

PARENTAL GUIDE TO INSTAGRAM



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a widely used social media platform that enables users to share photos, videos, and messages through features such as Stories, Feed, Live, IGTV, and direct messaging. For teenagers, Instagram serves as a space to mark important life events, document daily experiences, stay connected with friends and family, follow public figures, and engage in interest-based communities.

Is there a minimum age for Instagram?

Yes, the minimum age to use Instagram is 13 years, in accordance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and international child protection standards. In certain countries within the EU and other jurisdictions, the minimum age may be higher (e.g., 14 or 16), depending on local data protection laws.

As of 2024–2025, Instagram uses AI tools and ID checks to better enforce age rules. Accurate age matters—minors get extra protections, like private-by-default accounts, limits on adult messaging, and reduced visibility in search.

Teen Accounts are being gradually introduced and are expected to become available globally in early 2025. These accounts are designed for users aged 13 to 17, and come with default safety settings that offer enhanced protection.

Rollout is happening individually by region, so some teens may receive access before others. Teens under 16 require parental permission to reduce safety settings, while those aged 16–17 can adjust them independently—unless parental supervision is enabled.

What Parents Should Know?

Parents commonly express concerns that are typical across all social media platforms: exposure to mean or harmful behavior among peers, access to inappropriate or risky content (or sharing such content themselves), excessive screen-time, and threats to personal privacy. Another frequent concern is the impact of social comparison on teens' mental well-being, as well as the possibility of being contacted by strangers.

The good news is that teens can learn how to navigate and manage these challenges. That's why we created this Quick Guide.

"Support for teenagers in the world of social networks"

Instagram often shows only the best moments—carefully selected and edited highlights of people's lives. Many users invest significant effort in their appearance through makeup, lighting, styling, or even cosmetic procedures. Others curate their posts to make their lives appear more exciting than they really are.

It's important for teens to understand that what they see is not the full picture. People rarely share their struggles or ordinary moments, yet everyone has them. Remind your teen that constant comparisons can harm self-esteem—and that even professional models don't look flawless all the time.

Privacy and Safety Tools on Instagram?

Yes, Instagram offers several tools to help protect teens' privacy and safety. One of the first steps is setting the account to private, allowing only approved followers to view and interact with posts.

Users can also block unwanted contacts and report inappropriate content directly from the app. Instagram actively removes accounts that violate its rules and now additionally flags profiles with potentially suspicious behavior, restricting their ability to engage with teen accounts.

Further details on how to use these tools are provided in the next section.

Safety Features for Teen Accounts

- **Hidden Words:** Teen Accounts are automatically set to filter potentially offensive comments and message requests using the Hidden Words feature.

Note: This setting does not currently apply when using Instagram via web browsers or Meta Quest devices.

- **Sensitive Content Control:** By default, Teen Accounts are set to limit exposure to sensitive content across search results, Explore, Reels, and the main feed.
- **Time Management:** Teens receive daily reminders to take a break after spending 60 minutes on Instagram or Threads.



Smart Parenting Tips:

Before certain features can be enabled, a parent or guardian must supervise their teen's Instagram account. Supervision is required to:

- Set time limits for how long their teen can use Instagram and/or Threads (an app from Instagram where public conversations can be viewed or shared).
- Approve or decline requests from the teen to adjust safety settings to a less protective level
- View insights on the teen's activity, including accounts they interact with via messages
- Strengthen certain safety settings for additional protection Grant permission for the teen to independently modify their safety settings

More Advice for Safety & Well-Being on Instagram

Privacy Settings for Teen Accounts

Private by Default

- When teens aged 13–17 create a new Instagram account, it is automatically set to private.
- Teens under 16 must obtain parental or guardian consent to switch to a public account.
- Teens aged 16–17 may change their account to public on their own—unless parental supervision is active.

Existing Accounts

With the introduction of Teen Accounts:

- Accounts of teens under 16 will be automatically switched to private, even if they were previously public. Changing back to public requires parental approval.
- Teens aged 16–17 with existing public accounts will not be affected and may keep their accounts public without needing consent.

Messaging Controls

Teen Accounts are set to only receive messages from accounts they follow or have interacted with before.

Tags, Mentions, and Remixing

- Teens can only be tagged or mentioned by accounts they follow.
- Content remixing (e.g., Reels) is limited to users they follow and who follow them back.



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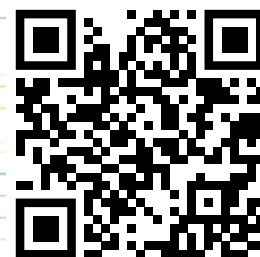


Foster Healthy Digital Habits

Encourage your teen to maintain a balanced relationship with technology by combining screen time with offline activities. Promote regular breaks from Instagram, participation in hobbies, outdoor time, and face-to-face interactions with friends and family. This balance supports emotional well-being and helps prevent the negative effects associated with excessive use of social media.

Stay Informed and Involved

Social media platforms are constantly evolving, introducing new features, trends, and risks. Staying informed empowers you to better support your teen's online experience, respond to concerns as they arise, and engage in meaningful conversations about safe and responsible digital behavior.



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Finsta: "Fake" but not sinister. Unlike Facebook, Instagram does not require real names and allows users to manage up to five accounts, easily switching between them. Many teens create secondary, more private profiles—often called “Finstas” (short for “fake Instagram”)—to share more relaxed or authentic content with a select group of friends. Despite the name, Finstas are not inherently problematic; they often reflect a desire for privacy.

Encourage open dialogue by asking your teen how they manage their online privacy, and whether they use secondary accounts.

Promote positive connections. Teens—especially younger ones—should be encouraged to interact only with people they know in real life and to approve follower requests selectively.

What users see and experience on Instagram depends on who they follow and what content they engage with. Supporting mindful choices in these areas can significantly improve a teen's experience on the platform.

Use Safety Tools: Block, Restrict, or Report

Instagram provides tools to protect users from unwanted contact or inappropriate content:

- Block users to stop all interactions (go to their profile → tap three dots → Block)
- Restrict users to limit their visibility and interaction without unfollowing them
- Report any content or behavior that violates Instagram's Community Guidelines (go to profile or post → tap three dots → Report)

Monitor and Manage Screen Time

Instagram offers built-in tools to help users manage how much time they spend on the app:

- Set daily time limits and receive break reminders
- Mute notifications during study, rest, or family time
- View your activity dashboard:
- Go to Settings → Your Activity to access a visual summary of daily app usage. Tap on any day to see total time spent.

Teach About Digital Footprints

- Remind your teen that everything posted online leaves a trace—a digital footprint that could impact them in the future.
- Encourage them to pause and reflect before posting, and to consider how they'd feel if that content were seen by a wider audience later on.

Algorithm Changes

The platform's algorithms are not only becoming stricter but also smarter, which means that the right actions can get you more coverage than ever before.