

Online grooming



This factsheet explains online grooming and includes tips for parents and carers about how to help their children avoid unwanted contact.

What is online grooming?

Online grooming is when an adult makes online contact with someone under the age of 16 with the intention of establishing a sexual relationship. The offence occurs in the communication phase so no physical contact need ever occur for police to step in and investigate these offenders.

Offenders may create several online identities with some pretending to be another young person in order to build and maintain trust with a young person, while others are upfront about their age or intentions and manipulate the young person into thinking their relationship is okay.

Where can it happen?

Online grooming can take place on instant messaging apps, social media, gaming sites, emails and in chat rooms. It's important to know that all websites, apps, games or pages have the potential to be misused or cause harm.

Many parents and carers may not be aware that chat functions appear on several popular online games, applications and social networking platforms.

Anonymous chat can provide a platform for online child sex offenders to target young people. There have been many instances where online predators have used 'in game' chat as a gateway to access children.

Tip: If you are unsure about the features in the games or apps your child is using, do some research, download it yourself and review, or better yet, sit down with your child and ask them to show you how it works.



Who is your child talking to? Be aware of the connections your children are making; not everyone online is who they say they are.



HOW TO HELP MINIMISE UNWANTED CONTACT

- > Your child should not use their full name online; they should use a nickname or their first name only
- > They should not disclose their address or phone number to anyone online
- > They should not post or share photos of themselves that show their identity or location (such as a school logo on a shirt)
- > Keep communication open and encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if they feel they cannot discuss something with you
- > Your child should never agree to meet someone they have met online unless they have your permission and are accompanied by yourself or a trusted adult
- > If something feels wrong then it probably is; your child should trust their instincts
- > Check your child's security settings on their online networking sites and have them set to protect their privacy as much as possible, review settings regularly, particularly after updates or changes to the site
- > Consider whether having the 'chat' function enabled on apps and games is necessary

Reassure your child that they can talk to you and you will support them even if they have shared something online that they are concerned about.



WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT ONLINE GROOMING?

If you are concerned your child, or a child you know, is possibly at risk of online child sexual exploitation, report it to police.

Online child sexual exploitation can be reported to ThinkUKnow thinkuknow.org.au/report

If a child is in immediate danger please contact 000.

ThinkUKnow and the Carly Ryan Foundation have developed a **Family Online Safety Contract** to help parents and carers start cyber safety discussions with their children. This is a resource for parents, carers and their children to refer to when agreeing on appropriate online behaviours and expectations held by both the parents and their children. A copy is available at www.thinkuknow.org.au

CONSIDER SEEKING ADVICE FROM SUPPORT SERVICES:



Lifeline
13 11 14



Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800



Youth Beyond Blue
www.youthbeyondblue.com



ReachOut
www.au.reachout.com



Bravehearts
www.bravehearts.org.au



The Carly Ryan Foundation
www.carlyryanfoundation.com



Fact sheet

INSTAGRAM (For parents)



Follow us:



@ThinkUKnow_Aus



facebook.com/ThinkUKnowAustralia

What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo-sharing app which allows users to take photos and videos, apply filters and share these with either followers or the general public. Users are able to 'like' and comment on photos as well as send these images directly to individuals through a private messaging option. Private messaging is accessed by the inbox symbol at the top right corner of the home page.

What is the age classification for Instagram?

Instagram users must be 13 years or older. This service is owned by Facebook and usually links to a Facebook account where a user's age can also be verified. There may be content on Instagram, which is confronting, graphic or not appropriate for children and younger teens.

How are young people using Instagram?

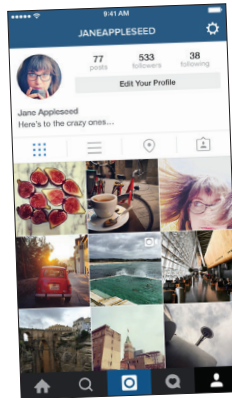
Instagram is being used by young people to share photos, occasions and situations with their friends. The ability to like and comment on photos provides a useful communication function for young people as they explore and express their personality.

Should I be worried if my child is using Instagram?

Any application when used incorrectly, has the potential to cause harm. It is important that you openly communicate with your child about how they may be using an application and the legal and ethical ramifications of inappropriate use. They also need to be aware the dangers of communicating with people they don't know via any mobile application.

Who can see my child's photos on Instagram?

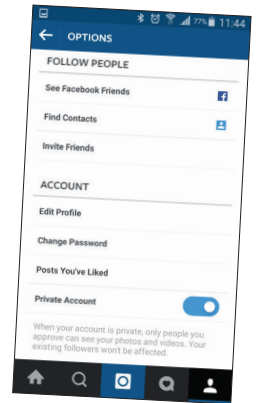
An Instagram account can be made visible to the public, or to approved followers only. Account settings can be changed through the Instagram app on a mobile device



by selecting the 'Profile' option on the lower right-hand side of the screen. Click 'Options' (signified by three dots), under 'Account' ensure 'Private Account' is in the 'On' position. It is important to note that even if an account is private, content shared on Instagram can easily be posted to a linked Facebook account which means Facebook friends can also see the post.

What could be revealed through an image?

There is a lot of information which can be revealed through a photo when it is shared online, in particular your location. This is revealed through a process called 'geotagging'. Geotagging is when the GPS coordinates of where an image was taken or a post was made, are stored within that post. This means that people may be able to find out location specifics such as where your child lives, works, or goes to school.



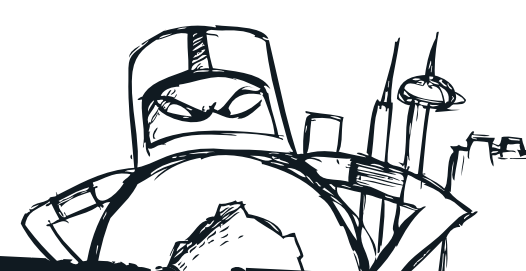
How to limit sharing location information?

It is important to turn off the location function for the camera on your child's mobile device, especially if they are using social media apps such as Instagram. For most devices, you can find where to do this in the 'Settings' menu. If you are unsure how to do this on your child's device, you can look up the device's user guide online.

It is also best to avoid using the Photo Map function on Instagram as this will pinpoint where photos have been taken on a map, potentially showing others the locations where your child spends much of their time. It is important to maintain open lines of communication between yourself and your child and discuss safe privacy settings.

What are the potential problems with Instagram?

Potential problems faced when using Instagram include the sharing of private information through photos, such as a home address or where a child goes to school. Your child may post a photo and receive negative comments





Fact sheet

INSTAGRAM (For parents)



Follow us:



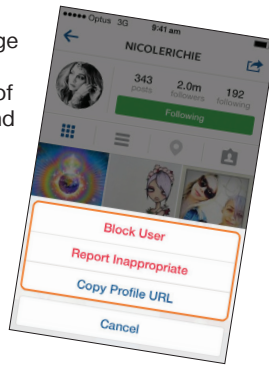
@ThinkUKnow_Aus



facebook.com/ThinkUKnowAustralia

from other users or have their images shared without their permission. They may also be exposed to photos which are rude, offensive or upsetting to them. It's important you and your child know how to block and report inappropriate users on Instagram.

You can block users via the Instagram app on your mobile device. Open the profile page of the offensive user and select the **Further Options** icon on the upper right-hand side of the screen. Select the **Block User** option and when prompted by the dialog box, select **Yes, I'm sure**.



If you child experiences cyberbullying report it to the social media platform in first instance. If it hasn't been removed in 48 hours, you can report it on the Office of the Children's e-safety Commissioner's eSafety hotline (eSafety.gov.au).

How can I delete my child's account?

If after talking with your child about the ethical use of Instagram and your family's rules around technology, you may think it's appropriate to delete the Instagram account.

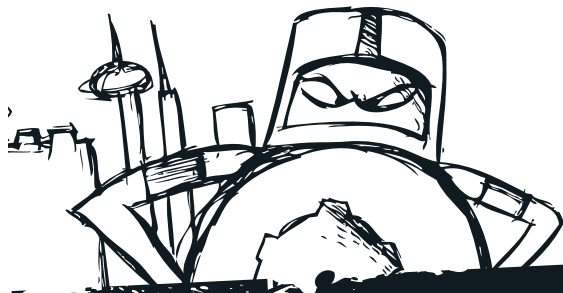
To delete an Instagram account log into the account at instagram.com, click the account username in the top right and select **Edit Profile**, click **I'd like to delete my account** in the bottom right.

Note: Accounts can not be reactivated and photos may be lost.

Open and supportive discussions around technology usage are vital in ensuring your child understands their responsibilities when using technology. Simply removing the technology is not the best response as it could potentially make your child hide their usage where there are fewer opportunities for you to support them.



thinkuknow.org.au



Managing your digital shadow

i

This factsheet explains how you can manage your online reputation.

“

What you do online today could impact you into the future. What does your digital shadow say about you?

When you post or send something online, you can lose control over who sees it and what they do with it. You may never be able to permanently delete an image or text, so it is important that before you send something, think about what you are sending and where it might end up.



Here are a few things to consider before pressing send:



DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE SENDING IT TO?

You might be tricked into thinking you are communicating with a friend, but can you ever be sure that it is only them? Not everyone online is who they say there are.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY WILL DO WITH IT?

Even if you are sure who is on the other end, can you really trust them? Relationships can breakdown over time, so while you might be happy for someone to have your image or video today, tomorrow might be a different story.



Our partners



DATACOM

 Microsoft



CAN IT BE DELETED?

Once you have shared something online, it can easily be shared around to others.

Distribution might start with just your school, but it can quickly spread to your community and beyond. Content can be copied or stored by others, so can be difficult to ensure content is ever deleted.

Settings

Remember that, depending on the privacy settings your friends use, whatever your friends share about you can also affect your digital shadow.



SO WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

Content of someone under the age of 18 in little or no clothing, a sexualised pose or engaged in a sexual act may be considered child abuse material.

Even if it's an image or video of you, and you consent, you can still be breaking the law!

Non-consensual image sharing

If someone has created this material of you without your permission, you need to tell a trusted adult and they can assist you in reporting it to police. This is a serious matter and should not be ignored.



HOW WILL IT AFFECT YOUR FUTURE?

A future employer, university or sporting organisation might research you online. What they find may influence their decision on whether to offer you an opportunity.



HAVE YOU BEEN PART OF THE PROBLEM?

By storing or helping to distribute this type of material, you are contributing to this serious issue. Distributing these images maliciously is viewed even more seriously, and you may be committing an offence.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN EXPLICIT IMAGE?

If you have received this type of material, delete it without forwarding it. Tell the person who sent it to you that you are not interested in being a part of this. If you know who the person in the image is, let them know what is going on. They wouldn't want to be the last to know.

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

You can change your digital shadow — if you don't like what is out there, take ownership and have it removed or balance it with positive content.

Research yourself online and see what's out there about you. Regularly search for your name, username, email address and phone number in online search engines.

You can also use meta search engines for a deeper search.

Tip: Deactivate any old social media accounts that you may no longer use.

Remember:

Your online reputation is your responsibility so take control of what your digital shadow says about you!

Top tips for online safety!



1

Not everyone is who they say they are online. You should only accept friend requests from people you know and trust.

2

Think before you post! Once it's posted online you can lose control over who sees it or where it ends up.

3

Use a passphrase — a random collection of four or more words and at least 12 characters. Passphrase example: hairybeachblueshoe

4

Keep personal information (whether about yourself, a family member or a friend) private online.

5

Not everything you see online is true, helpful or safe. Make sure you know it's coming from a trustworthy and reliable source.



6

Read comments or texts out loud; could they be misinterpreted by someone?

7

Never post inappropriate or illegal content anywhere on the internet. It's important to know that online actions can have consequences.

8

Make sure your social network profiles are set to private or friends only (check your privacy settings).

9

Always ask permission before uploading and/or tagging someone in a post/photo/video.

10

Know how to block and report on every game, app or website you use.

Most importantly, know where you can go for help! Speak to a trusted adult if something makes you feel uncomfortable online.

YOU CAN ALSO GET HELP FROM:



Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800



Lifeline
13 11 14



ReachOut
www.au.reachout.com



Youth Beyond Blue
www.youthbeyondblue.com



Office of the eSafety Commissioner
www.esafety.gov.au



Local police

