Instagram is an image and video sharing app that allows users to share moments with the world. The app has a live streaming feature and additional add-ons, such as ‘Boomerang’, ‘Hyperlapse’ and ‘Layout’, which can be used to enhance their feed. Users can choose to add filters and make adjustments to their photos, such as brightness/contrast. To make their content more ‘searchable’, users can include hashtags in their uploads to make them easier to find.

**Photo / Video Sharing**
Posting photos and videos is Instagram's biggest selling point, and with sharing comes risks. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street names, 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 not set to private, anyone can access their account and see their images.

**Live Streaming to Strangers**
The live stream feature on Instagram allows users to connect with their friends and followers in real-time. Followers can comment on the video during the broadcast (which can be turned off in the settings). If your child has a private account, only their approved followers can see their story. It is important to note that they still may have followers that they do not know, which means they could be live streaming to strangers. A public account allows anybody to view their story. We suggest that your child goes through their followers list and blocks people they do not know. An additional benefit of live streams is that your child may do something that they regret. This could be captured by a viewer taking a screenshot and further shared around the internet.

**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 unauthorized purchases. This can be added in the payment settings tab.

**Filter Inappropriate Comments**
Instagram announced on 1st May that they include hashtags in their filtering filter on the app. The new filter hides comments containing attacks on a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's well-being or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so they can take action on the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, but it can be turned off. Make sure this is turned on in the apps settings.

**RESTRICT MESSAGES**
If your child's account is not private, anybody can message them and reply to their stories. If they do wish to keep their account public, we strongly recommend changing the message reply settings to restrict who can message them.

**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.

**Use a Private Account**
By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible for their followers and to anyone who knows the username. By making an account private, people will not be able to message, comment or view your child's story unless they are approved by your child. If somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos.

**IMAGE & MENTAL HEALTH**
When influencers, celebrities or peers use filters on their photos or videos on Instagram, it can set unrealistic expectations of their own appearance and create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Children may try to strive for a comparable number of likes on their own image. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, which can further contribute to feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem.

**Damage to Confidence, Body Image & Mental Health**
When influencers, celebrities, or peers use filters on their photos or videos on Instagram, it can set unrealistic expectations of their own appearance and create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Children may try to strive for a comparable number of likes on their own photo to an image or video that has been edited heavily.

**New for May 2018***
- Instagram is rolling out in-app payments for products and services directly through the app. It will operate under the same rules as Facebook Payments, which state if you are under the age of 18, you can only use Facebook Payments with the involvement of a parent or guardian.

***NEW FOR MAY 2018***
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**HiJacked Hashtags**
Like Twitter, hashtags are also an extremely prominent tool in Instagram and with that, comes potential risks for your child. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one 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 certainly shouldn't be exposed to.

**Location Tagging**
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 your child's location; this is particularly more of a risk if it is on their story, as it is in realtime.

**Top Tips for Parents**

**What parents need to know about Instagram**

**National Online Safety**

**Sources**
- "Instagram’s new privacy features explained: How to control who sees your posts and videos". Accessed on 1st May 2018.
- "Instagram announced on 1st May that they include hashtags in their filtering filter on the app. The new filter hides comments containing attacks on a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's well-being or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so they can take action on the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, but it can be turned off. Make sure this is turned on in the apps settings.

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