

What we know about the social media ban so far

What is the social media ban?

The Government has legislated that people under the age of 16 will not be able to sign up for social media accounts. To do so will be against the law.

Who will it affect?

The Government has set a minimum age of 16 for accessing social media platforms. All young people under the age of 16 in Australia, regardless of whether they have current access, will be affected.

What platforms are being banned and which ones aren't?

The Government are still finalising the full list of social media platforms that will be included in the ban. However, they have said it will include most of the major platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and X. The Government has stated that they will allow exemptions for messaging apps and services with the primary purpose of supporting health and education (like headspace, Kids Helpline and Google Classroom). Although YouTube was initially expected to be exempt, the eSafety Commissioner has recently recommended that the platform should be included in the ban. The full list of exempted platforms is yet to be confirmed.

If young people already have an account will they be kicked off?

Under the legislation, yes. Even if young people already have accounts, after the ban come into effect, anyone under 16 will not be allowed on certain social media platforms. There will be no 'grandfathering' arrangements (wondering what grandfathering means? Check out key terms and definitions in our guide for young people).

What if I give my parental/guardian consent?

This won't make a difference. Parents (or other guardians) won't be able to give their consent for their young people to access social media before they are 16 years of age.

How will they enforce this?

The Government has said that they want the responsibility to be placed upon the platforms and their companies to enforce the age restriction, rather than upon young people and their families. While the Government hasn't dictated exactly how platforms have to comply, at a minimum they will be required to implement some form of age assurance. The eSafety Commissioner is currently testing different tools to figure out the best way to do this. That might include things like ID checks or technology that estimates a young person's age, but no single method has been locked in yet.

How parents and carers can help

eSafety understands the change in the law may make some under-16s feel upset, worried or angry. Some may become more secretive about their social media use and less likely to ask for help from a trusted adult if things start to go wrong.

It's important that parents and carers help under-16s by talking openly about the age restrictions, finding out how they currently use social media and how that may be impacted by the new law, as well as encouraging them to seek help if they need further support for their health and wellbeing.

Supporting young people through change

We know that uncertainty around change can be unsettling, so now is a great time to chat to young people in your life about their use of social media, and their thoughts about the ban.

The period of adolescence is one of discovery and challenges. Young people are navigating friendship and relationship ups and downs, stress and pressure, concerns about their appearance, abilities and future, understanding and exploring their identity, where they fit in the world, and struggles with their mental health and wellbeing.

Young people will continue to seek information, inspiration and role models. As their family, we want to be a part of these conversations, including helping them to find trustworthy and safe sources of truth and opportunities for connection and shared experiences.

This ban will not automatically shift young people to the offline world - they will continue to have online and offline spaces. The ban offers a unique opportunity for family to open up a conversation and learn more about your young person's experiences in both spaces.