



18 November 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

We have recently discovered an Instagram account that many of our students are keen to follow. Closer inspection has brought to light that many of our students have **public accounts**, which means that anyone can access their information; this includes photographs students may have taken of their family and friends, videos that they have posted of themselves, and comments made to, or by, other Instagram users. Only if students set their privacy settings to “private” can students be sure that their information is only accessible to trusted *followers*.

Below is some useful information on how to change privacy settings on some of the most popular social media apps that young people use. Please can we ask you to talk to your child to ensure they understand that everything they post is free to see by anyone, unless they change their settings to private.

Facebook

Minimum age: 13

Facebook's privacy settings let your child control who sees their posts and timeline.

Click or tap the **padlock icon** at the top of any page and this takes you to **Privacy Shortcuts** in the drop-down menu for further instructions. On the mobile app you will find it under **More** at the bottom of the screen.

Your child can also block someone (click or tap **the padlock icon** on the right side of their timeline, then select **How do I stop someone from bothering me** and type in their user name), and report abusive or offensive content (choose **Report post** after clicking the arrow to the right of the name of the person, or **Report group** by clicking on the three dots to the right of Notifications at the top). On mobiles and tablets, go to **Privacy Shortcuts** (see above) and then click on **How do I stop someone from bothering me**.

Instagram

Minimum age: 13

To set Instagram posts to private, your child should go to their profile by tapping the **person icon**.

Then, tap the **gear icon** (iOS) or the **three dots icon** (Android) and turn on the **Private Account** setting.

Your child can also block and remove followers by tapping their username, then the three dots icon and selecting **Block User**.

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Snapchat

Minimum age: 13

Snapchat has two privacy settings, one for who can send your child Snaps and another for who can view their Stories. To change these privacy settings, tap the **gear icon** in the top right of the **Profile** screen to access **Settings**. To change **Who Can Send Me Snaps** within **Settings**, tap **Send Me Snaps** and choose from **Everyone** or **My Friends**. To change **Who Can View My Stories** within **Settings**, tap **View My Story** and select either **Everyone**, **My Friends** or **Custom**. Any changes will be saved when you press the back button. To block someone, go to **My Friends**, tap on the name of the person you want to block, then the **gear icon**, which brings up a list of options. Click **Block**.

Twitter

Minimum age: no specific T&C but in their privacy policy they say that their services are not directed to people under 13.

Your child can choose to protect their tweets so they are only visible to the Twitter followers they have approved. On the Web, find **Settings** under your small profile pic, top right. Go to **Security Privacy settings**, scroll down to the **Tweet privacy** section, tick the box next to **Protect my Tweets** and click the blue **Save** button. On a smartphone, go to **Me**, tap on the **gear icon** (iOS) or **overflow icon** (Android), select **Settings** and choose the account you'd like to edit. Then, for iOS devices, go to **Protect my tweets** and tap **On** and for Android devices, go to **Other** and tick the **Tweet privacy** box. To block someone on the website and mobile, click on their tweet, select the **three dots icon**, then click **Block**. You can also **Report** a user or comment here.

YouTube

Minimum age: 13 for an account, no minimum to watch videos

YouTube is very popular with children of all ages. You can watch videos without creating an account or (over 13s only) log in with a Google account to upload videos, comment and vote. If you're worried about your child watching inappropriate content on YouTube, you can set up **Restricted Mode**. From your computer or tablet, click on the **drop-down menu** at the bottom of any page on YouTube and select **'On'**. To prevent your child from making changes, **lock** Restricted Mode for that particular browser – you'll need a YouTube account to do this. To access **Restricted Mode** on mobile, you'll need to go to the **Menu** and look under **Settings**. YouTube also allows you to flag, report and block videos, comments and accounts. To block or report a user, go to their channel, click **About**, click the **flag icon** and choose from the drop-down menu.

To report a video, click on **More** and select **Report**.

To report a comment on a video, hover over the comment, click the arrow in the top right corner and use the **Report spam or abuse** link.

TikTok

People aged 13 and over can download the app which has a 12+ rating in app stores. Parents need to ensure their children are the appropriate age to use TikTok.

TikTok users can make their own short videos on the mobile app, and often like to have music accompany their videos. The users have creative control over the videos. Other TikTok users can 'react' to videos they see by filming their responses alongside the original video; or 'duet' by making a video alongside another video. Users can also participate in hashtag challenges by clicking the 'Discover' button, with new challenges added every week. Users can easily share videos on other social media platforms, such as Instagram or Facebook, and users can build up followings and reputations.

Privacy Settings

The app has come under fire for a lack of privacy settings in the past but users now have privacy options, including the ability to make their accounts **private**; choosing who can comment on or download their videos, and who can duet with them. Users can also block other users. Messaging on TikTok has always been private and messages can only be sent between friends.

Recently, TikTok introduced a new feature that lets users filter comments by using up to 30 words that they can choose themselves. By activating this, users can make sure no one can post comments under videos using words they find unpleasant or harmful.

All of these options can be found on the top right of the screen (three dots) inside the 'Privacy and Settings'.

Yours faithfully

A Davies

Mrs A Davies