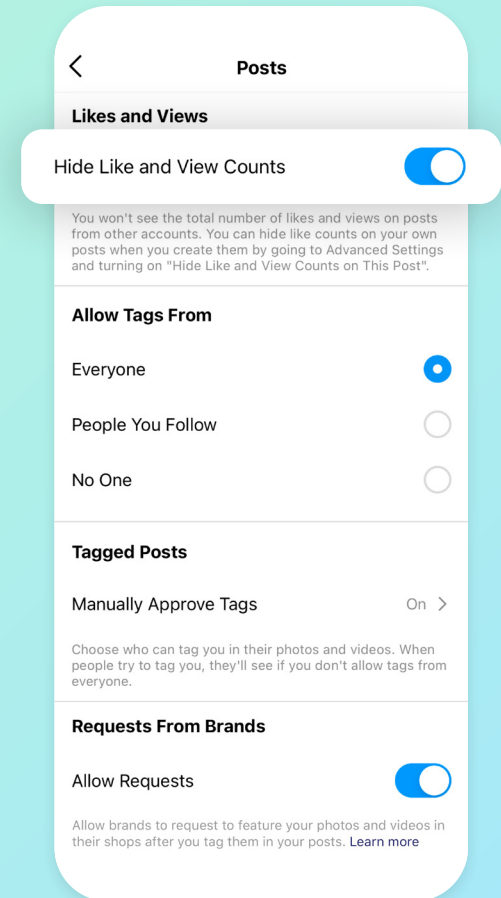
HIDE LIKE COUNT ON YOUR POST



YOUR POST WITH NO LIKE COUNT



VISIT SETTINGS TO HIDE LIKE COUNT ON OTHERS' POST



SETTINGS → PRIVACY → POSTS → HIDE LIKE AND VIEW COUNTS



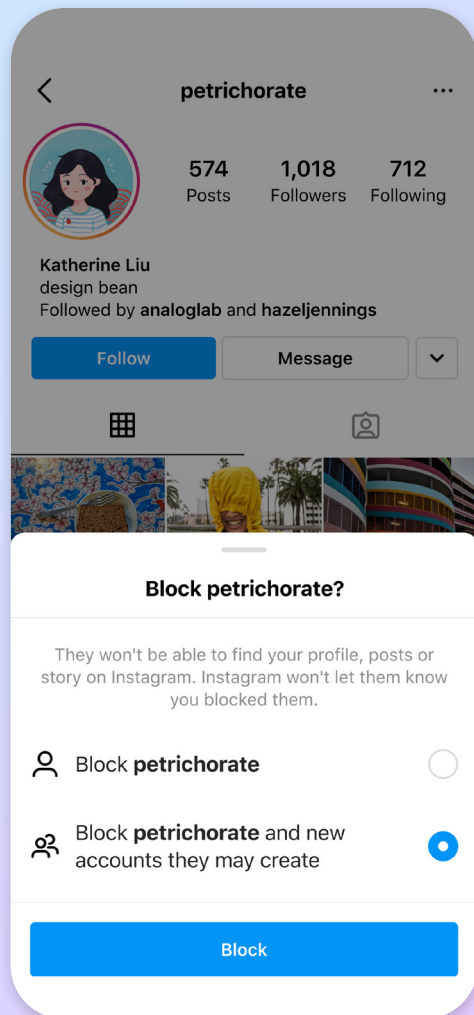
BLOCK UNWANTED INTERACTIONS

Your teen can block accounts they don't want to interact with. This will block people from seeing and commenting on their posts, Stories, Reels, and Live broadcasts. We know sometimes teens don't like blocking people because they worry that person will be notified—this isn't the case. We don't tell people when they've been blocked, or who has blocked them, and you can unblock an account at any time.

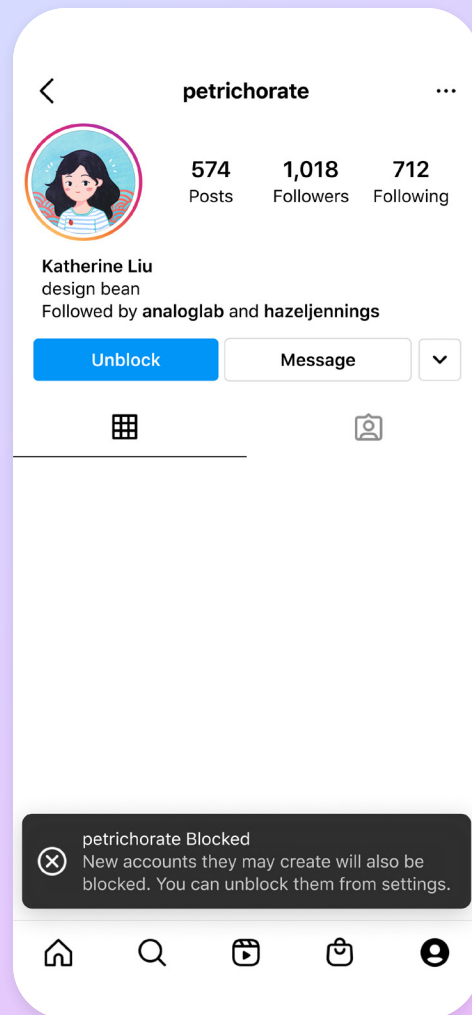
We also recently announced an update to our blocking feature, to make it harder for someone who you've already blocked from contacting you again through a new account. Read about it here: about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/introducing-new-tools-to-protect-our-community-from-abuse.

Now, whenever you decide to block someone on Instagram, you'll have the option to both block their account and preemptively block new accounts that person may create.

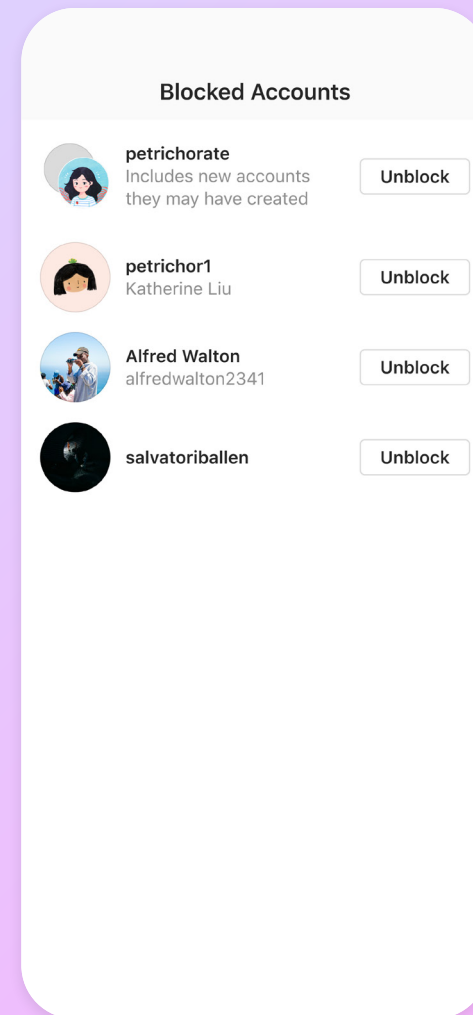
Block Unwanted Interactions



PROFILE → TAP "..."
IN TOP-RIGHT CORNER → BLOCK



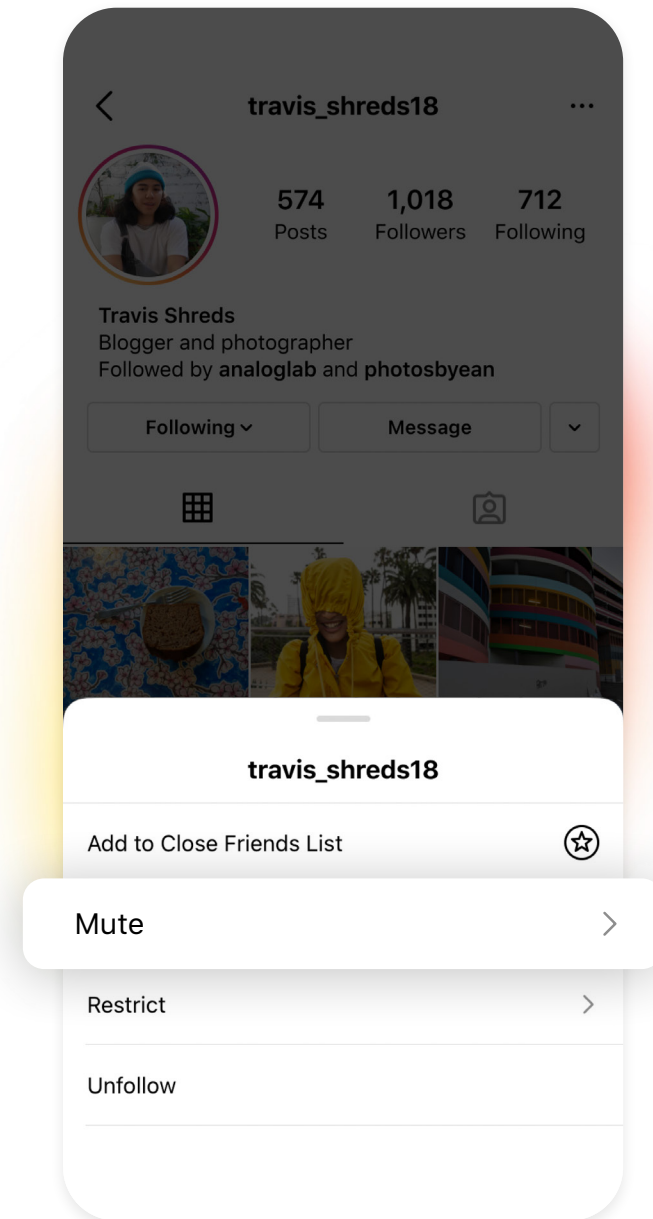
BLOCKED ACCOUNT



SETTING → PRIVACY →
BLOCKED ACCOUNTS

MUTE AN ACCOUNT

There may be accounts that your teen isn't interested in interacting with but is hesitant to unfollow. Muting will keep posts or Stories from those accounts from showing up in your teen's feed. The other person will not know they've been muted, and your teen can unmute at any time.



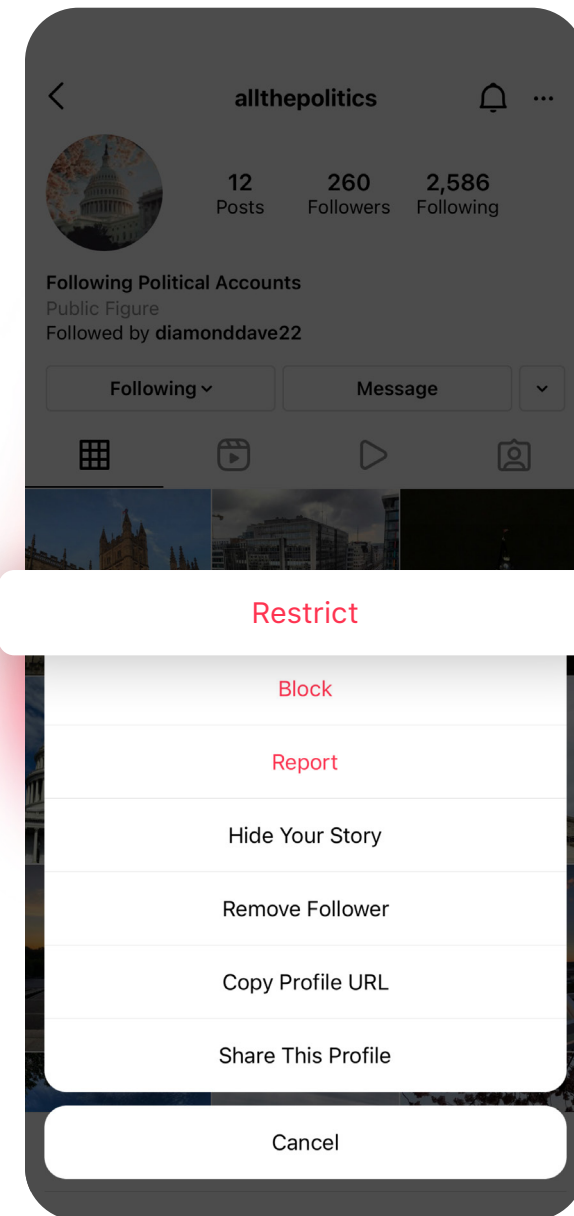
PROFILE → TAP "FOLLOWING" → MUTE

RESTRICT AN ACCOUNT

Sometimes young people aren't comfortable blocking or unfollowing someone because they feel it could lead to uncomfortable or escalated situations.

To help, we developed Restrict mode, which allows your teen to protect their account from unwanted interactions without making the bully aware.

Once they Restrict someone, comments from that person will only be visible to that person. Restricted people aren't able to see when you're active on Instagram or when you've read their direct messages. Your teen can remove restrictions at any time.



PROFILE → TAP "..."
IN TOP-RIGHT CORNER → RESTRICT

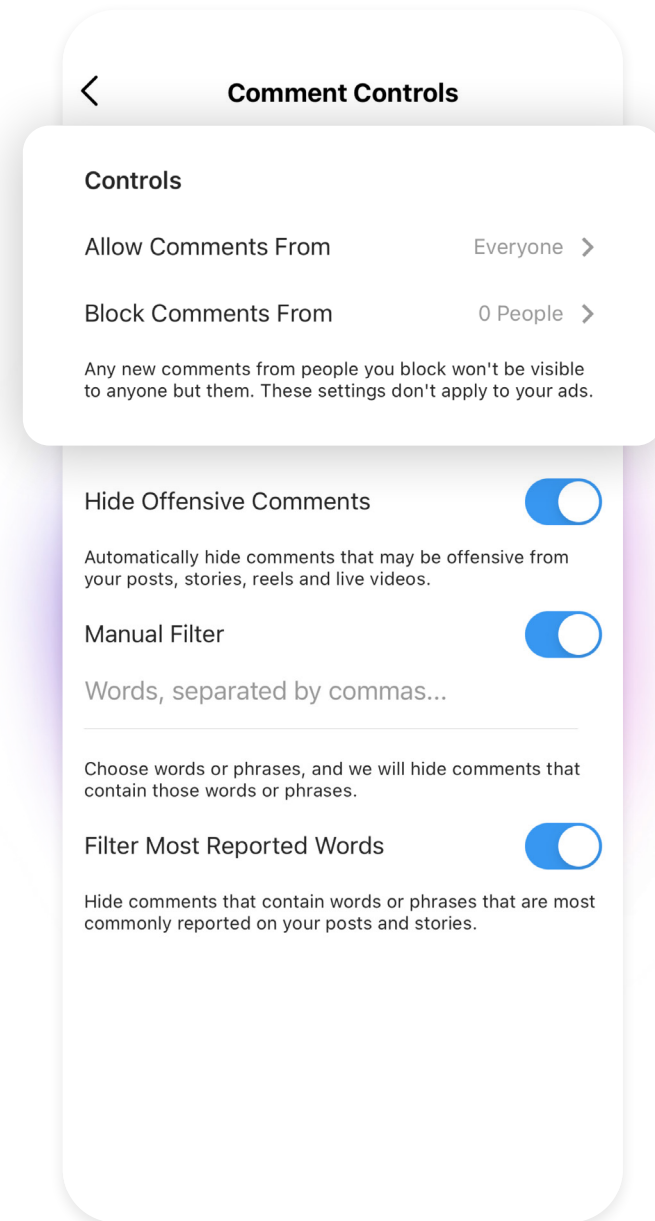
05 /

MANAGE COMMENTS



COMMENT CONTROLS

Your teen is in control of who can comment on their photos and videos. In the “Comment” section of Instagram’s privacy settings, they can choose to allow comments from everyone, people they follow and those people’s followers, just the people they follow, or just their followers. They can also remove comments entirely from their posts.



SETTINGS → PRIVACY → COMMENTS



FILTER OFFENSIVE COMMENTS

As well as turning off comments completely, we also have controls that help you manage what comments can appear under your posts, and controls that can hide comments that are offensive or intended to bully. We've built filters that automatically hide potentially offensive or bullying comments, and we just launched an option to 'Hide More Comments' that may be potentially harmful, even if they may not break our rules.

Your teen can also create their own custom list of words, phrases, or emojis they find offensive. Any comments using these terms will be hidden under their posts, so that they and their followers don't see them. We really encourage them to do this, to protect them from having to see hurtful comments.

FILTER OFFENSIVE MESSAGES

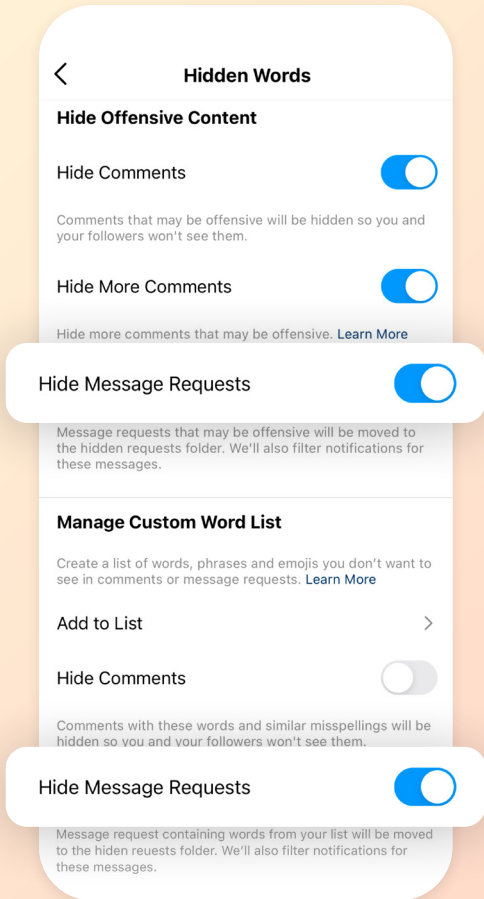
We don't want anyone on Instagram to receive bullying, offensive, or abusive messages in their DMs. Because DMs are private conversations, we don't proactively look for hate speech or bullying there the same way we do elsewhere on Instagram. But that doesn't mean that we can't protect our community from hurtful messages. As well as our existing messaging controls which let you choose who can message you, we've also built a new tool which, when turned on, will automatically filter DM requests containing offensive words, phrases, and emojis, so you never have to see them.

When your teen turns on this feature, they can either choose to use our pre-defined list of offensive terms, which we developed with leading anti-discrimination and anti-bullying organisations in the UK, France, and Germany, or they can also create their own custom list of words, phrases, or emojis that they personally find offensive. We recommend they do this, because we understand that different words can be hurtful to different people. Any DM request that contains these offensive words, phrases, or emojis will be automatically filtered into a separate hidden requests folder, and they won't be notified when they receive it. If they choose to open the hidden requests folder, the message text will be covered so they're not confronted with offensive language, unless they tap to uncover it. They then have the option to accept the message request, delete it, or report it.

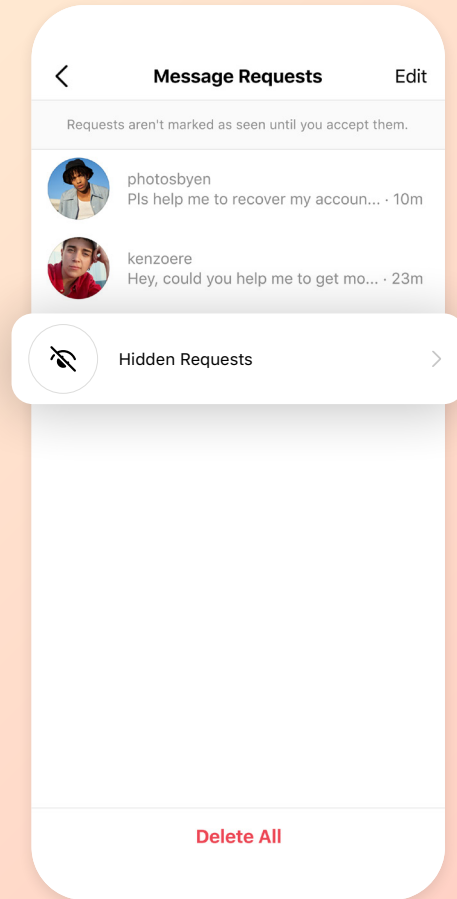
You can turn both comment and DM request filters on and off in a new dedicated section of your Privacy Settings called Hidden Words.



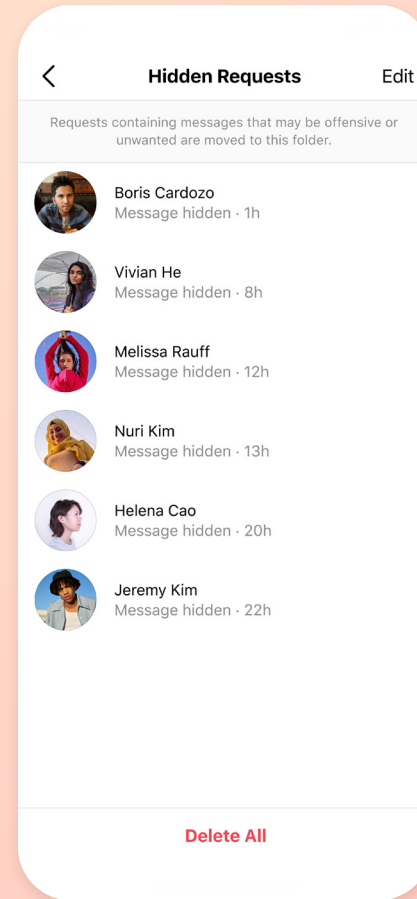
Filter Offensive Messages



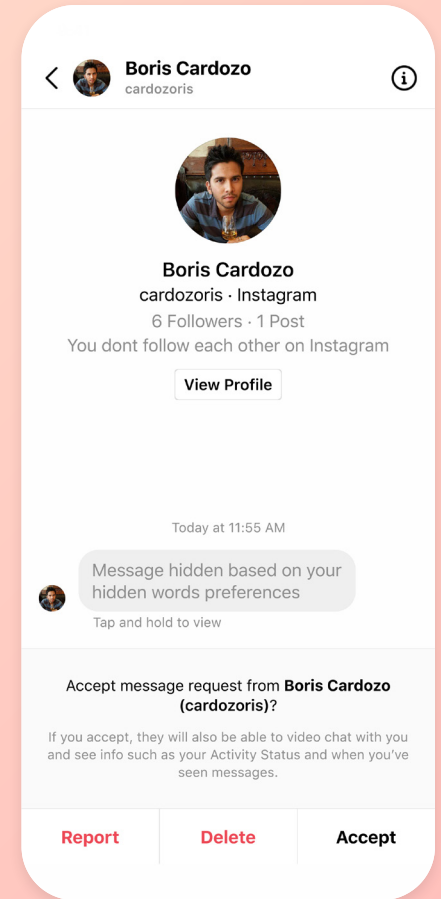
SETTINGS → PRIVACY → HIDDEN WORDS



MESSAGES → REQUESTS TAB → MESSAGE REQUESTS → HIDDEN REQUESTS



HIDDEN REQUESTS INBOX



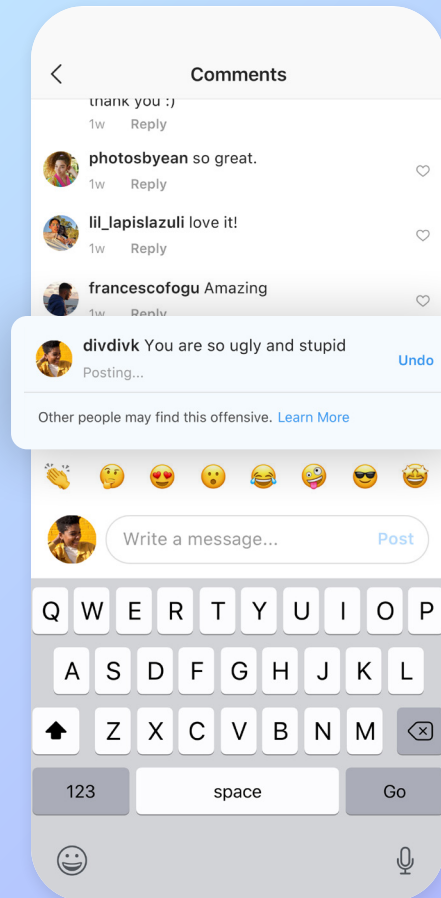
HIDDEN DM

COMMENT WARNINGS

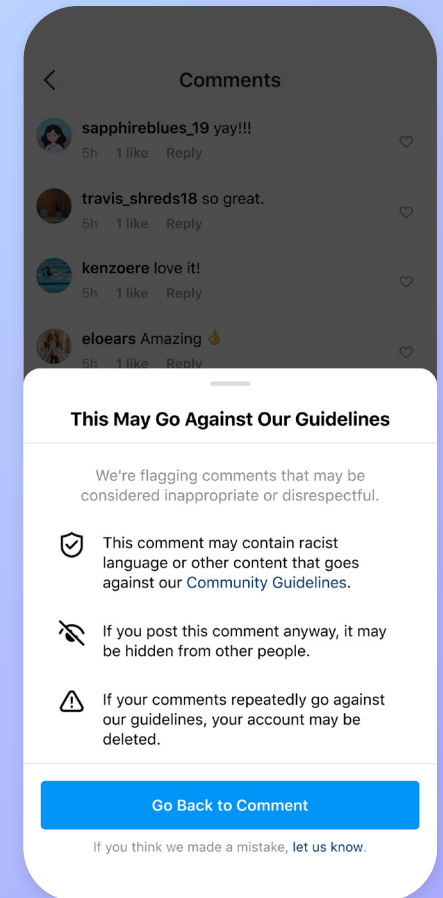
We use AI to detect when someone may be trying to post a comment that could be harmful or offensive, and we send them a warning to give them a chance to rethink. If someone repeatedly tries to post offensive comments, we show a stronger, more prominent warning—reminding them of our Community Guidelines, and warning them that we may remove or hide their comment if they post it.

Since launching these comment warnings, we've seen that reminding people of the consequences of bullying on Instagram and providing real-time feedback as they are writing the comment is the most effective way to shift behaviour.

Recently, we made a change so that, rather than waiting for the second or third comment, we'll now show this stronger warning the very first time someone tries to post something potentially hurtful.



WARNING WHEN POSTING OFFENSIVE COMMENTS



COMMUNITY GUIDELINES REMINDER



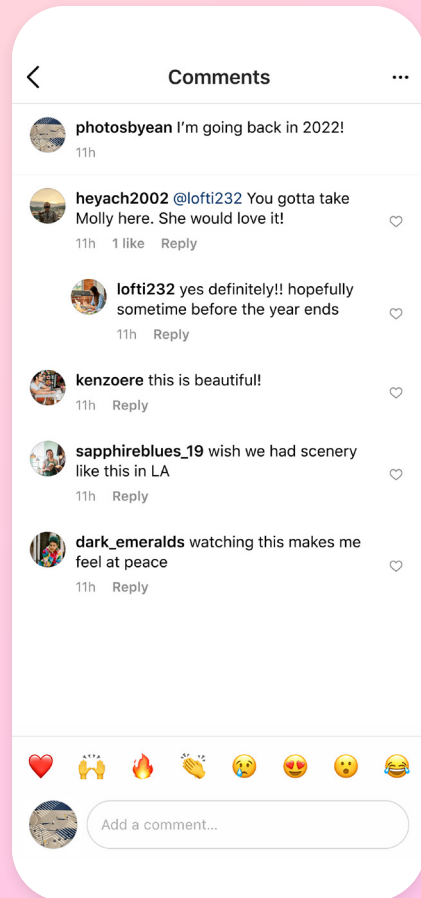
BULK COMMENT MANAGEMENT

We know it can feel overwhelming to manage a rush of comments, so we've introduced features to delete comments in bulk, as well as block or restrict multiple accounts that post negative comments.

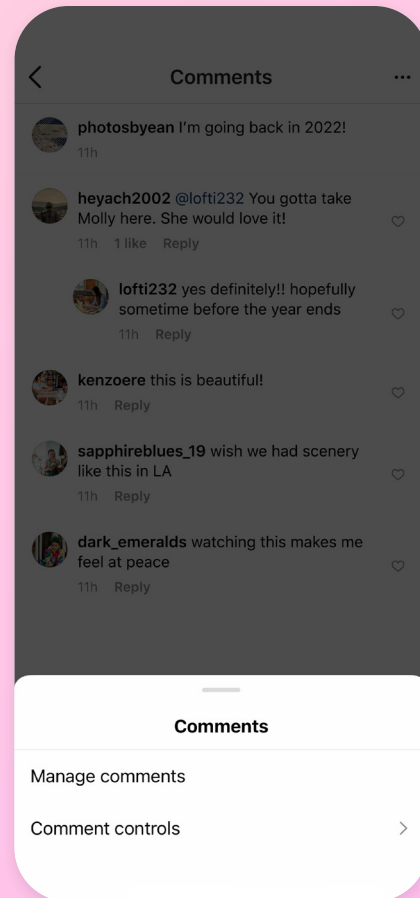
To enable this feature on iOS, tap on a comment or "View all comments" and then tap the "..." icon in the top-right corner. Select "Manage Comments" and choose up to 25 comments to delete at once. From here, you can also choose to restrict or block accounts in bulk.

On Android, tap on a comment or "View all comments" and then select the comments you want to manage. Tap on the trash can icon in the top-right corner to delete comments in bulk, or if you wanted to restrict or block multiple accounts, you can do so by tapping the other icons in the top-right corner.

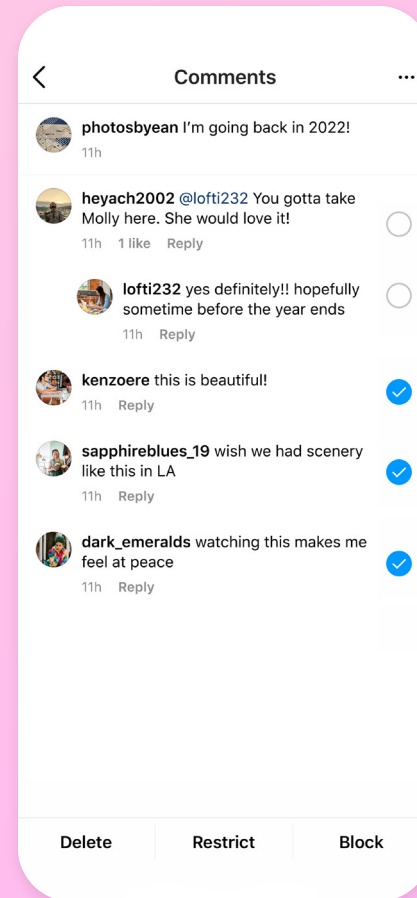
Bulk Comment Management



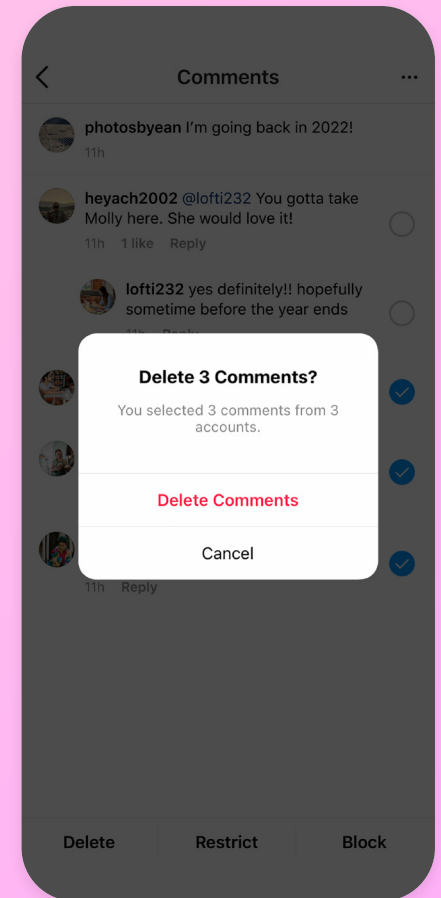
TAP "..."
IN THE
TOP-RIGHT CORNER



TAP "MANAGE COMMENTS"



SELECT COMMENTS TO REMOVE →
TAP "DELETE"

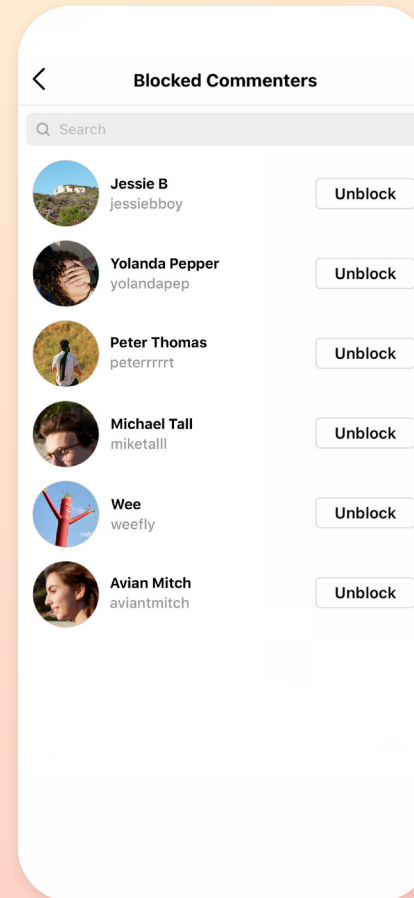


TAP "DELETE COMMENTS"

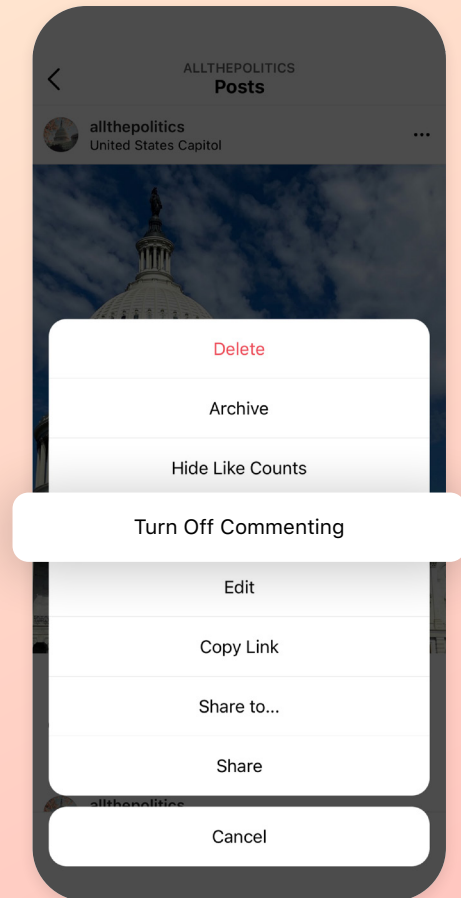
BLOCK COMMENTS

Your teen can block accounts that they don't want to interact with. Comments will no longer appear from a blocked account.

Your teen can also turn off comments from all posts or individual posts.



SETTINGS → PRIVACY → COMMENTS
→ BLOCK COMMENTS FROM



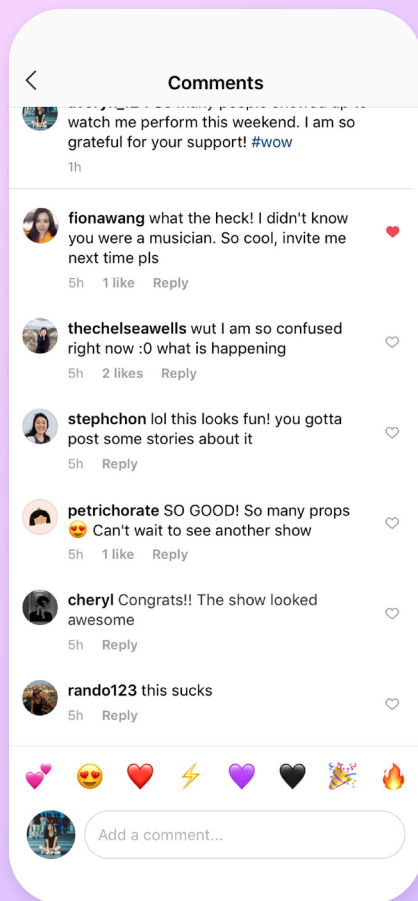
TAP "..." IN CORNER OF POST →
TURN OFF COMMENTING



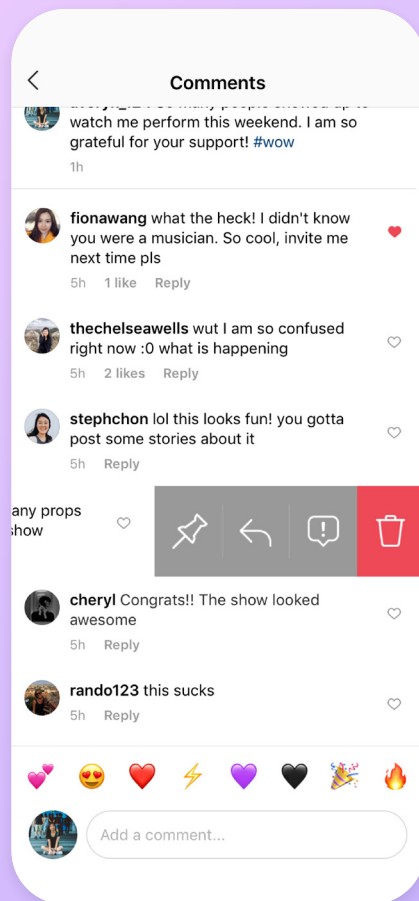
PIN POSITIVE COMMENTS

In addition to removing negative comments, we want to give people an easy way to amplify and encourage positive interactions. Pinned Comments gives your teen a way to set the tone for their account, and engage with their community by pinning a select number of comments to the top of their comments thread.

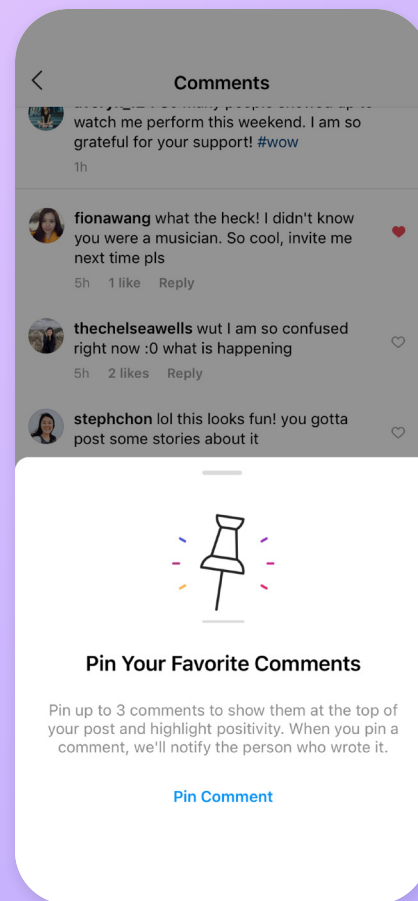
Pin Positive Comments



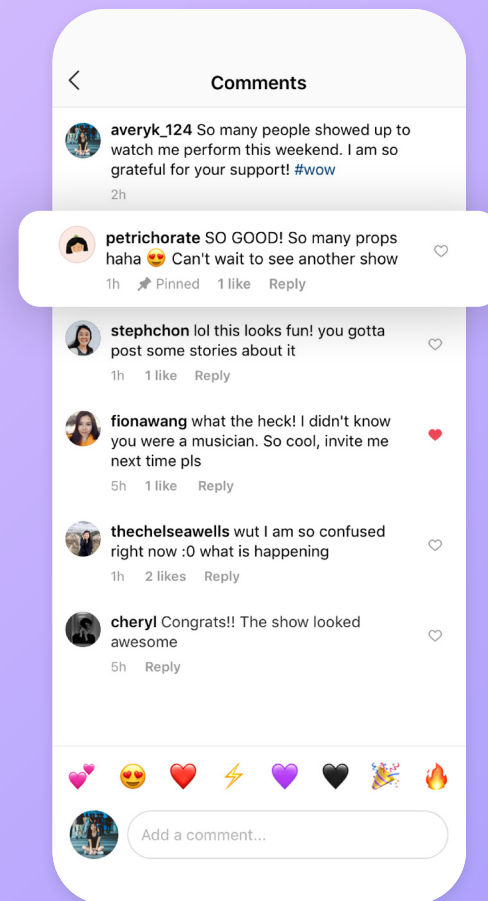
VIEW COMMENTS



SWIPE LEFT ON COMMENT →
TAP "📌"



TAP "PIN COMMENT"



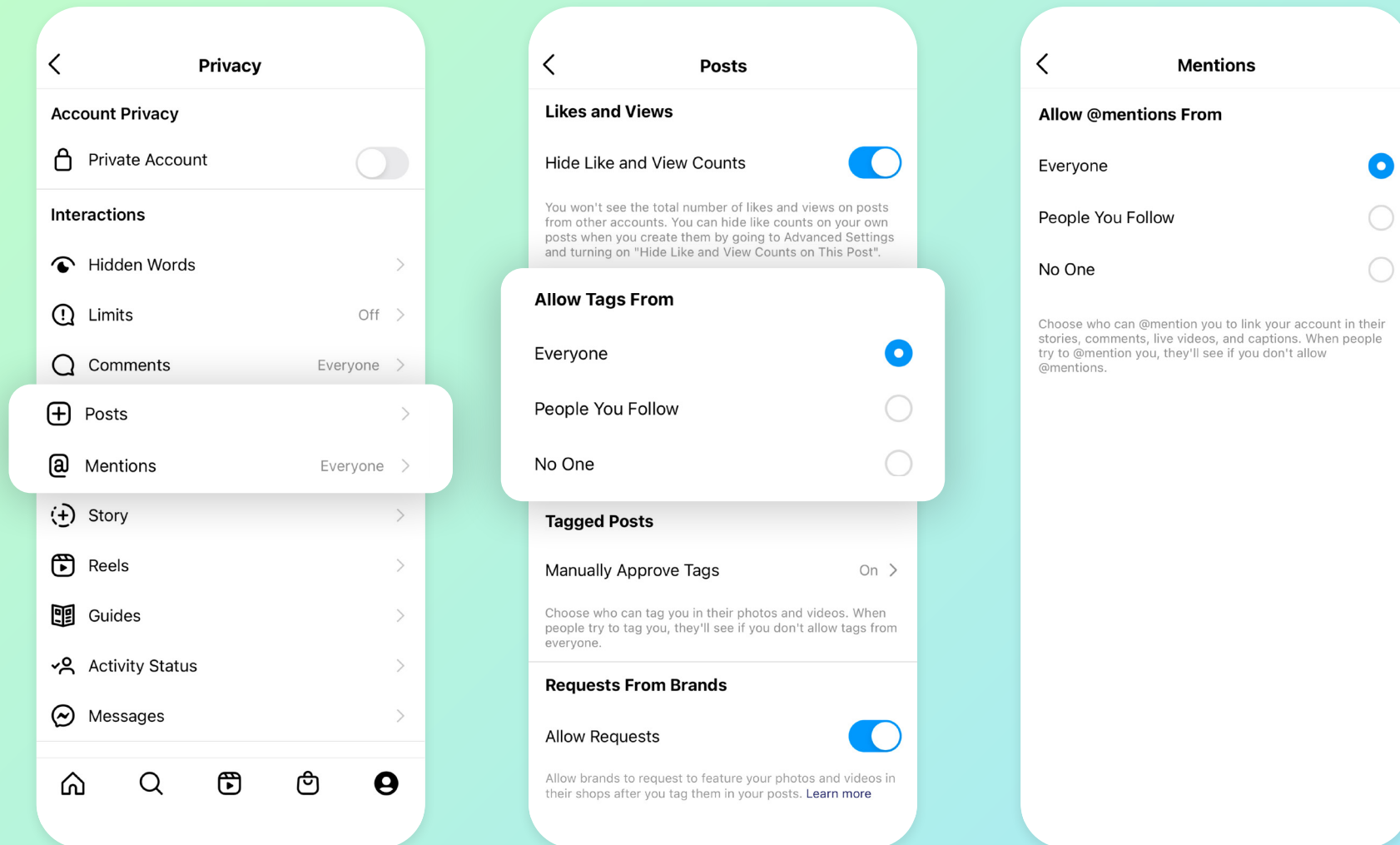
PINNED COMMENTS APPEAR AT
TOP OF COMMENTS THREAD



CONTROL TAGS AND MENTIONS

We've created new controls that allow people to manage who can tag or mention them on Instagram. Your teen can choose whether they want everyone, only people they follow, or no one to be able to tag or mention them in a comment, caption, or in Stories.

Control Tags and Mentions



SETTINGS → PRIVACY →
POSTS/MENTIONS

POSTS →
ALLOW TAGS FROM

MENTIONS →
ALLOW @MENTIONS FROM

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MANAGE TIME



When it comes to spending time on Instagram, it's important to have open conversations with your teen, and come to an agreement about what is an appropriate amount of time on the platform each day or each week.

Taking regular breaks can also be important, especially during stressful times. There are a number of tools to help you and your family understand and take control of the time your teen is spending on the app. You can work together to decide what the right balance is for your family.

HOW MUCH TIME IS TOO MUCH?

How much time online is too much? An almost impossible question to answer, although balance is the watchword here.

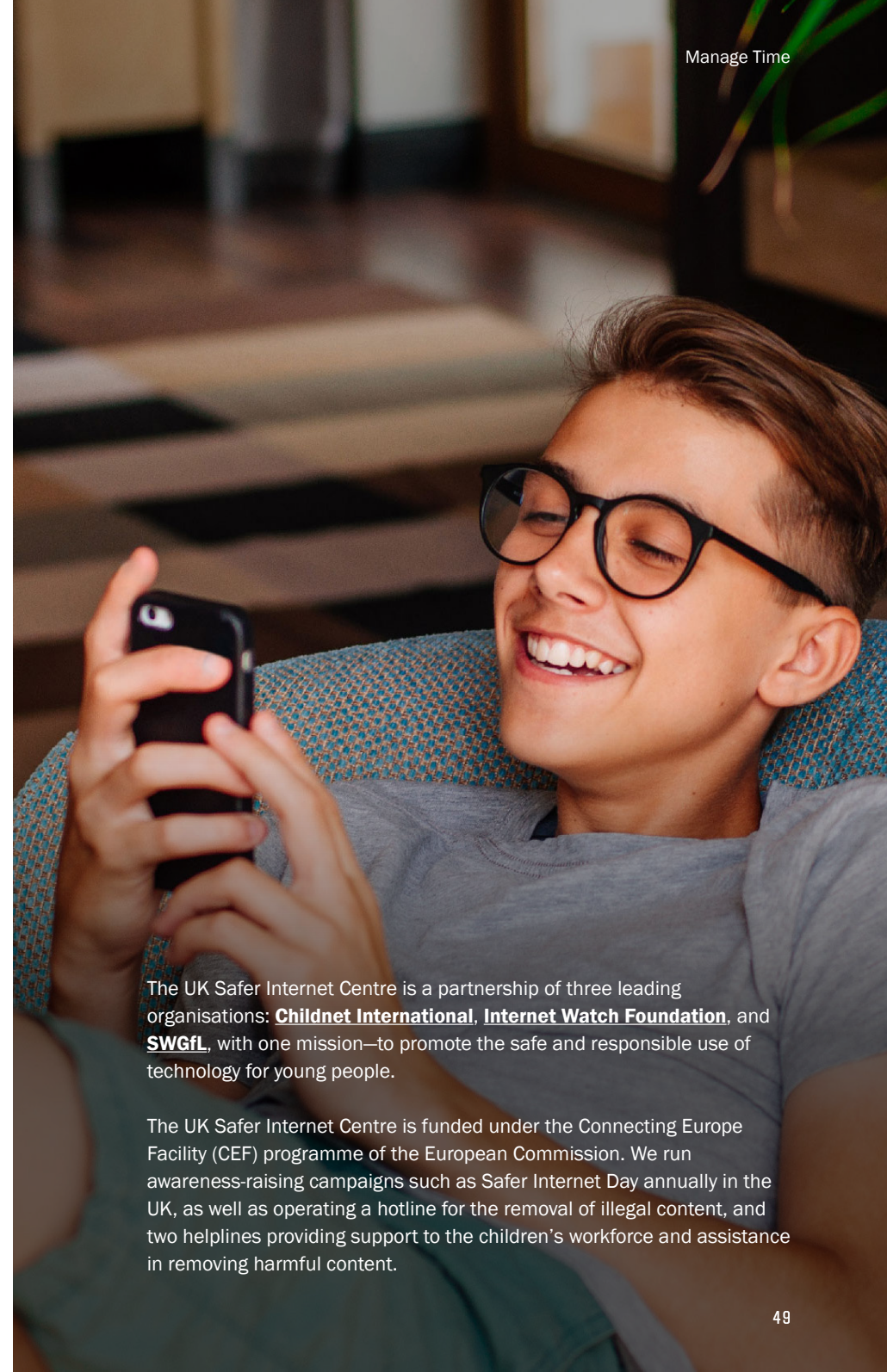
In a report published by [SWGfL](#)—one of the partners in the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)—many young people suggested that the “Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO) is a primary reason for spending “too much” time online. The main conclusion from this analysis is that there is a clear link between the amount of time a young person spends online, and their exposure to upset, risk, and issues related to well-being.

As a parent, your attention may be drawn to how much your children spend in front of screens (especially recently), but let's not forget the question of equal importance: “What do they do when they are connected?”.

In support of parents managing the challenge of screen time, [The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](#) have developed four key questions to use as a guide to look at their screen time:

- Is screen time in your household controlled?
- Does screen use interfere with what your family wants to do?
- Does screen use interfere with sleep?
- Are you able to control snacking during screen time?

Open and non-judgemental conversation is the first step in understanding how and when your child uses devices, and for how long. As a parent, it's also important to model behaviour and adopt your own expectations—it's always illuminating to ask your children if you are a good digital role model.



The UK Safer Internet Centre is a partnership of three leading organisations: **Childnet International**, **Internet Watch Foundation**, and **SWGfL**, with one mission—to promote the safe and responsible use of technology for young people.

The UK Safer Internet Centre is funded under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programme of the European Commission. We run awareness-raising campaigns such as Safer Internet Day annually in the UK, as well as operating a hotline for the removal of illegal content, and two helplines providing support to the children's workforce and assistance in removing harmful content.



TIPS FOR BALANCING SCREEN TIME

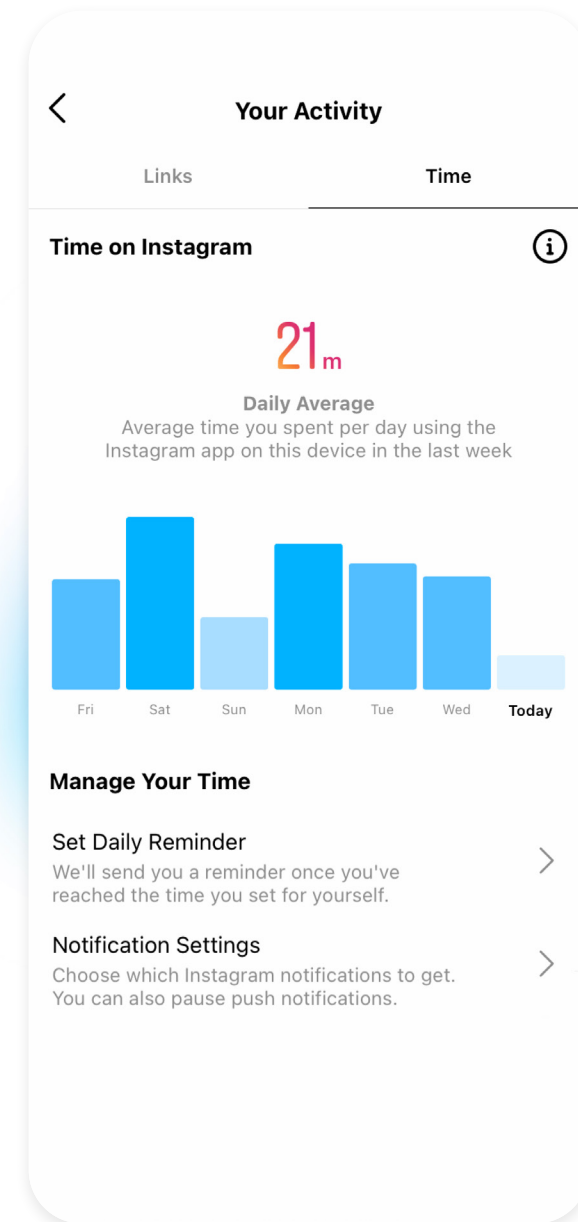


- Talk about content your family might encounter online.
- Create a plan as a family of how much screen time is allowed on specific days in the week.
- Consider the use of parental controls in managing the time connected—ironically children may be more accepting if a device automatically switches off rather than being asked to stop.
- Create opportunities and activities for some offline fun.
- Enjoy screen-free meal times (yes, the whole family).
- Avoid screens an hour before bedtime and no devices in bedrooms overnight.
- Take a break at least every 2 hours.

These are not hard and fast rules, but rather guidance that can be shaped for what works best for your family. The most important thing is that your family time, both on and offline, should be safe, fun, and rewarding, making family memories worth having.

VIEW YOUR ACTIVITY

The Activity Dashboard shows your teen how much time they've spent on Instagram for the past day and week, as well as their average time on the app. Your teen can tap and hold the blue bars to see how much time they've spent on Instagram on a certain day.

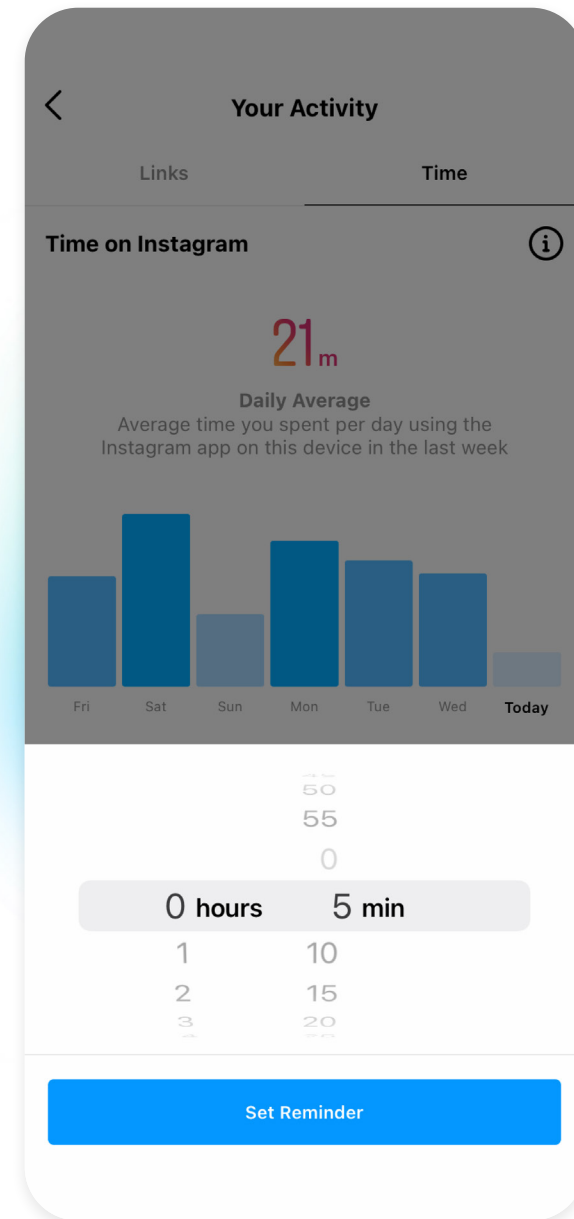


TAP "☰" IN TOP-RIGHT CORNER
OF YOUR PROFILE → YOUR ACTIVITY → TIME

SET A DAILY REMINDER

Your teen can use the daily reminder to set a limit on how much time they want to spend on Instagram.

Talk with your teen about how they feel while using the app. Is there a point when they don't get as much out of it? Setting the daily reminder together can be a good way to talk to your teen about how they are using Instagram throughout the day.

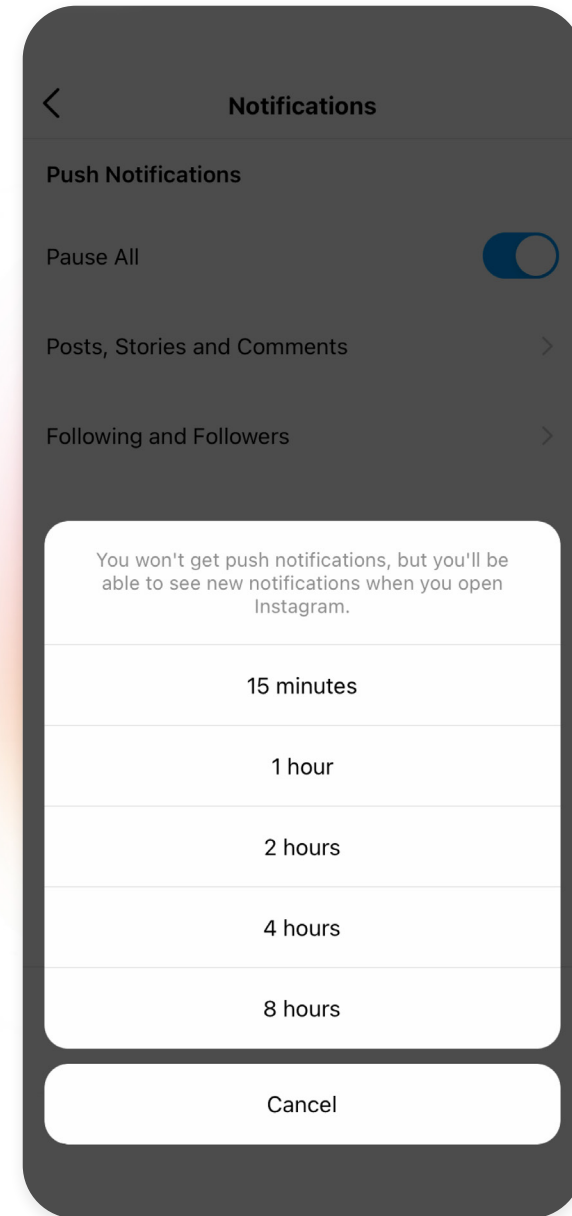


YOUR ACTIVITY → TIME → SET DAILY REMINDER

MUTE PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Your teen can use the “Pause All Notifications” feature to silence Instagram notifications for a period of time.

When the preset time is up, notifications will return to their normal settings without having to reset them.



SETTINGS → NOTIFICATIONS → PAUSE ALL



How your teen uses social media can be more important than how long they use it for, and the way they use Instagram influences the things they will see and won't see.

Teens help improve the experience simply by interacting with the profiles and posts they enjoy, but there are a few more explicit things they can do to influence what they see:

- **Pick Close Friends.** Teens can select their close friends for Stories. This was designed as a way to let them share with just the people closest to them, but we will also prioritize these friends in both Feed and Stories.
- **Mute people they're not interested in.** Teens can mute an account if they'd like to stop seeing what those accounts share, but are hesitant about unfollowing them entirely. Accounts that are muted won't know who has muted them.
- **Mark recommended posts as "Not Interested."** Whenever teens see a recommendation, whether it's in Explore or in Feed, they can indicate that they are "not interested" in that post. We will do our best not to show teens similar recommendations in the future.

Providing more context on how content is ranked, shown, and moderated on Instagram is only part of the equation. There is more we can do to help teens shape their Instagram experience based on what they like. We also need to continue to improve our ranking technology and, of course, make fewer mistakes. Our plan is to be proactive about explaining our work across all three areas from here on out. Stay tuned.

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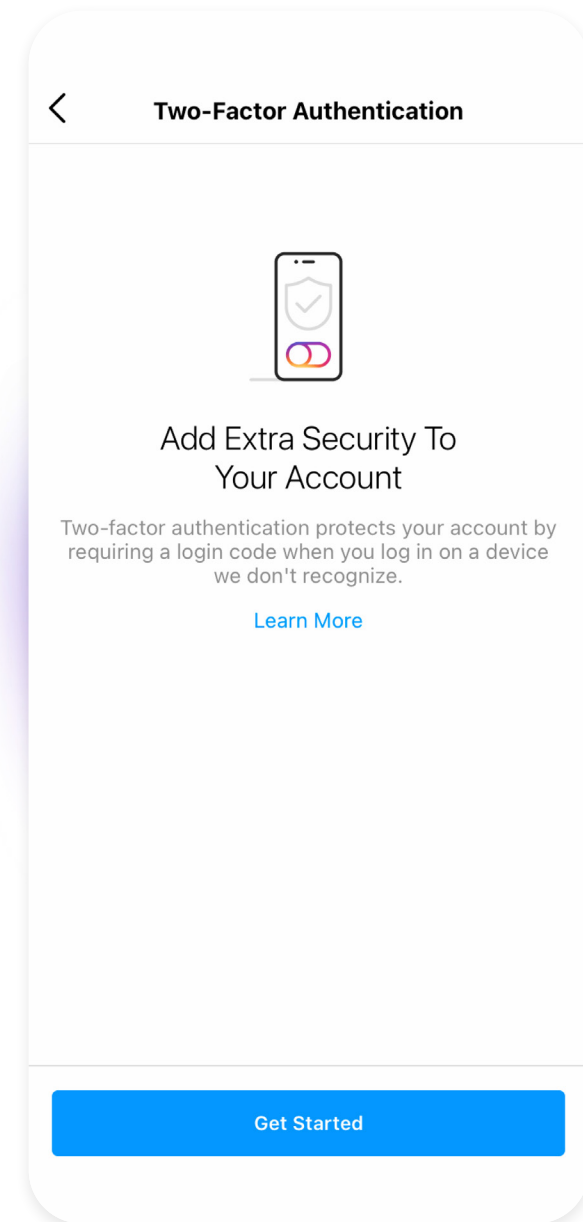
MANAGE SECURITY



TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Keep your teen's account secure and their login private, especially across multiple devices. Two-Factor Authentication is an additional security layer that helps secure an account from unauthorized password usage, and can be enabled from within Settings.

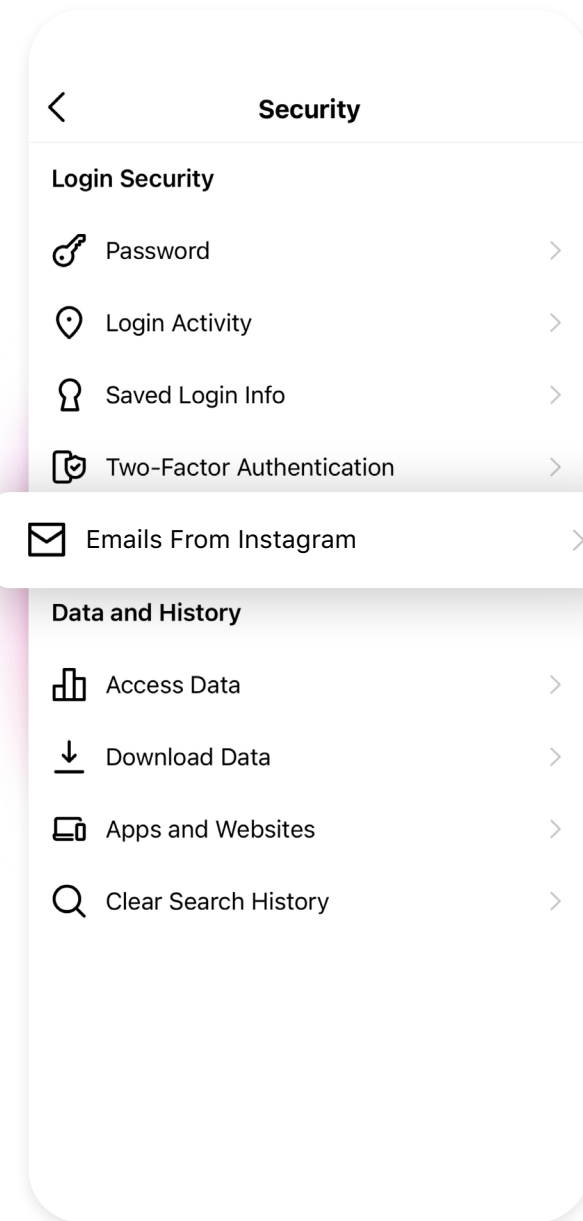
Logging into an Instagram account will then require a password, as well as a secure code that is sent through an authenticator app or via text message.



SETTINGS → SECURITY →
TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

EMAILS FROM INSTAGRAM

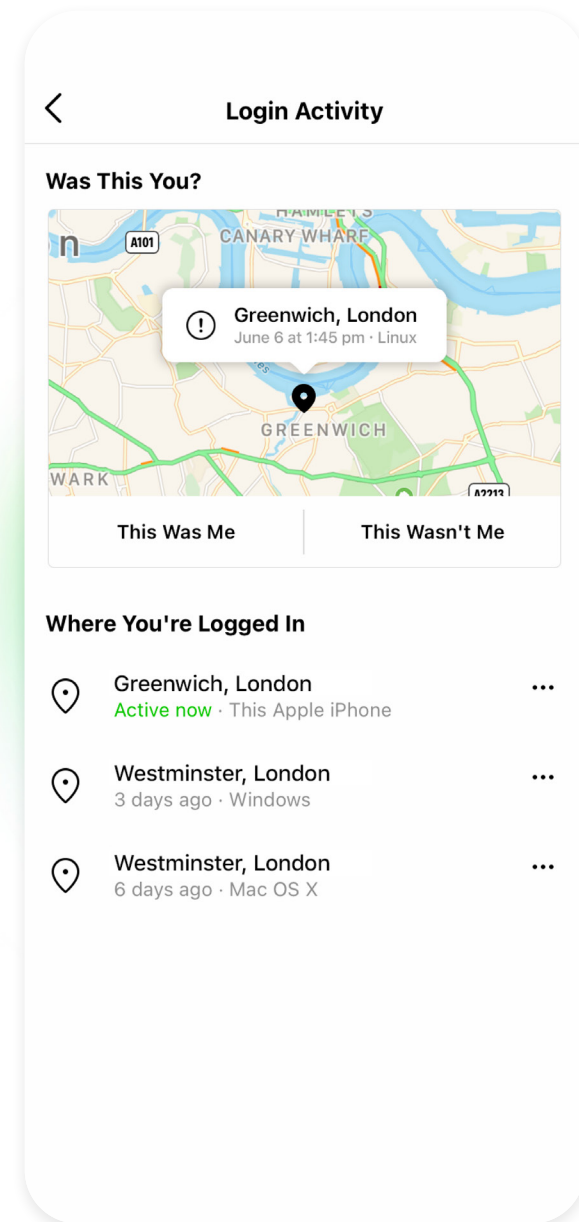
Verify your teen's account security and ensure that you do not, or your teen does not, miss important legitimate emails from Instagram regarding your teen's account. If Instagram ever wants to reach you about your account, we will do so via the 'Emails from Instagram' tab in your settings, which is the only place you will find direct and authentic communication from us on the app.



SETTINGS → SECURITY →
EMAILS FROM INSTAGRAM

LOGIN ACTIVITY

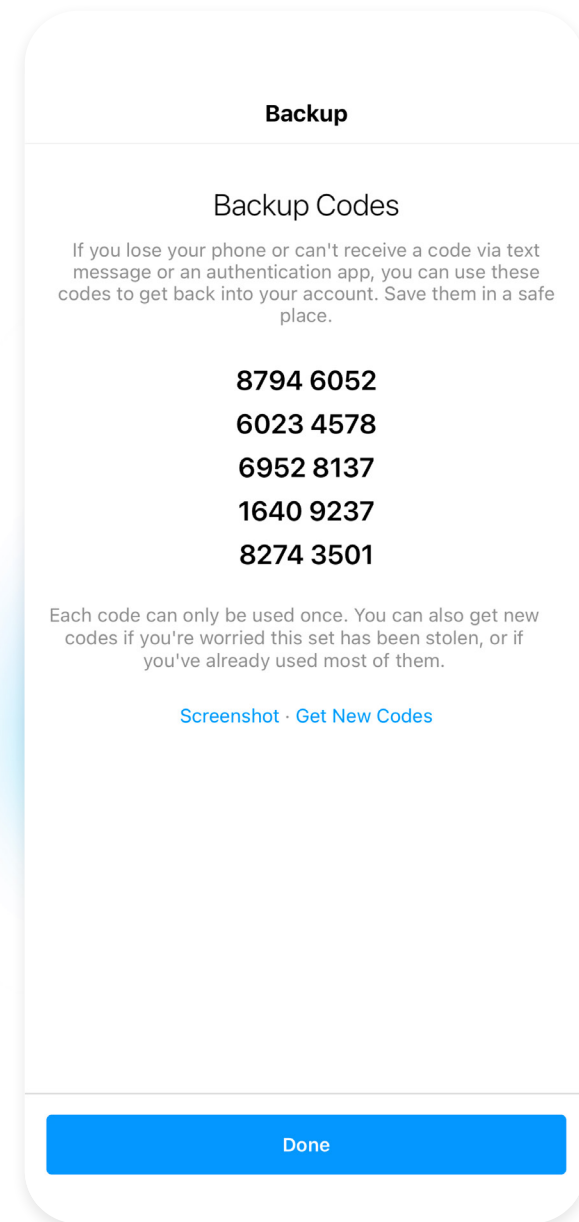
You can only be logged into a single Instagram account at a time, but your device can store login information for multiple Instagram accounts. You can add or remove login information from your Instagram app settings.



SETTINGS → SECURITY →
LOGIN ACTIVITY

BACKUP CODES

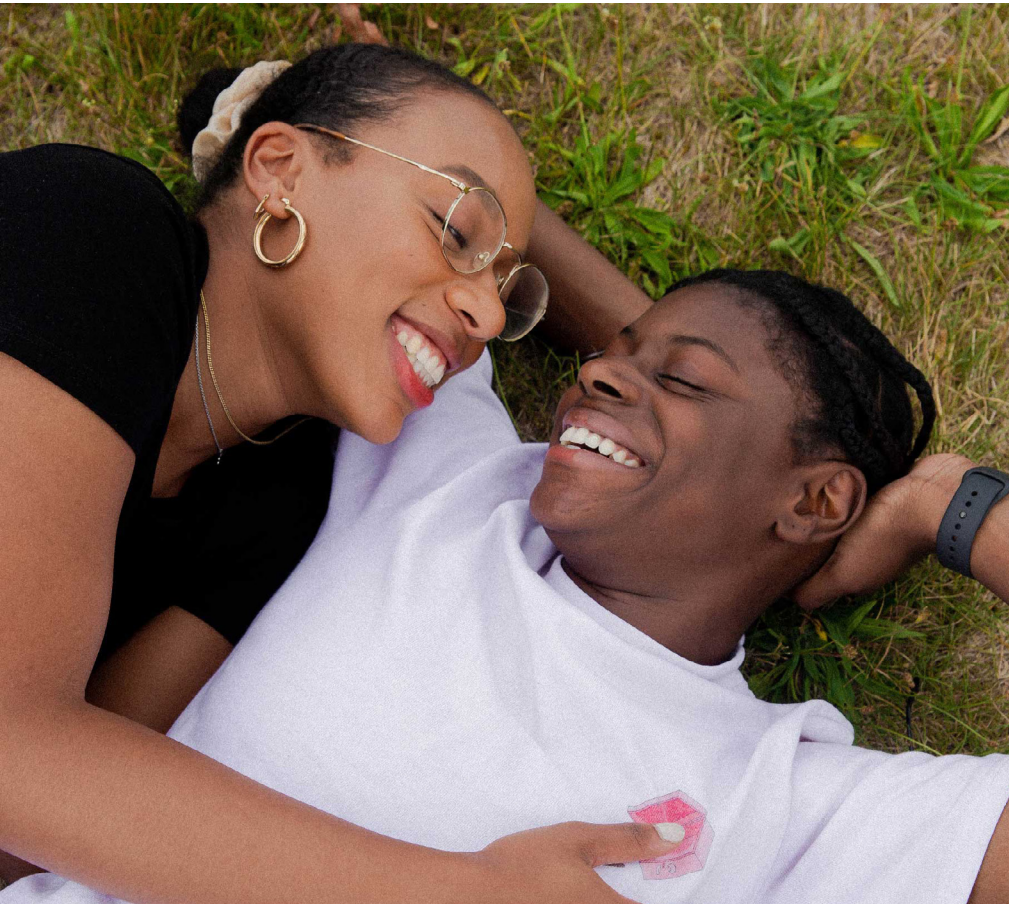
Once Two-Factor Authentication is set up, you will have access to Backup Codes, which enables you to log in if you are not able to receive your Two-Factor Authentication code via an authenticator app or via text message.



SETTINGS → SECURITY → TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION
→ ADDITIONAL METHODS → BACKUP CODES



SUPPORT FOR OTHER PEOPLE



It may never happen, but it's important for young people to know how to act if they are concerned for someone else's emotional well-being on Instagram. You may have already discussed mental health with your teen, but if not, try broaching the topic of having the skills to help others with kindness and without judgement. Instagram provides a number of tools for reporting concerning behaviour, which are explained on the following pages.

If your teen is affected by self-harm or suicide, Instagram has tools to help, including expert-backed resources. We work with experts to help inform our policies and we direct people who search for self-harm or suicide-related content to local support organisations, including Samaritans, CALM, Shout, and Papyrus here in the UK.

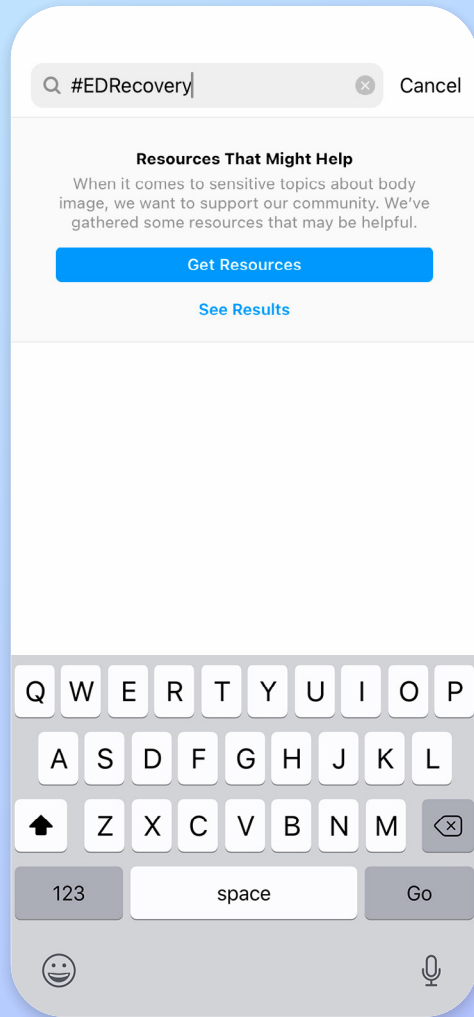


EATING DISORDERS

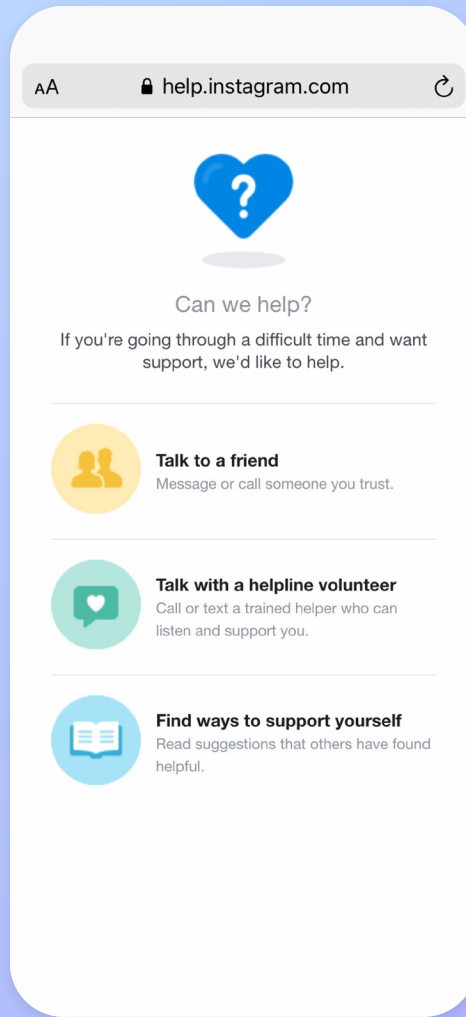
If your teen is affected by negative body image or an eating disorder, Instagram has tools to help, directing people to local support organisations, such as Beat in the UK, and showing expert-backed resources if they try to search for eating disorder-related content.

We also work with experts to help inform policies, as well as collaborate with community leaders and curators to help them create and share positive, inspiring body image content.

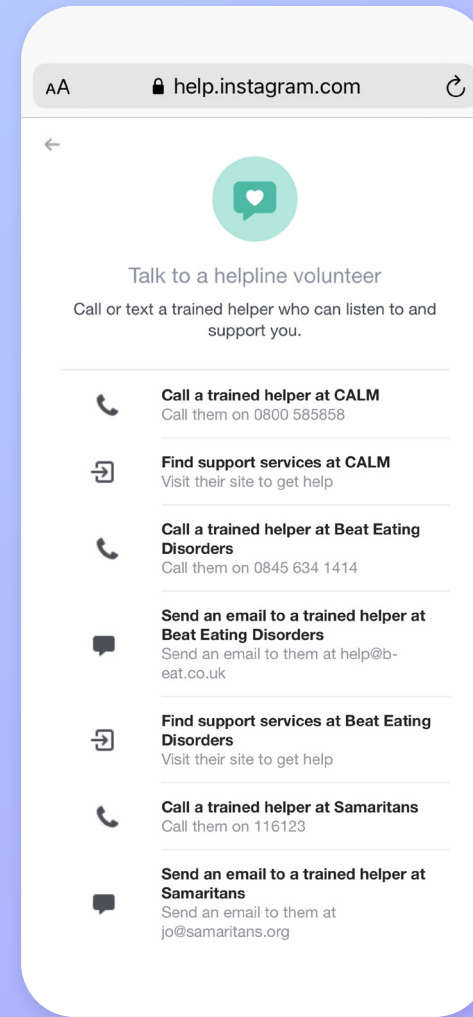
Seek Help Through Instagram



RESOURCES SUGGESTED
WHEN SEARCHING ON INSTAGRAM



INSTAGRAM RESOURCES



TALK TO A HELPLINE VOLUNTEER



NEGATIVE OR SELF-HARM THOUGHTS

“ Hearing that someone you love and care for is having thoughts of suicide or self-harm can be a really difficult thing to experience. It can bring up lots of feelings for you as a parent or caregiver, and it's important to recognise that, and give space to those feelings as well.

Here at The Mix, we take all thoughts of suicide and self-harm seriously, and recognise the importance of creating a safe space for both you as the listener and the person sharing with you. The most important and nurturing thing you can do in this situation is to sit with the young person and provide a safe, non-judgemental space to explore their thoughts and feelings, provide options for support, and consider ways that they can keep themselves safe.

If you are concerned about a young person's immediate well-being, or are concerned that they are unable to keep themselves safe, or if they need medical support for self-harm, you can contact 999 for support, or take the young person to your local A & E, or walk-in clinic. ”

Here are some strategies you could use to support this conversation:

- 1 **Thank the young person** and recognise how brave they have been to share this with you. It would have taken a lot of courage to make themselves vulnerable, and it's a very important step on their journey to support.
- 2 **Explore their experiences** using open (not a yes or no answer) questions. Consider questions like:
 - “How long have you been experiencing this for?”
 - “Can I ask what sort of things may have triggered these feelings for you?”
 - “And how do you normally manage these thoughts?”
 - “Have you been able to speak to anyone else about this?”
- 3 **Use the same words** as the young person and respect and acknowledge their experience as it is for them.
- 4 Although it can feel confronting, **don't hesitate from asking** the young person how likely they are to act on these thoughts. It is important to not sidestep the words “suicide” or “self-harm.”

You could say something like, “That sounds really serious to be experiencing thoughts of suicide. Can I ask if you've thought about what you might do to end your life?” Speaking about how someone may act on their thoughts will not mean that you will be putting thoughts into the young person's mind.
- 5 **Grab the “buts.”** Sometimes young people will say “I want to... but... I'm worried about.. It makes me feel...” and you can reply “What makes you worried about...” or “It sounds tough to be feeling... Can you tell me a little more about that?”
- 6 **Make time to have the conversation**—don't rush the chat or push the young person to fill in any gaps in the conversation. Try to keep your expression and language neutral.
- 7 **Try to avoid judgement**, giving advice, or sharing how the conversation is making you feel.
- 8 **Encourage and empower** the young person to seek support, and consider whether you could support the young person to access this by scheduling an appointment, taking them to the appointment, dialling the number for them, or sitting with them while they have the call (or making the call on their behalf with their consent).
- 9 **Consider how you will take care of yourself** after the conversation, and who you will reach out to for support. Your well-being is a priority too.
- 10 **Continue to check in** with the young person following the conversation.



FURTHER SUPPORT

The Mix's Crisis Messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you're aged 25 or under, and are experiencing any painful emotion or type of crisis in your life, you can text **THEMIX** to **85258**. Their trained volunteer will introduce themselves, reflect on what you've said, and invite you to share at your own pace. You'll text back and forth, only sharing what you feel comfortable with. They can deal with issues such as thoughts of suicide, abuse or assault, self-harm, bullying, and relationship breakdown. You can find out more at www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/crisis-messenger.

If you're under 25 and need help, but don't know where to turn, you can also call The Mix's helpline for free at **0808 808 4994**. They'll explore your situation with you and find organisations that may be able to help you further. Phone lines are open 7 days a week from 3pm–12am.

There's also an organisation called Samaritans which offers a listening service and emotional support to anyone about any issue, with a special focus on thoughts of suicide. They are open all day, everyday. You can call the helpline for free at **116 123**, email jo@samaritans.org, or text **07725 90 90 90**. The Samaritans website is www.samaritans.org if you want more information.

The PAPYRUS helpline provides practical advice and information to young people, or anyone who is concerned that a young person is at risk of suicide. The helpline number is **0800 068 4141**. You can

also text them at **077862 09697**, email pat@papyrus-uk.org, or go to www.papyrus-uk.org. The helpline is open 10am–10pm, Monday–Friday, 2pm–10pm on weekends, and Bank Holidays from 2pm–5pm.

There is an organisation called Young Minds which provides expert knowledge to professionals, parents, and young people through the Parents' Helpline, online resources, training and development, outreach work, and publications. You can call their helpline at **0808 802 5544** and their operating hours are Monday–Friday, 9:30am–4pm. If you would like more information, you can visit their website at www.youngminds.org.uk or send them an email via the website.

There is an organisation called Family Lives which offers information, advice, guidance, and support on any aspect of parenting and family life, including bullying. You can call them at **0808 800 2222** on Monday–Friday, 9am–9pm, and Saturday–Sunday, 10am–3pm. They also have a webchat service on their website: www.familylives.org.uk.

There is an organisation called Youth Access which has a database of free youth advice and counselling throughout England and Wales. You can visit their website at www.youthaccess.org.uk to look for local options.

Your local GP (doctor) may also be an option for you. GPs offer access to further help with any physical or mental health problem.

They can prescribe treatments and medicines for physical and mental health conditions, and they can refer individuals to specialist doctors and healthcare professionals for long-term help with specific problems. You can find a list of local GPs at www.nhs.uk.



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WELL-BEING SUPPORT TIPS



“ Young people have told The Mix that they would really welcome their parents gaining a better understanding of their online world and how they use it for communicating, learning, and supporting each other.

Since the pandemic, the whole world has changed with technology and social media playing a crucial role in keeping connections alive.

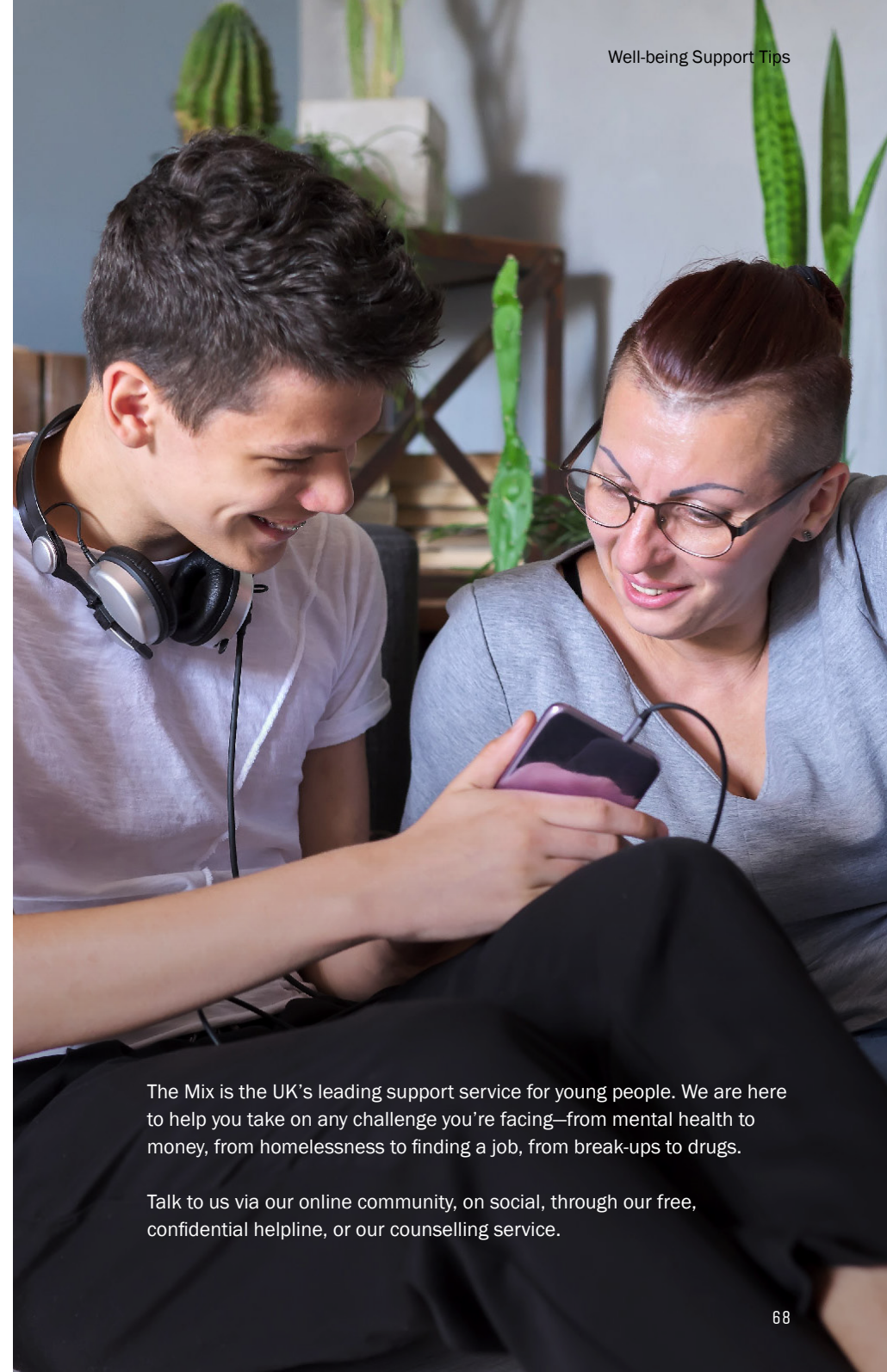
This guide will be as empowering for young people as it will be for parents in aiding positive conversations about how to use Instagram safely, responsibly, and consciously. ”

Zoë Bailie
Deputy CEO & Chief Development Officer
TheMixUK

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Advice from young people from The Mix UK, aged 16-19 years old:

- “Ask us what we’re doing online in a way which expresses a genuine interest, rather than a need to protect us.”
- “Show that you’re following the same rules you set for us regarding screen time and how you use apps.”
- “Give us a chance to voice our opinions on social media and take us seriously.”
- “Value the relationships we build online rather than dismissing them, as they can be really important to us.”
- “We need to be trusted with more independence and privacy with our social media use as we get older, just as we would in other areas of our lives.”



The Mix is the UK's leading support service for young people. We are here to help you take on any challenge you're facing—from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs.

Talk to us via our online community, on social, through our free, confidential helpline, or our counselling service.



KEEPING IT IN PERSPECTIVE

When your teen sees something posted by others, it is important that they understand that it is just one part of their story—a single post or video rarely reflects all that is happening behind the scenes. That realisation can help free them from the pressure of thinking they need to conform to a certain set of standards both on and offline.

When young people reflect on how they feel about the content they see and share on Instagram, they can make informed decisions about how they use it. In partnership with Internet Matters, we have created a separate [toolkit](#) for teenagers to help them build self-awareness, and a [parent's guide](#) to help you navigate these conversations.

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GLOSSARY OF INSTAGRAM TERMS

BLOCK

Block is a tool your teen can use if someone is bothering them on Instagram. When your teen blocks someone, the other person isn't notified, but they'll no longer be able to interact with your teen in any way.

COMMENT

A comment is a reaction to the content someone posts on Instagram. Comments appear below posts on your teen's feed, and can use words or emojis.

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

We want to foster a positive, diverse community. Everyone who uses Instagram must adhere to our Community Guidelines, which are designed to create a safe and open environment for everyone. This includes things like no nudity or hate speech. Not following these guidelines may result in deleted content, disabled accounts, or other restrictions.

DIRECT MESSAGE (DM)

Instagram Direct is where young people can message each other individually or in groups. They can also share photos and videos with just the people they're messaging.

EXPLORE

Explore is where young people will see photos and videos from accounts and hashtags they might be interested in. Explore is different for everyone—the content changes depending on accounts and hashtags your teen follows.

FEED

Feed is where young people can see posts from the accounts they follow. Young people generally see feed posts as being more celebratory or special. Feed posts can be photos or videos.

IGTV

IGTV is a place to share video content up to one hour in length. Your teen can find videos from their favourite creators, and make their own longer content.

LIVE AND VIDEO CHAT

Your teen can go live to share with their followers in real time. When live, they can invite friends to join them, co-host a live session, or leave comments and send hearts. They can also video chat in their DMs with up to four people.

POST

A post is the media your teen is putting on their feed or on Stories. This can be photos or videos.

PROFILE

Your teen's Instagram profile is where their friends and followers will find their posts and can access their Stories. It also includes a short biography. If your teen's profile is private, only their main profile picture and biography is visible to those who don't follow them.

REELS

Reels allows people to record and edit short videos of up to 30 seconds in the Instagram Camera. You can add effects and music to your reel, or use your own original audio.

REPORT

Reporting is a way your teen can let Instagram know that something they have seen is inappropriate. Your teen can report anything on Instagram that they believe violates our community guidelines.

RESTRICT

Restrict is a tool that allows your teen to protect their account from unwanted interactions without making the restricted person aware. Once they restrict someone, comments from that person will only be visible to that person. Restricted people aren't able to see when your teen is active on Instagram or when they have read their direct messages.

STORIES

Stories disappear from the app after 24 hours, unless your teen has enabled archiving, which makes their expired stories available only to them. Your teen can subsequently share these in their Stories Highlights, which don't disappear. Anyone who can view your teen's stories can screenshot them.

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RESOURCES



For more tools and resources to help you navigate healthy, social media habits with your teen, visit about.instagram.com/community/parents.

LORRAINE
CANDY

parentzone

THE MIX
Essential support for under 25s

UK Safer
Internet
Centre
www.saferinternet.org.uk

internet
matters.org

Instagram