

PLAYER GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA



Professional
Footballers'
Association



Premier
League

AN EXTENSION OF YOUR WORKPLACE

When you use social media platforms you remain accountable to FA rules and can be sanctioned for discriminatory language even if it was on an old account a long time ago. Social media use has a footprint and we are working to ensure that all users are as accountable as players.

We know players are subject to abuse and hate online and we are working hard to ensure that users can be identified and held to account in the same way that players are. Until the platforms make the necessary changes, there are a number of factors football has put in place to try and protect your online experience that we will go through in this document.

If you need to report abusive content there are multiple ways you can do this:

Send evidence to:

- > Enough@thepfa.com
- > onlineabuse@premierleague.com or via the Premier League Player App
- Please always report within the app if you receive the abuse and let your club know too.
- When reporting an incident we advise that you screenshot the abuse and the abuser's user name/handle. **Please do not engage or respond to the abuser.**
- There are mechanisms in place to protect you including wellbeing support so please do not suffer in silence.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU NEED TO REPORT

➤➤ Until the platforms make the necessary changes we are monitoring the accounts of every player in the Premier League, EFL and WSL and offer support from across the game to ensure abusive messages are swiftly removed and dealt with.

It is especially important to report abuse in Direct Messages, if you have open DMs, because these are private spaces where the platforms do not run the same levels of proactive detection of harmful content. You can also ask your club, Kick It Out, the PFA or your football league to report the post or account for you.

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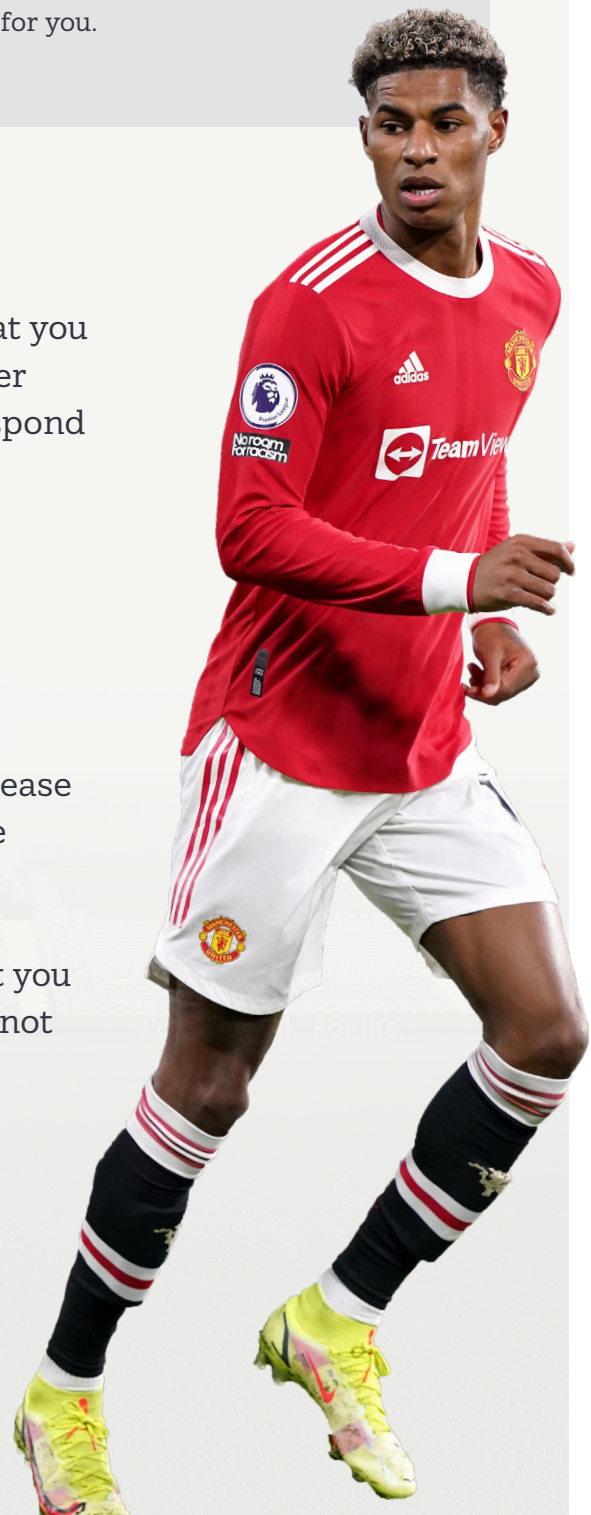


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send to onlineabuse@premierleague.com or via the Premier League App but also please report within the app that you receive the abuse and let your club know too.

There are mechanisms in place to protect you including wellbeing support so please do not suffer in silence. Its OK not to be OK.



EFL and WSL players: send to enough@thepfa.com and report to your club who will alert the EFL/WSL

THE LAW

If there is a post that may be breaking the law, please refer to the following guidance from the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS):



Posting racist, sexist, homophobic or other discriminatory comments onto social media platforms is a hate crime.



A player, a family member, any of your representatives or agents or a member of the public can make a report to the police.

Tackling hate crime is a key priority for the police and CPS and so we want to encourage you to make a report. It has no place in our communities and no place in football.



The police will investigate the report and, in appropriate cases, send it to the CPS to prosecute. Successfully prosecuting an individual is one of the few real world consequences for those who use social media to post hateful content.

It not only means that they are punished for their crime by the court but could also affect them getting jobs or travelling internationally in the future.



You may think it will take too long or be too much effort to try to prosecute an individual for online abuse, but along with the football authorities, the CPS/police will fully support you through the process.

Your contribution could make a real difference to the case outcome and can be made in the following simple ways:

VICTIM PERSONAL STATEMENTS (VPS)

This is used once the defendant has been convicted. It isn't used as evidence in the trial. During the sentencing hearing, the VPS is read out to the court so they can take it into account.



The person who made the VPS doesn't need to be present and doesn't have to read it out themselves. The CPS prefer to have a VPS because the voice of the victim is really important in the case.

A VPS should explain about the impact the crime has had on you, your day-to-day life or your loved ones. If we don't have one, then the court might make an assumption about how you have been affected and you may not agree with their view.

If giving a VPS is too traumatic for you or will make it more of a negative experience, then you can say no and it won't prevent the case from being prosecuted. The police can help you with drafting your VPS.

The voice of the victim is really important.

GIVING A STATEMENT

Some cases can be prosecuted without you having to give a statement. We will not ask for one every time. When we do ask it is because your evidence is important to prove the case.

The statement will just cover the facts of what you saw or read on your social media account. If you have a team or someone at the club who helps you with your social media, then they might be able to give the statement instead of you.

The police can help you with what needs to be included in the statement. In some cases, sometimes the more serious cases, not having a statement from the person who the offensive material was written to might mean that it can't be prosecuted.

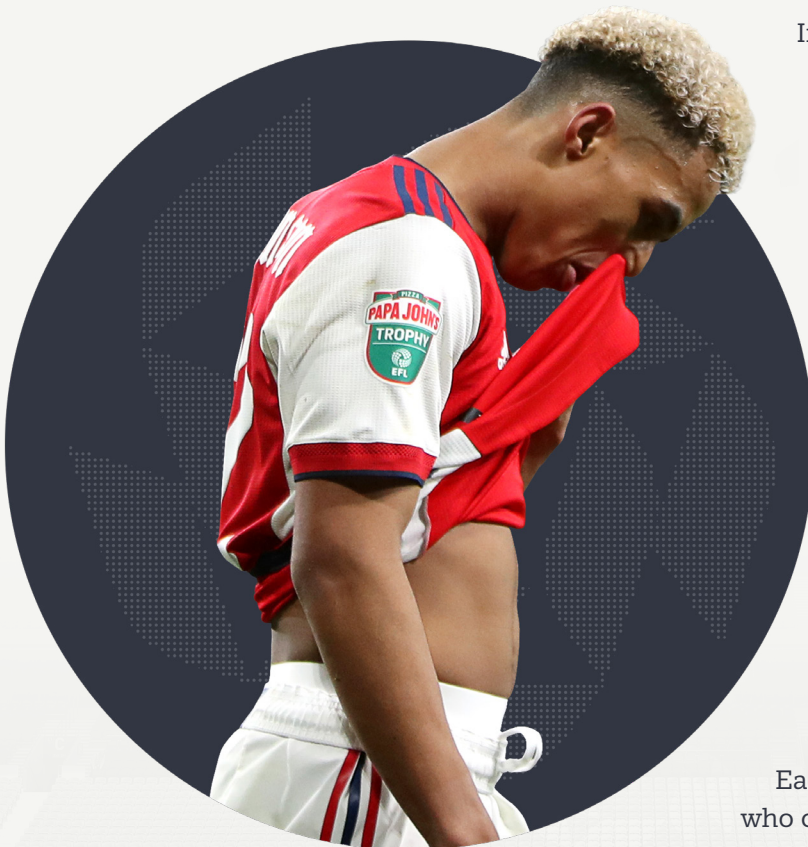
This is because one of the possible offences requires the prosecution to show who read the message and how they felt about it.

If this is the case, the police will explain and may encourage you to provide a statement.



COURT

Even if you have given a statement, it will not automatically mean you have to come to court. If the defendant pleads guilty (and many people in the Magistrates' Court do) then there won't be a trial and you won't be required to attend.



If there is a trial and you have given a statement then you will be given plenty of notice if you have been asked to attend.

The prosecutor will only allow this to happen when your attendance is needed to prove the case. We will not expect you to come to court 'just in case'.

If giving evidence is necessary then it might be possible from home via video link so that you do not have to come to court in person. At each stage, the police and prosecutor will be available to help you and explain what is happening.

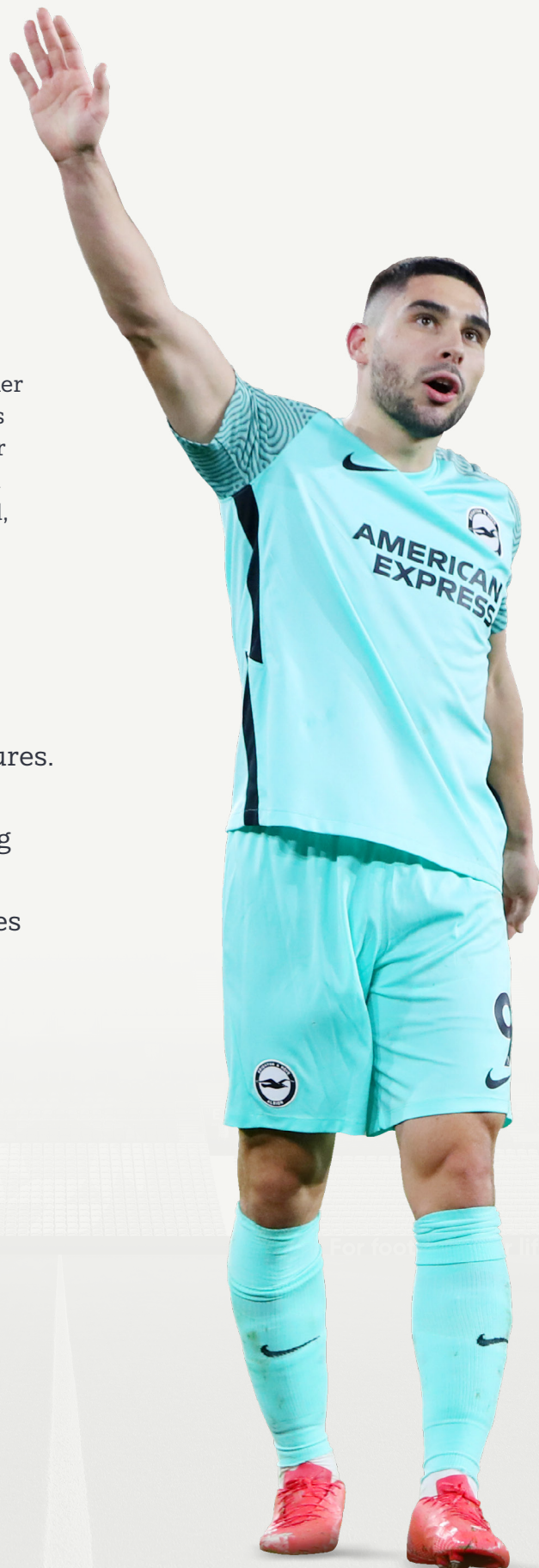
Each real world consequence for those who commit hate crime online will serve as a warning to thousands of others that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

CASE STUDIES

Following an investigation led by the Premier League, a 19 year-old man in Singapore was handed a nine-month probation order after sending abusive messages (including death threats) to Brighton & Hove Albion forward, Neal Maupay. He says...

// The vile and toxic abuse of which I was on the receiving end is a daily occurrence for many professional athletes and public figures.

I hope this goes someway to showing those online trolls that it is totally unacceptable and that the authorities are prepared to take the necessary action.”



CASE STUDIES

A 49 year old man was charged by West Midlands police with racially abusing Romaine Sawyers online.

He was convicted and charged with a prison sentence.

Romaine says...



“Everybody has to rally together and that’s how the message will get through to the masses. To the people that want to help and crack down on it I would advise them to come forward. This isn’t just a football situation it’s a society situation.”

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Here are some of the most important tools available to manage your experience online.



MUTE

You can mute an account if you don't want to see their Tweets, but don't want to unfollow the account or don't want them to know they're blocked.

From a Tweet or profile page, **click the '...' icon** and **click 'Mute.'** You can also mute particular words, conversations, phrases, usernames, emojis, or hashtags.

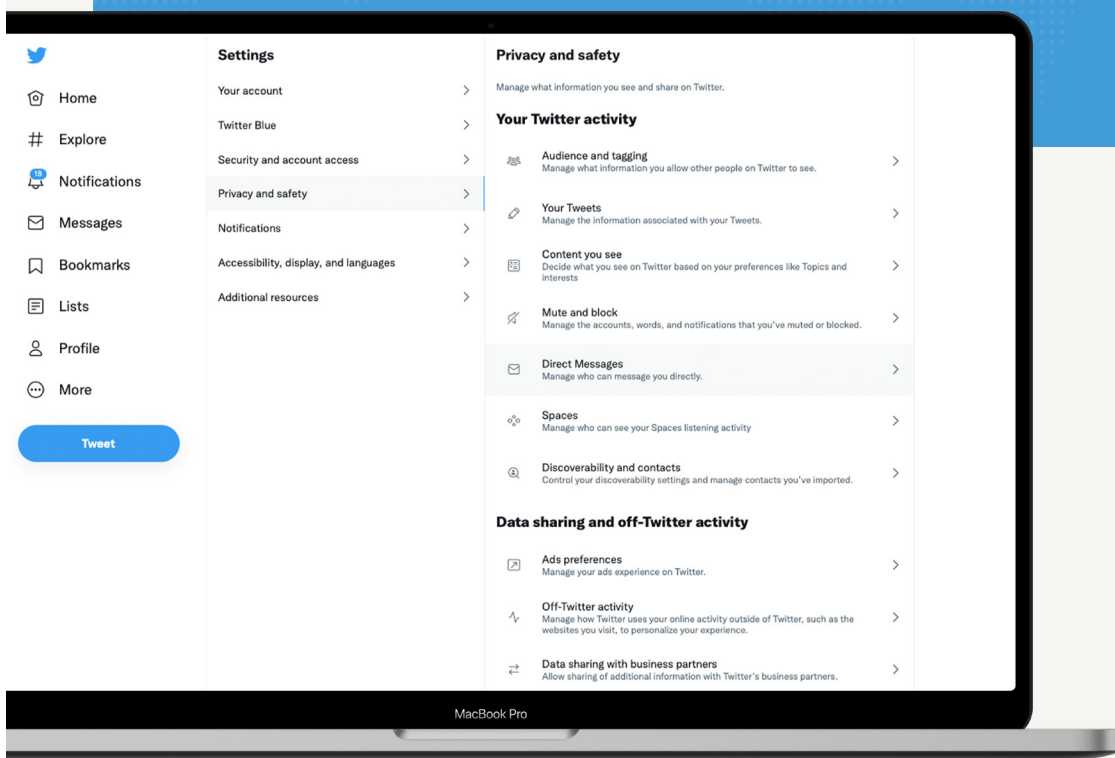
Go to **'Mute and Block'** in your **'Privacy and Safety'** settings review.

NOTIFICATION FILTERS

Filter the accounts you see in your notifications. You can decide not to see Tweets that mention you from people who haven't confirmed their email or phone number or from new accounts.

You can access advanced filter settings by navigating to:

Settings and Privacy' > 'Notifications' > Filters > Muted notifications



TOOLS YOU CAN USE



CONVERSATION SETTINGS

Before you send a Tweet, you can decide who will be able to reply to it. You will see a default setting of **'Everyone can reply'** next to a globe icon in the compose Tweet box. Tapping this prior to posting allows you to choose who can reply to you.

HIDE REPLIES

Tweet authors have the option to hide replies to their Tweets. From a reply to one of your Tweets, click or tap the **'...'** icon. Select **hide reply** and confirm.

BLOCK

Block any account instantly when you don't want someone to see your Tweets and don't want to see theirs. **Click the **'...'** icon located at the top of a Tweet** from the account you wish to block and select **'Block.'**

NOTE: If the account tries to interact with you in future, they'll know you've blocked them.



TOOLS YOU CAN USE

INSTAGRAM

BLOCKING PROFILES & ACCOUNTS

You can block people to prevent contact from those you do not wish to interact with on Facebook or Instagram.

Blocking someone also means they cannot search for your profile. **How-to [here](#).**

WHO CAN MESSAGE

All accounts on Instagram have the option to switch off private DMs from people they don't follow. This means you never have to receive a DM from anyone you don't know.

Settings -> Privacy -> Messages

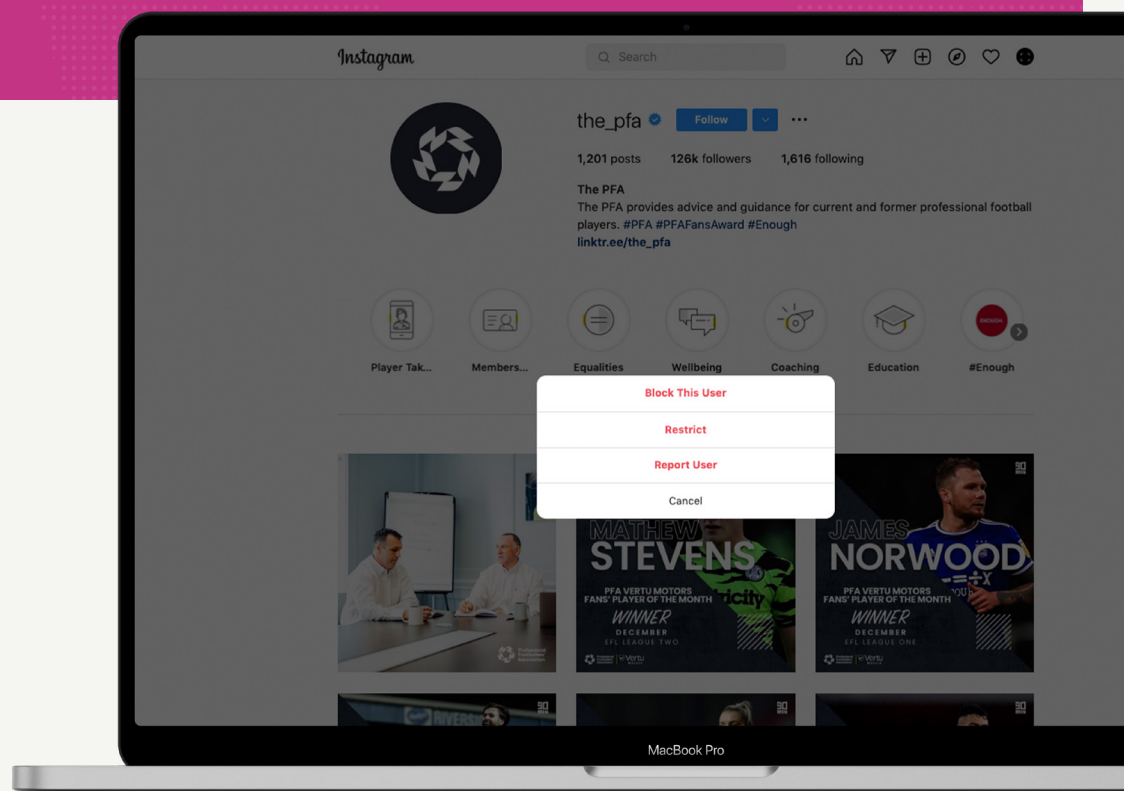
LIMITS

This tool hides DMs and comments from people who don't follow you and people who recently followed you.

Our research shows that a lot of negativity towards public figures comes from these two groups.

Limits allows you to hear from your long-standing followers, while limiting contact from people who might only be coming to your account to target you. Information [here](#).

Settings -> Privacy -> Limits



TOOLS YOU CAN USE

INSTAGRAM

MESSAGE CONTROLS

You can filter Direct Messages (DMs) so that you never have to see abusive private messages from people you don't know. You can use our default list of potentially offensive terms, and add your own words/emojis to the filter too.

With the feature on you can still report messages that contain potentially offensive terms to us so we can take action on the message and account behind them, but without you having to see the message

Settings -> Privacy -> Hidden Words
-> Hide Message Requests

COMMENT CONTROLS

Add emojis, words or phrases you find offensive to your comment filter, and no comment containing these terms will appear under your posts.

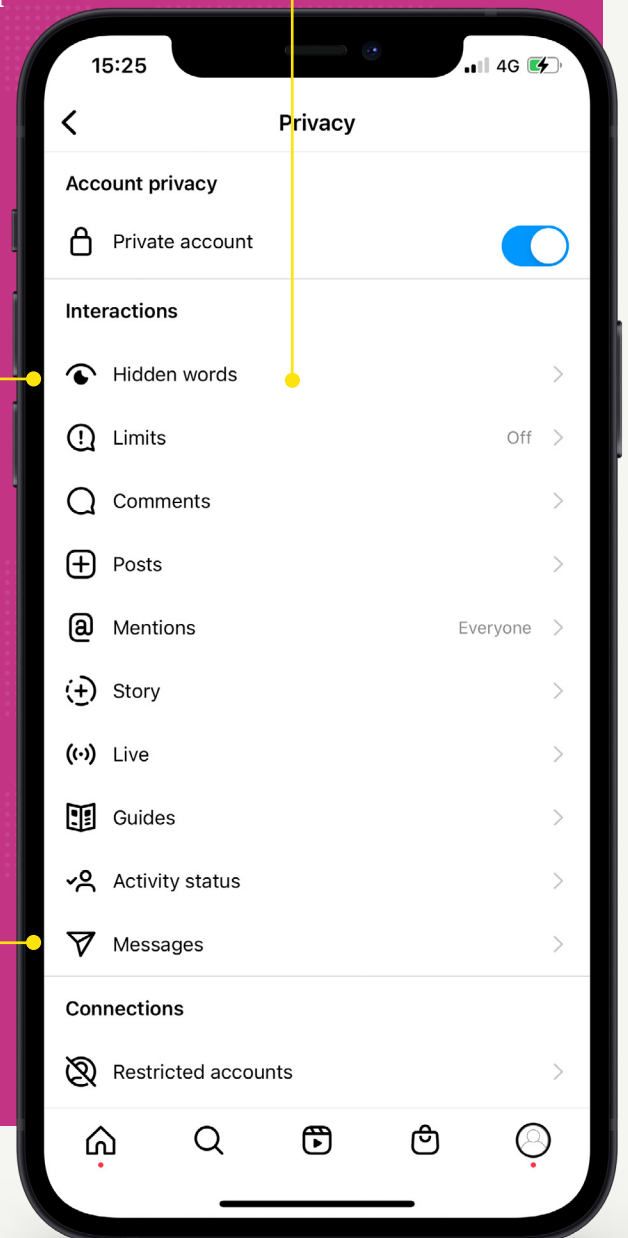
Even with this filter turned on, we will still take action on people who send comments that break our rules.

Settings -> Privacy -> Hidden Words
-> Manage list

WHO CAN COMMENT

Who can comment - In addition to filtering comments, you can control who can comment on your posts. You can also access comment controls within a comment section of your own post.

Settings -> Privacy -> Comments





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**For football.
For life.**



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