

# Social media minimum age

## Fact sheet

The Australian Government has taken world-leading action to reduce online harms experienced by young Australians by introducing a minimum age to access social media.

Social media platforms now need to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from having a social media account. Importantly, the responsibility is on the social media platforms, not parents or young people, to follow this law.

Delaying access to social media will help protect the health and wellbeing of young people and give them extra time to develop real world connections and digital literacy skills before they join global platforms.

## Why do we have a social media minimum age?

There are many benefits to being online—from education to social connection. But for too many young Australians, the addictive algorithm has exposed them to harmful content.

Over 7 in 10 young Australians have seen content they shouldn't be exposed to online, including sexist, misogynistic or hateful content, content depicting dangerous online challenges or fight videos, or content that encourages unhealthy eating or exercise habits.

Keeping young people safer online is a top priority for the Australian Government. That's why we've delivered a world-leading social media minimum age—to give under 16s a break from the pull of social media and give parents peace of mind.

## How does it work?

Age-restricted social media platforms include: **Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X and YouTube**. This means they need to take reasonable steps to prevent under 16s from having an account.

Under 16s continue to have access to messaging apps (such as WhatsApp and Messenger), online gaming, professional networking and professional development services, and services that are primarily for the purposes of education and health support.

eSafety will continue to update the list of platforms it considers age-restricted. Check the **eSafety website** ([www.eSafety.gov.au/social-media-age-restrictions-hub](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/social-media-age-restrictions-hub)) for the latest advice.

## How do platforms know who is under 16?

There are lots of technologies that help social media companies figure out how old people are.

There are 3 types of age assurance technology that social media platforms can use to identify if a person is under 16:

- **Age inference:** social media platforms can use the data they already hold to infer a person's age. This could include how long they've had an account, their interests and networks.
- **Age estimation:** social media platforms can analyse a person's characteristics like their facial features, voice and language they use.
- **Age verification:** a person can choose to provide social media platforms with existing documents that prove their age.

Platforms are encouraged to take a layered approach, and no Australian can be forced to use government ID to provide their age online. Social media platforms must comply with Australian law to protect the data provided to assure a person's age.

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) has resources explaining what personal information may be handled by age-restricted social media platforms and third-party age assurance providers, as well as tips on how you can best protect your personal information. Visit the **OAIC website** ([www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/social-media-minimum-age](http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/social-media-minimum-age)) for information.

## Can't young people get around the law?

We understand some people will try to get around the law. Much like laws that restrict the sale of alcohol or cigarettes or mandate the use of car seat belts, raising the minimum age to access social media is about changing cultural norms. The responsibility is on the platforms, not parents, to prevent circumvention.

Platforms have tools at their disposal to prevent access to certain content for commercial purposes, including detecting VPNs. We expect social media platforms to use that same technology to keep young Australians safe.

## Digital literacy

There are things young people can do now to boost their digital literacy so they can be safer once they're on socials. The **young people hub** on the eSafety website ([www.eSafety.gov.au/young-people](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/young-people)) has tips and advice, covering topics like critical thinking, nudes, digital footprints, grooming and more.

The **parents hub** ([www.eSafety.gov.au/parents](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/parents)) has information to help you guide and protect young people, including how to set up parental controls, videos, family tech agreements, conversation guides, webinars and more.

## Support

If a young person in your life needs help adjusting to the change, they can contact:

**eheadspace:** 1800 650 890 or [ehheadspace.org.au](http://ehheadspace.org.au)

- Available 3pm – 10pm every day (phone/online)

**Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800 or [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

- Available 24/7 (phone/online)
- You can also join **My Circle** ([kidshelpline.com.au/my-circle](http://kidshelpline.com.au/my-circle)), a private, safe and confidential social platform for 12–25 year olds across Australia, run by Kids Helpline.

**ReachOut:** [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

- A safe space for young people aged 12–25 to chat anonymously, get support and feel better.

**13YARN:** 13 92 76 or [13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line, available 24/7

Scan the QR code to visit the social media age restrictions hub on eSafety.gov.au

