What is Instagram?

Instagram is a photo-sharing app which allows users to take photos, apply a filter and share content with either followers or the general public. Users are able to 'like' and comment on photos as well as send these images directly to individual followers. Instagram also allows users to post short videos.

What is the age classification for Instagram?

Instagram is recommended for users aged 13 years and above, however there are many underage users.

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.

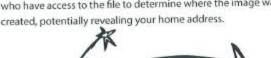## Should I be worried if my child is using Instagram?

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.

What are the privacy settings on Instagram?

Accounts on Instagram can be shared with anyone, or with those you approve as followers only. This can be done via the Instagram app on your mobile device. First select the Profile option on the lower right-hand side of the screen. In the Edit Your Profile section scroll to the bottom of the screen and ensure Photos Are Private is in the On position and select Save.

What could be revealed through an image?

A concern with photos which are taken and shared via a mobile device is that they may contain geolocation information. Geotagging refers to the embedding of location data, such as GPS coordinates, in images taken on smartphones and some digital cameras. When these images are shared online, the location data is often also shared. This may allow others who have access to the file to determine where the image was created, potentially revealing your home address.

How can my child limit geolocation information?

It is important for your child and you to know how to disable the geolocation function for the camera on the smartphone or mobile device your child utilises. For iOS devices, this can be disabled by accessing Settings>Privacy>Locations and disabling for Camera. On Android devices, users need to open the Camera app, access Settings and disable GPS tagging. If you are unsure how to do this on your device, please access the online user guide for the model of device.

It is also useful to discourage children and young people from using the Photo Map function on Instagram. This capability plots users' photos on an interactive map and could reveal sensitive location information.

What are the potential problems with Instagram?

It is important that young people only allow people they know and trust to access their photos and learn how to block and report inappropriate users. 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.

Sharing images that are rude, offensive or sexualised can see young people in breach of State and Commonwealth legislation that carry serious legal consequences. Ethically, young people need to be aware of the impact that their online behaviour has on others as well as their own reputation.

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 drive your child's usage underground where there are fewer opportunities for you to support them.