

Reducing tensions around the social media ban

Australia's social media ban for under 16s comes into effect from 10 December 2025 and with it potential challenges for young people adjusting to the uncertainty this brings. Here are some key ways to start preparing your family for this change.



Young people under this ban will only be able to see publicly available content on platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, X and YouTube but creating or maintaining accounts will be restricted. These age restrictions aim to protect young people from safety risks associated with social media including excessive screen time, dangerous algorithm-driven content and cyber-bullying. While some safety experts welcome these changes, there are some that have flagged concerns about how under 16s will react once the ban is in place.

For parents and caregivers, now is the chance to have proactive, open conversations with your child about social media, set up strong habits, and offer support and alternatives. With preparation, this change can become an opportunity rather than a crisis.

Start the conversation early: Sit down with your child and ask how they currently use social media, what they like about it, what worries them. Explain the upcoming change calmly and factually so they understand the rationale around the restrictions.

Acknowledge feelings: Recognise this may be a difficult adjustment and your child may feel upset, frustrated or worried about the uncertainty of this change.

Explore alternatives together: For many young people, social media is a space to forge connection. This can be especially important for marginalised young people. Help your child identify other ways to connect with friends or likeminded people, share interests, express creativity, and stay entertained offline or via non age restricted platforms.

Back up important content: We still do not know what the restriction will look like for each platform. If your child has an account likely to be age-restricted, there is the potential they could lose their data so you might like to assist them to download or archive meaningful photos, chats or memories in case their accounts are deactivated.

Stay connected and monitor: After the change, some children may feel disconnected, anxious without their social media or begin using alternative apps in secret. Regularly check in with them to see how they are coping and watch for signs like mood changes, isolation, secretive device use, sleep disturbance that may indicate a deeper issue.

Talk about “when” not “if” they access social media: The ban is not forever and once under 16s have access to social media, there are still e-safety risks to be aware of. Use this as an opportunity to build educate and build good digital habits, strategies to deal with difficult or unsafe situations and how to ask for help if things go wrong.

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Coordinate with others: This is an opportunity to revisit your family's device usage and reaffirm things like screen time or device routines. Similarly, if your child spends time at friends' or extended family's houses, or uses shared devices, try aligning expectations with other parents or carers to avoid confusion.

Seek support: If your child is struggling emotionally or socially after the change, consider seeking further support to help with this adjustment. Consider talking with their school, GP, or a counselling service.

Other resources: The eSafety Commissioner has created a series of resources to support families and young people navigate this change, found here: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions-hub>

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