28th January 2019

Dear Parents,

It has come to our attention that a number of children at Archibald now have Instagram accounts. Unfortunately the use of Instagram by our children has been highlighted through the *inappropriate* use of the app between peers.

<u>The required age for an Instagram account is 13 years old.</u>

Instagram is a social network. It is a photo editing and sharing 'app' that allows users to edit photos/videos taken on their phone and post them to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter with the click of a button. Instagram photos are open to the public by default and Instagram lets users browse public photos posted by others and by people whom they follow.

Please find attached and on our website, ways to ensure if your child does have an Instagram account how they can use it safely. Further information can be accessed via:

- https://wellbeing.instagram.com/parents - this is a link to a parents guide
- https://help.instagram.com
- https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/social-media-guides/instagram

In class, we have also talked to the children about their awareness of what they share and how to keep themselves safe. We have discussed their digital footprint that they are already creating from the age of 8 years old, and how this should be a positive one for their future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Turner

Instagram

Signing up for an Instagram account requires that the user provide a Username. The sign-up process also has an optional phone number section where users can submit their phone number as part of their public profile. The key word here is 'public.'

Usernames

Select a username that does not contain personal information. Work with your teen to come up with a good screen name. Pick one that can be identifiable as them and is as unique as they are. Ensure that it's not a screen name that will haunt their future, many of us still use the same screen names we created twenty years ago, and those names have become as identifiable with us as our given names. They don't need to put their real information out there.

Passwords

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.

Account Privacy

Ensure that your teens profile and photos aren't out there for everyone to look at. If their profile isn't on private then switch it over. This will ensure that only approved followers will see the photos.

Profile Image

Work with your teen to select an appropriate profile photo that you can both agree on. It's best to avoid using an actual photo of your teen and instead find something that best represents your teen or their interests.

Expectations

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

Photo Privacy

By creating a 'private account', the photos may not be going out publicly but everyone that has chosen to follow your teen 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 followers of your teen. 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 teen's photos and your teen will no longer see them.

Comments

Control if comments can be made on videos and images, and if so, who can comment. Take the correct steps to hide offensive comments, add inappropriate language to a filter to ensure that these words or phrases are never seen on your teens posts.

Linked Accounts

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.

Location Settings

Turn off the Geo-tagging or Location of photos, that way even if a photo gets out to the public, hopefully no one knows where your child is.

For parents, insurance companies have been known to decline claims based on social media feeds highlighting their location including when they are away from home.

Accepting Followers

If they don't know who the person is in real life, then they probably shouldn't accept them as a follower.

Avoid Portraits

Teens are a vain lot, but try to discourage them from posting photos of themselves or their friends. If there aren't photos out there, then they can't slip out. Emphasis the appropriateness of photos and images.

Talk

Continue to talk to your children about what they are posting and what they are allowed to post. Encourage them to talk to their friends about appropriate posting and their own privacy settings. Your teen may do everything correctly, but all it takes is a careless friend and that beach photo could end up public.

#Hashtag

Your teen needs to be aware that by using a hashtag this will make their photo public even if their account is private.