# What parents need to know about
# INSTAGRAM

**AGE RESTRICTION 13+** Anyone over the age of 13 can create an account.

Instagram is a hugely popular social networking app with over 1 billion users worldwide. The app, which is accessible on iOS and Android devices, allows users to upload images and videos to their feed, create interactive 'stories', exchange private messages or search, explore and follow other accounts they like. Images and videos can be transformed with an array of filters to edit the shot before sharing and anyone with an account can see others' online 'galleries' if their account is not private. To make posts easier to find, users can include searchable hashtags and captions to their uploads. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Instagram is about.

LOCATION · #HASHTAG · CHAT

## HOOKED ON SCROLLING

Many social media platforms, Instagram included, have been designed in a way to keep us engaged on them for as long as possible. Behavioural economist, Nir Eyal, calls this the 'Hook Model' and the Instagram feed is a great example of this. Children and adults may find themselves scrolling to try and get a 'dopamine release'. Scrolling may become addictive and it can be difficult to stop until children find that 'something' they are looking for, quickly losing track of time as they get deeper into their Instagram feed.

## SLIDING INTO DMS

Direct messages (or DMs) on Instagram allow users to share posts, images, videos, voice messages and calls between each other privately (or in a private group). Even if your child's account is set to private, anybody has the option to message them and send them content. If the person is not on your child's friends list, the message will still be sent to their inbox but the user has to accept their request to see the message.

## INFLUENCER CULTURE

Influencers are sometimes paid thousands of pounds to promote a product, service, app and much more on social media. When celebrities or influencers post such an advert, they should add a disclaimer somewhere in the post which states that they have been paid for it. Commonly, this is well-hidden in the hashtags or in the comments of their post, making it unclear that their photo/video is actually an advert. This can be very misleading to young people who may be influenced into buying/wanting something promoted by somebody they admire, creating a false sense of reality and potentially affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

## IMPACT ON WELLBEING

In a report by the RSPH, Instagram was ranked the worst for young people's mental health. Using filters on photos on Instagram can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Children may strive for more 'likes' by using realistically edited photos. Judging themselves against other users on the app might threaten their confidence or self-worth. In early 2019, Instagram banned images of self-harm and suicide, following the suicide of 14-year-old Molly Russell, who had reportedly been looking at such material on the platform. They since extended the ban to include drawings, cartoons and memes.

## LIVE STREAMING TO STRANGERS

Live streaming on Instagram allows users to connect with friends and followers in real-time and comment on videos during broadcast. If your child's account is private, only their approved followers can see their story. It's important to note they may have accepted a friend request from someone they don't know, which means they could be live streaming to strangers. Children also risk sharing content they later regret, which could be re-shared online for years to come. Public accounts allow anybody to view, so we suggest your child blocks followers they don't know. In early 2019, data gathered by the NSPCC found that sex offenders were grooming children on Instagram more than on any other online platform.

## IN-APP PAYMENTS

Instagram allows payments for products directly through the app. It operates under the same rules as Facebook Payments, which state that if you are under the age of 18, you can only use this feature with the involvement of a parent or guardian.

## EXPOSING LOCATION

Public locations can be added to a user's photos/videos and also to their stories. While this may seem like a good idea at the time, it can expose the location of your child. This is particularly more of a risk if it is on their story, as it is real time. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street name, house and even tagging in the location of the photo uploaded to Instagram can expose the child's location, making it easy to locate them. If their account is public, anyone can access their account and see their location.

## HIJACKED HASHTAGS

Hashtags are an integral part of how Instagram works, but they can come with risks. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one particular thing in mind, and before you know it hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn't be exposed to.

## IGTV

Instagram TV (IGTV) works similar to YouTube. Users can watch videos from favourite accounts on the platform or create their own channel and post their own videos. It's important to note anyone can watch an Instagram TV channel and doesn't have to be friends with a person to follow an account and watch their videos. In 2018 Instagram apologised and removed some of its TV content which featured sexually suggestive imagery of children. As the feature may encourage spending more time using the app, it's important to set time limits to avoid children's sleep or education being disturbed.

# Top Tips for Parents & Carers

## RESTRICT DIRECT MESSAGES

If your child receives a message from somebody they do not know, encourage them not to accept their message request and 'block' this person; this is the only way to stop them messaging your child again. Children can also 'tap and hold' the individual message to report it directly to Instagram as well as reporting the account itself.

## LOOK OUT FOR #ADS

In 2019, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority launched an investigation into celebrities who were posting adverts on social media and not declaring that they were paid for. Influencers must clearly state that they have been paid for their posts, for example using a hashtag like #ad or #sponsored. Teach your child to look out for the signs of a paid post/advert and discuss with them that not everything they see from celebrities is their personal choice and opinion.

## MANAGE NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS

If your child is receiving unwanted or negative comments, they can block that account so that they can't interact with them. This stops them seeing and commenting on their posts, stories and live broadcasts. In addition, your child can instantly delete unwanted comments from their posts, turn them off completely and control who can tag and mention them in comments, captions or stories, from everyone, only people they follow, or no one at all.

## MANAGE DIGITAL WELLBEING

Instagram now has an in-built activity dashboard that allows users to monitor and control how much time they spend on the app. Users can add a 'daily reminder' to set a limit on how much time they want to spend on Instagram, prompting them to consider if its been too long. In addition, once users have caught up with all the previous posts since they last logged on, they'll receive a 'You've completely caught up' message. Both features can help you have a conversation with your child about how much time they are spending on the app and to set healthy time limits.

## PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your child may unknowingly give away personal information on their profile or in their live streams. Talk to them about what their personal information is and make sure that they do not disclose anything, including their location, to anyone during a livestream, comment, direct message or any other tool for communication on the platform, even to their friends.

## USE A PRIVATE ACCOUNT

By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible to anyone. A private account means that you have to approve a request if somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos. Children should also use a secure password and enable a two-factor authentication to add an extra layer of security to their account.

## FILTER INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS

Instagram has an 'anti-bullying' filter, which hides comments relating to a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's wellbeing or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so that they can take action against the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, which should always be enabled. Children can also report abusive behaviour or inappropriate/offensive material directly to Instagram from the app. This includes posts, comments and accounts.

## TURN OFF SHARING

Even though this feature will not stop people from taking screenshots, it will stop others being able to directly share photos and videos from a story as a message to another user. This feature can be turned off in the settings. We also recommend turning off the feature which automatically shares photos and videos from a story to a Facebook account.

## REMOVE PAYMENT METHODS

If you are happy for your child to have a card associated with their Instagram account, we suggest adding a PIN which needs to be entered before making a payment; this will also help prevent unauthorised purchases. This can be added in the payment settings tab.

**DON'T FORGET TO BE VIGILANT & TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITIES!**

## Meet our expert

Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience of working in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks, a web resource helping parents and children thrive in a digital world.

## *NEW FOR 2020* INSTAGRAM REELS

Instagram Reels is the latest update from Instagram that gives users the ability to record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and new creative tools. It is the apps answer to TikTok and can be accessed via the Stories feature. Reels can be shared with friends and family, however, if your child has a public account, it could be shared wider via 'Explore' and viewed by millions of strangers online.

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With over 14 million daily users, Discord is one of the most popular communication tools for gamers. It allows you to create or join what are known as 'servers', where different users can talk in groups via text message or voice call. There is also the option to send direct messages and make video calls.

**AGE RESTRICTION 13+**

## What parents need to know about DISCORD

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Your child can access almost any chat server on Discord. This means they can easily be exposed to content and conversations that are inappropriate, upsetting or potentially harmful.

### SEXUAL IMAGERY

Despite there being guidelines in place to prevent it, users are able to circulate adult content. This can include sexualised images, pornographic videos and provocative discussions. It's important to stay alert and know the risks that your child could be exposed to.

### RISK OF CYBERBULLYING

Interactions on the platform are largely unregulated. This means other users can easily say and show things to your child that might be offensive and upsetting. The competitive nature of gaming can lead users to make abusive and harmful remarks about your child.

### HIDDEN CHARGES

Though the basic platform is free, your child will be encouraged to sign up to premium subscriptions, which give extra perks, such as animated emojis and free games. The two options are known as 'Nitro Classic' (which costs $4.99 a month) and Nitro (which costs $9.99 a month). Prices are only converted to pound starling during the payment process.

### RISK OF CYBERCRIME

Cybercriminal groups have been linked to the platform due to reports of hackers sharing stolen data. It's also possible that your child may be encouraged to share the data of their friends, either through peer pressure, or 'for fun', without realising the consequences.

### STRANGER DANGER

To create an account, you only need to display a username and profile image. This makes it easy for someone to hide his or her real identity. Predators from anywhere in the world can join a chat server, message your child and quickly leave to avoid detection. Forbes reports groomers have been targeting children susceptible to online coercion on the platform.

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## Top Tips to Protect Your Child

### 1 BE WARY OF WHAT'S SHARED

Whatever your child says or shares on the platform can be seen, heard and shared with a much larger audience. Be careful to make sure your child understands this and does not say or share anything that could be deemed offensive, harmful or put themselves or others at risk.

You can find Discord's own guide for parents here: https://blog.discordapp.com/parents-guide-to-discord-c77d91793e9c

### 2 IMPROVE SECURITY SETTINGS

To help protect your child, make sure they set strong passwords. You should consider using the 'two-factor authentication' function for extra protection. It's also important to remind your child to never to share their personal information, or the details of another user.

### 3 CHECK THEIR FRIEND LIST

You can restrict who is able to make 'friend requests' to your child in the 'Friends' tab. It's a good idea to deselect the default option that allows anyone to connect. Of course, you should also talk to your child about why it's a risk to allow strangers to connect with them through such platforms.

### 4 REPORT & BLOCK SUSPICIOUS USERS

Make sure your child knows how to report and block abusive or suspicious users. If you do find your child suffering repeated abuse, contact the platform directly using the email: abuse@discordapp.com. It's a good idea to teach your child how to screenshot any negative interactions too.

### 5 BE WARY OF NSFW CONTENT

Public forums on the platform are a potential venue for inappropriate content that you should be wary of. There is a Discord mascot known as 'Wumpus', which is supposed to represent anyone under 18. Anyone who posts content unsuitable for under-18s, should mark it NSFW (Not Suitable For Wumpus).

### 6 SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS

It's important you actively teach your child to treat other users with respect and behave online the same way as they would offline.

Take the time to read through Discord's Community Guidelines with your child. Find them at: www.discordapp.com/guidelines

### 7 TURN ON SAFE MESSAGING

You should encourage your child to activate the 'Safe Direct Messaging' option. This will scan and delete any direct messages sent to your child containing explicit content.

## Meet our expert

Claire Woffenden has been a technology journalist since 1998 with a specialism in consumer technology (apps, websites, home computing and digital devices). As a Mum of two young children - aged 8 and 6 - Claire is passionate about helping to keep children safe online.

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Part of our Gaming & Gambling Series

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# What you need to know about...
# GAMING STREAMERS & INFLUENCERS

## What are they?

### 'Gaming Streamers & Influencers'

Streamers are people who stream themselves gaming, drawing, making things etc. for people to watch on the internet. Usually this will be done live, and others are able to chat with them in real time while they do so. Influencers are social media stars who hold influence over the people that follow them, like a kind of trend-setter or taste-maker, who companies often pay to promote their products. A streamer could also be considered an influencer in their chosen area.

**JADAGAMING**

LIVE

## Know the Risks

### Adult Content

Many streamers use platforms such as Twitch or YouTube to broadcast themselves. YouTube for example, is only for ages 13+ (YouTube kids is for under 13s) and may contain a lot of other adult content. Streamers themselves, may be unsuitable for younger audiences with the kind of content they make, and with many opting to stream live, anything can – and does – happen.

### Authenticity Risk

A lot of streamers will have some kind of sponsorship deal in place with a company trying to sell their products to an audience. When the audience is mostly younger viewers, they may not realise that streamers are getting paid to promote a product and may not necessarily have their best interests in mind.

### Bullying and hate

#BULLY
#HATE

While some streamers do employ moderators to try and combat hateful comments or bullying in their comments sections, they can still be very hectic. Hateful language is quite common, and people looking to groom children or engage in online bullying behaviour, could frequent the live chats.

### Subscriptions

Streamers also make money through subscriptions on websites like Twitch, where fans will donate them a small amount as little or as often as they like. Called 'bits', they can be bought in bundles of varying prices which can be gifted to streamers via 'cheers'. Children could buy these 'bits' in large amounts without realising what they're doing, leaving a big bill behind.

## Safety Tips

### Discuss what's real online

Be sure to teach kids the difference between what's real and honest, or fake and untrustworthy online. Photoshopping fake images and videos and bragging about themselves online is unfortunately quite commonplace so it is difficult to tell what is real or fake. People with large followings can be promoting unhealthy or unattainable lifestyles to children to boost their own online influence.

### Use Filters

There are filters that can be put in place to block out a lot of adult content on streaming sites. Just make sure you have access to children's accounts so you can set the parameters and keep track of what they're seeing yourself. Usually, parental controls will be located in the settings portion of an account's menu.

### Check age settings

Both YouTube and Twitch state that they are not suitable for children under 13 years old, but other sites might be different. YouTube Kids, for example, is for ages 13 and under, and offers much of the same kid-friendly content that YouTube does without the risk of running into something improper.

### Affiliate links

Keep an eye out for affiliate links in social media posts and tags like #ad. UK influencers have to follow the CAP Code for advertising standards, but many don't. It can be hard to tell who is working through legitimate channels because it's almost impossible to regulate. Many streamers encourage fans to buy merchandise through online shops and stores.

## Action & Support

### Name check streamers

If your child has begun showing an interest in a streamer or influencer, check their names on Google. Some popular streamers have been discovered flouting industry regulations and using their young audiences to enhance their personal wealth through scams whilst others may swear on streams or promote drinking, substance abuse or links to gambling sites they operate to their young audiences.

### Talk to your child

Initiate an open dialogue with your child about the kind of content they're consuming online. Ask about their favourite streamers and whether they like their personalities or the games they play and the community they have. Also remind them about what they should and shouldn't be sharing about themselves online and that just because social media stars do it, it can also be damaging.

### Block and report

If you suspect a streamer might be taking advantage of their audience, or worse grooming children in any way, and have irrefutable evidence, do not hesitate to block and report them. First, block your child from being able to view their content and alert other parents to your concerns. Go immediately to the police or local authorities with the evidence of what you've seen.

## Our Expert
**Mark Foster**

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

There's a very good chance you've heard of Minecraft. The block building phenomenon is, arguably, the most beloved video game of all time which has managed to maintain its popularity since its first release back in 2011. Nine years later, it still has a huge userbase of 112 million people playing the game every month. Accessible to those 7+, Minecraft can be a gateway into a world of learning and exploration which encourages players to use their imagination to build three-dimensional worlds with virtual building blocks. While Minecraft is considered relatively safe generally speaking, there are some safety precautions parents may want to consider before allowing their children loose on the game.

**AGE RESTRICTION 7+**
If under 16, supervision of a parent or legal guardian required

# What parents need to know about
# MINECRAFT

## OPEN TO HACKING

Hackers can be a real problem in any online game, including Minecraft. Some individuals can access other people's games to disrupt their play time, or even worse, access private details about players such as their names, email addresses, dates of birth and so on. It would be incredibly rare and unfortunate to encounter a player like this, but it does happen and must be taken as a serious risk.

## RISK OF GRIEFING

Griefing is when someone purposely upsets another player during the game. This can be done by ruining somebody's creation or generally doing something to spoil someone's gameplay and can essentially amount to a form of cyberbullying. In open servers, or even private ones among friends, it can be difficult to keep track of who's saying what, and an innocent comment in one person's eyes could be seen as bullying by somebody else. Stealing supplies, destroying things that take hours to build and harassing innocent players can all be commonplace if care isn't taken.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Most players aged 7 and over will be able to play the game comfortably and, whilst creating an account does ask you to input your date of birth for confirmation, there's no way to check if the information is correct nor to check someone's real identity. This could mean that children younger than 7 could access the game. However, what is more concerning is that adults pretending to be children could theoretically be using false information to access the game and be interacting with your child.

## ADDICTIVE NATURE

Minecraft can be an incredibly exciting game but it can also be very addictive. Too much time on the game could impact on your child's behaviour, causing them to become irritable or angry when being asked to stop playing. This might suggest it might be time to enforce some time away from the game. Addictive behaviour can be compounded at a young age and encouraging gaming in moderation is always recommended.

## 'SCARY' CHARACTERS FOR YOUNGER GAMERS

For the most part, Minecraft is not a scary game. Despite this, there are certain characters in the game that younger children in particular may find frightening. Creepers, zombies and various other 'baddies' can be commonplace in some parts of the game and young minds may find it difficult to disassociate them from real life once they switch off the game.

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# Safety Tips For Parents

## BLOCK STRANGERS AND UNWANTED CONTACT

Despite the fact that private messages can no longer be sent in the game, strangers may still attempt to interact with your child. From the pause menu, players can block chat and friend requests from others in the game. This causes any profanities, email addresses and phone numbers to become automatically blocked, meaning it's harder for people you don't know to potentially contact your child.

## LEARN FROM YOUTUBERS / TWITCH STREAMERS

There are a lot of Minecraft focused YouTubers and Twitch Streamers that offer a huge variety of fun, engaging content. Many of them focus on making videos specifically for younger audiences, which don't include bad language or anything scary. If you're unsure about the game, check out some of the biggest streamers and more importantly, ask who your children like. This will help you to understand what the game is about and also make sure that your children are watching age-appropriate content online.

## PLAY IN CREATIVE OR PEACEFUL MODES

Playing the game on Creative or Peaceful mode ensures that the experience is strictly safe. Peaceful mode allows children to explore with friends without having the survival element of normal Minecraft, while Creative mode allows imaginations to run wild with unlimited resources, encouraging creation of vast, personalised worlds. There really are no limits as to what can be accomplished and getting involved yourself can make it a great way to bond with your child and give you a long-term project to complete with them.

## MONITOR GAME TIME

Being able to play on a wide variety of platforms can be beneficial however it can also make it more difficult to put the game down. Play time should be monitored and it's always a good idea to talk to your child if you feel they are spending too much time on the game or showing signs of addictive behaviour.

## CREATE A PRIVATE SERVER

The best way to avoid unwanted strangers or griefers in a server is to simply create your own. Private servers do exactly what they say on the tin by offering a safe, secure place for children to play and create with their friends, free from outside interference. They (and you) control who is allowed in the server and what kind of things they can do in it, making it the closest thing Minecraft offers to parental controls.

## LEARN TO PLAY YOURSELF

Minecraft is an incredibly easy game to pick up and play. Furthermore, it doesn't require an expensive console or computer, with versions available for smartphones and tablets. Learning to play yourself and playing alongside your child is the best way to understand the game and will help to put your mind at ease in respect of what your child is viewing and who they may be interacting with.

## CREATE SERVER WHITELISTS

Usernames you know to be safe, like your child's friends or relatives, can have their accounts whitelisted as safe. Essentially, this means that server moderators can create a community made up of people they know to be friendly and children will only be playing alongside people both they and you know, reducing any risk of contact with strangers or experiencing griefing.

## Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

# How to Set up
# PARENTAL CONTROLS
## for
# APPS
## Android Phone

On Android phones, restricting access to particular apps usually requires going onto Google Play. From there, it's fairly easy to navigate your way through the settings to manage the parental controls and authentications relating to any apps on the device. These features can prevent your child from downloading or buying anything unsuitable for their age. Updated versions of apps or games that your child has already installed may occasionally contain something inappropriate, so we've explained how to stop those, too.

**Parental controls**

Parental controls are on

Set content restrictions
Set a restriction for each type of content

- Apps & games — Teen
- Movies — Allow all, including unrated
- TV — Allow all, including unrated
- Books — Allow all
- Music — Restrictions on

**Settings**

General

**Auto Update Apps**
- Over any network — Data charges may apply
- Over Wi-Fi only
- ● Don't auto-update apps

User controls

Parental Controls
On

**Kumail@NOS**

Manage Settings

Location - Updated 3 min ago

UK

## How to Block App Downloads
## (This Also Disables In-app Purchases):

1. Open Google Play Store
2. Tap the profile icon in the top right
3. Tap Settings
4. Scroll down to the Family section and tap Parental controls
5. Toggle 'Parental controls are off' to 'Parental controls are on'
6. Create a PIN and tap OK
7. Confirm your PIN and tap OK again
8. Tap Apps & Games
9. Set the age limit you wish to set
10. Tap Save to apply your changes

## How to Stop
## Auto-updates

1. Open Google Play Store
2. Tap the profile icon in the top right
3. Tap Settings
4. Tap Auto-Update Apps
5. Select 'Don't auto-update apps' and then tap Done

## Restricting Apps Through
## Google Family Link

1. Open Google Play Family Link for parents
2. Tap the three horizontal lines in the top left
3. Select your child's account
4. Tap Manage
5. Tap Controls on Google Play
6. Tap Apps & Games
7. Select the age limit you wish to set

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
# ROBLOX

**PEGI 7+**

With more than 150 million users worldwide, Roblox is one of the most popular video games of recent times. Roblox allows users to create their own gaming experiences using Roblox Studio: building levels and games then allowing other people to play them. Similarly, players can play each other's creations, either on their own or with other people online. While it's a tool that can help foster creative thinking, Roblox is also intermittently in the news amid concerns over young users' safety.

## No Age Rating

Roblox is rated 7+ by PEGI, but the platform itself doesn't have a minimum age requirement. It does ask for a date of birth when registering, but this can be easily fabricated. The sheer quantity of games available on Roblox means that some will fall into teen/adult categories. Users can also interact with each other freely – and the game has, historically, attracted scammers, griefers and online predators.

## In-App Purchases

Robux is the in-game currency used to buy things like special outfits or emotes, and to play certain sections of the game. A subscription service (costing £4.99 per month) called Roblox Premium offers more privileges and more in-game currency. Robux can also be purchased in batches, for up to £4.99. Children can easily pay for these, or purchase a membership, without realising it.

## Chat Functionality

Users can join group chats with almost anyone through the Chat & Party function. While the chat has some filters, predators still try to find ways around these to prey on young children. There have been recent reports of adults pretending to be children, attempting to groom younger players and encouraging them to chat privately in an unmoderated environment away from the game.

## ODers

An 'ODer' (online dater) joins Roblox to find someone to 'date' online. While there's nothing inherently wrong with finding love on the internet, it becomes an issue in a space that's populated by children and young teens, like Roblox. Online dating is against Roblox's community guidelines, but certain player-built games on the platform are specifically for 'ODers' and should be avoided by children.

## Online Predators

Roblox's developers aim to maintain a safe place for children; they employ human moderators for their players' protection. But there will, sadly, always be individuals who try to bypass these safeguards so they can chat to children and attempt to communicate outside the game. Anyone asking for your child's personal information or to talk privately should be blocked and reported.

# Advice for Parents & Carers
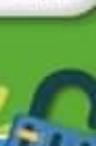
## Take Note of Ratings

Recent press reports drew attention to Roblox's issues with potentially offensive content. Some players were using Roblox Studio to create games featuring nudity, sexual activity and extreme political views. In response, Roblox is introducing a ratings system which will rank content by age appropriateness, with clear warnings if a game is not suitable for younger players.

## Set Parental Controls

Roblox has controls that allow parents to moderate who their children can talk to and which games they can play. To enable these, add your email address to your child's account through the Security menu, and create a secure PIN to stop settings being tampered with. Then head into the Privacy menu where you can apply moderation to in-game chat, personal messages, invites and more.

## Disable Messages

It's advisable to block all messaging if you have concerns over your child's safety. If they're playing with friends they know in real life, encourage them to chat in another way (like on the phone), so you know exactly who they're talking to and how. Accounts can be tweaked to allow messages from specific groups of people, such as friends or users that your child follows.

## Block and Report

To report players in a game, find the Roblox symbol on screen (or the 'Settings' button on some devices). Identify the offending player and click the flag icon. Clarify why the player is being reported by choosing a reason from the list. If you think a particular game is inappropriate, you can also flag it for a moderator to check by following the same steps but selecting 'Game' instead of 'Player'.

## Encourage Creativity

It could prove a little too complex for younger children, but Roblox Studio is a great place to start learning the fundamentals of game design. Many budding developers have created Roblox games which have become popular among the community. There are plenty of tutorials on making games on sites like YouTube. You never know, your child's creation might be the next big thing!

## Meet Our Expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for several years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

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# What parents & carers need to know about ...
# AMONG US

**PEGI 7**

Among Us is one of the most popular games of 2020. A space-themed 'social deduction game' where 4-10 players take on the guise of Crewmates, who must complete various tasks around their spaceship, while randomly selected Imposters must try their hardest to sabotage the others' efforts. The Imposters have to remain undetected through rounds of voting to win. While Among Us is a largely safe game, it's still prudent to be aware of any potential risks young ones might encounter when playing.

## Inappropriate chat

While Among Us can be enjoyed locally via wi-fi, it is commonly played online. Between rounds, players come together to discuss who they think the Imposter is with a text chat, and it's here where children will come into contact with others. There is a profanity filter on the game as standard, but it can very easily be disabled and (like any unmoderated chat groups) children can be exposed to inappropriate, sexual or explicit language.

## Risk of hacking

Among Us has been the target of hacking activity. Indeed, only recently the game's developer, InnerSloth, tweeted advice that users play private games or with people they trust, in response to hacking issues. As yet, there has been no breach in player accounts. However, if a big enough hack were to take place and player details were accessed, it could lead criminals to having access to credit card data and other personal credentials.

## In-game purchases

Among Us is currently available on both PC (via the gaming service Steam) and mobile devices. On the PC, the game costs a flat amount of £3.99 and has some in-game purchases, whereas the mobile version is free to play but contains adverts and in-game purchases. You can pay to remove the ads or purchase in-game cosmetic items. While these amounts are relatively low, there's still the possibility that young ones could accidentally spend lots of money on the game without realising it, as the process is complete in a couple of taps if a card is connected to your store account.

## Use of external apps

Many players use external apps like Discord to voice chat with each other while they're playing. The problem with this is that it is unregulated by the game. Usually on Discord, players will only talk to other people they know in private chats, but a stranger could add a child on an external app pretending to be interested in playing Among Us with them, when in reality they could be attempting to bully, groom or extort.

## Mild violence

The art style of Among Us is cartoony but does contain some very mild violence. Imposters must kill off Crewmates one by one and can do this in a number of different ways. Some younger children might find this uncomfortable and could get scared or become upset when an Imposter is chasing them, or if they are the Imposter and are forced to kill. An age rating of PEGI 7 should help guide you in deciding if the game is appropriate or not.

## National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

# Safety tips

## Play with your children

Playing with your kids is one of the best ways to understand the game, and what makes it so popular. Among Us is free on mobile and is incredibly easy to pick up and play. It's also a great way to bond with your young ones - unless of course you're the Imposter or vote them out of the spaceship! You can do this by picking 'Local' on the main menu then 'Create Game'.

## Use private lobbies

Among Us uses private lobbies to let players keep track of who they're gaming with. Using a uniquely generated code that can be given to friends prior to a game starting, it gives parents peace of mind knowing who their kids are playing with. To get a game code, simply select 'Host', choose the game settings, press 'Confirm', then send the six-digit code at the bottom of the screen to friends to invite them.

## Deactivate credit cards

Having your credit card automatically paired with any online accounts that can be accessed by children is asking for trouble. A solution could be setting them up with their own account with no credit card attached. They can still ask you when they want to make a purchase, but it's totally up to you as and when that transaction happens.

## Use an alias
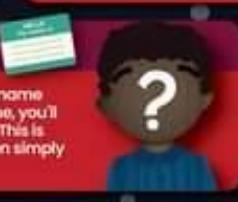
By default, your name on Among Us will be set to whatever name your device recognises you as. If this is your child's real name, you'll want to ensure they change it before hopping into a game. This is really easily done by clicking 'Online' on the main menu, then simply typing in a new name at the top of the screen.

## Talk about the risks

It's a good idea to talk to your child about the risks associated with online gaming, especially when there are chat options and an ability to communicate with others. Try to maintain an open dialogue with your child: talk about their experiences of the game and who they're playing with. This will help you to stay on top of how they're feeling and ensure they know they can come to you if ever they feel upset or uncomfortable about anything they've experienced.

## Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for five years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work - but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

# How to Set up
# PARENTAL CONTROLS
## for
# APPS
## iPhone

Apple devices come with built-in apps already available: Mail, FaceTime and Safari, for example. However, you can choose which apps and features appear on your child's device and which ones don't. You can also manipulate the features in Game Centre to enhance your child's safety and privacy when playing games, as well as blocking iTunes or App Store purchases if you wish.
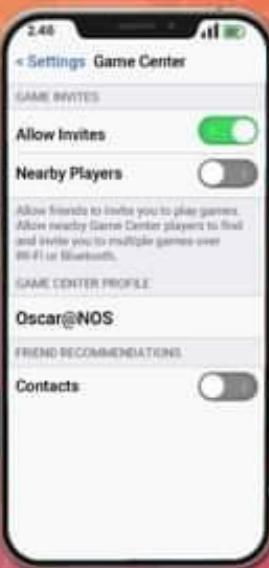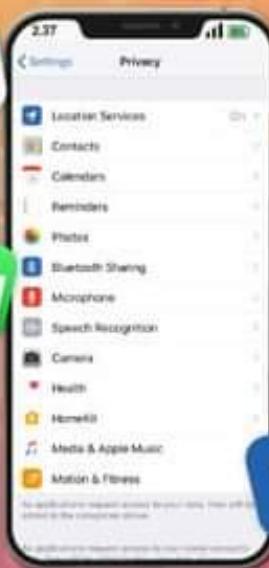
## How to Restrict Built-in Apps/Features

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap Allowed Apps (you may need to toggle this to 'on' at the top)
5. Enable or disable the apps you wish to appear (or disappear) on your child's device

## How to Restrict Game Centre

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap Content Restrictions (you may need to switch the toggle at the top to the 'on' position)
5. Scroll down to Game Centre
6. Choose between Allow, Don't Allow, or Allow with Friends Only in the settings for each feature

## How to Restrict iTunes & App Store Purchases

1. Open Settings
2. Tap Screen Time
3. Tap Content & Privacy Restrictions
4. Tap iTunes & App Store Purchases
5. Select Allow or Don't Allow for each feature (you can also lock these settings with a password)

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 22.09.2021

# How to Set up
# PARENTAL CONTROLS
## for
# APPS
## Android Phone

On Android phones, restricting access to particular apps usually requires going onto Google Play. From there, it's fairly easy to navigate your way through the settings to manage the parental controls and authentications relating to any apps on the device. These features can prevent your child from downloading or buying anything unsuitable for their age. Updated versions of apps or games that your child has already installed may occasionally contain something inappropriate, so we've explained how to stop those, too.

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**Parental controls**

Parental controls are on

Set content restrictions
Set a restriction for each type of content

Apps & games
Teen

Movies
Allow all, including unrated

TV
Allow all, including unrated

Books
Allow all

Music
Restrictions on

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**Settings**

General

Auto Update Apps

◯ Over any network
Data charges may apply

◯ Over Wi-Fi only

● Don't auto-update apps

User controls

Parental Controls
On

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Kumail@NOS

Manage Settings

Location - Updated 3 min ago

UK

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## How to Block App Downloads
## (This Also Disables In-app Purchases):

1. Open Google Play Store
2. Tap the profile icon in the top right
3. Tap Settings
4. Scroll down to the Family section and tap Parental controls
5. Toggle 'Parental controls are off' to 'Parental controls are on'
6. Create a PIN and tap OK
7. Confirm your PIN and tap OK again
8. Tap Apps & Games
9. Set the age limit you wish to set
10. Tap Save to apply your changes

## How to Stop
## Auto-updates

1. Open Google Play Store
2. Tap the profile icon in the top right
3. Tap Settings
4. Tap Auto-Update Apps
5. Select 'Don't auto-update apps' and then tap Done

## Restricting Apps Through
## Google Family Link

1. Open Google Play Family Link for parents
2. Tap the three horizontal lines in the top left
3. Select your child's account
4. Tap Manage
5. Tap Controls on Google Play
6. Tap Apps & Games
7. Select the age limit you wish to set

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