

Social Media Minimum Age

Information kit for stakeholders

January 2026



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Introduction

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.

That's why 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.

The new law started on 10 December 2025 and means age-restricted social media platforms need to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from having a social media account.

eSafety considers the following platforms age-restricted: **Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X** and **Youtube**.

eSafety will continue to update the list of platforms it considers age-restricted, and those it does not. Check the [eSafety website](#) for the latest advice.

What does this mean for under 16s?

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.

Under 16s can still access **messaging apps (for example WhatsApp and Messenger), online gaming, professional networking and professional development services**, and services that are primarily for the purposes of **education** and **health support**.

In this kit, you'll find a range of resources you can share with your networks—whether this is parents, carers, educators or young people—to help them adjust to the new rules.

To keep up to date about the social media minimum age, visit the [eSafety website](#) and subscribe to their [newsletter](#).

Thank you for your help sharing this important information.

About the social media minimum age

There is growing evidence that suggests a link between social media use and harms to young people, such as dissatisfaction with body image and depressive symptoms.

This is particularly true for young people using social media for 5 or more hours a day. They were found to be 31 per cent more likely to express dissatisfaction with their body weight.¹

On 10 December 2025, a new law started which means social media platforms 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, carers or children, to follow this law.

eSafety considers **TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, X, Facebook, YouTube** and others to be age-restricted social media platforms.

These platforms enable some of the more negative aspects of social media, such as **algorithms** that may recommend harmful or inappropriate content, **infinite scrolling**, and other features designed to keep users **continuously engaged**.

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**.

Check [eSafety's website](#) for the latest advice on the platforms it considers age-restricted, and those it does not.

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

It won't completely stop the chances of young people being exposed to harmful content online. That's why it's important to continue having conversations about staying safer online.

For information about the social media minimum age, including which platforms are considered age-restricted, and how to help keep young people safer online, visit the [eSafety website](#).

1 Yvonne Kelly et al, 'Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study' (2019) 3(9) EClinical Medicine 62.

Key messages

- 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.
- On 10 December 2025, a new law started which means social media platforms need to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from having a social media account. eSafety considers **TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, X, Facebook, YouTube** and others to be age-restricted social media platforms.
- Importantly, the responsibility is on the social media platforms, not parents, carers or children, 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.
- 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**.
- The important thing is young people now have reduced access to the harmful aspects of social media, such as algorithms that may recommend harmful or inappropriate content, infinite scrolling, and other features designed to keep people continuously engaged.
- These features can lead to problematic use, social isolation, sleep interference, poor mental and physical health (including unhealthy social comparisons and negative body image), low life-satisfaction and exposure to inappropriate and harmful content.
- There is also evidence these features can lead to harms, such as dissatisfaction with body image and depressive symptoms.
- The social media minimum age is the Australian Government's way to support parents and carers who know something needs to be done to keep kids safer online but aren't quite sure where to start.

Key messages (cont.)

- If a young person in your life needs help dealing with the change, they can contact:
- **eheadspace: 1800 650 890 or eheadspace.org.au**
 - A phone and online service for young people aged 12 and over and family seeking support to help a young person (aged 12–25). Available 3pm – 10pm every day.
- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au**
 - Free and confidential online and phone counselling service.
 - Available 24/7 (all ages).
 - You can also join My Circle, a private, safe and confidential social platform for 12–25 year olds across Australia, run by Kids Helpline.
- **ReachOut: 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**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line.
 - Available 24/7 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For more information about the social media minimum age framework, visit the [eSafety website](https://www.esafety.gov.au).

Frequently asked questions

Which platforms are age-restricted?

Age-restricted platforms are social media platforms that allow people to interact with others and upload content.

eSafety considers **Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X** and **YouTube** to be age-restricted social media platforms. Check [eSafety's website](#) for the most up to date advice on age-restricted platforms.

Why can someone under 16 still see social media content?

Under 16s can still see publicly available social media content that doesn't require being logged into an account.

For example, most YouTube videos can be viewed without an account (meaning it can still be used in an education setting), and some Facebook content can be viewed without a login, such as a business' landing page.

Since they're not logged in, they're less likely to be exposed to some of the harmful design features of social media—such as predatory algorithms.

What if a young person's social media account is still active after 10 December or they passed age verification?

Just because a young person has passed age verification, doesn't mean their account won't be deactivated or frozen. Age-restricted platforms are expected to re-check the age of account holders if there are signals they are likely to be under 16—even if they passed through the first stage of an age check.

Someone has offered to help an under 16 bypass age restrictions. Could this be a scam?

Yes, it could be a scam.

The scammer may be trying to get money or personal information. Or, they may want the under-16 to send nudes or get sexual online – this can be 'grooming' by a sexual abuser, or a set up for 'sextortion' by someone who plans to blackmail them over the sexual content.

If someone says they will provide an under-16 with a fake ID or direct access to an age-verified account, the advice is:

- DO NOT PAY
- DO NOT send them nudes or get sexual with them online
- DO NOT send personal information that could be used to access your accounts or steal your identity.

Frequently asked questions (cont.)

It's unlikely they will provide what they've promised, or they may provide access to an account or 'proof of age' that doesn't work. Even if they do provide something that works, they may threaten to report the under-16 unless they are sent more money or content.

If you think you may have been scammed, visit the [eSafety website](#) for information and guidance.

Why are under 16s 'banned' from social media?

It's not a ban, it's a delay to having accounts.

Age-restricted platforms aren't allowed to let under 16s create or keep an account. That's because being logged into an account increases the likelihood they'll be exposed to pressures and risks that can be hard to deal with. These come from social media platform design features that encourage them to spend more time on screens, while also serving up content that can harm their health and wellbeing.

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.

Which platforms are excluded from the age restrictions?

There are some exclusions for certain types of online services. Under 16s still have access to:

- online gaming
- messaging apps (such as WhatsApp and Messenger)
- professional networking and development services
- services that are primarily for education and health support.

Check [eSafety's website](#) for the most up to date advice on age-restricted platforms.

What are the 'reasonable steps' platforms must take to stop under 16s from finding a way around age restrictions?

Under the law, age-restricted social media platforms are expected to take reasonable steps to:

- find existing accounts held by under-16s and deactivate or remove those accounts
- prevent under 16s from opening new accounts
- prevent workarounds that may allow under 16s to bypass the restrictions
- have processes to correct errors if someone is mistakenly missed by or included in the restrictions, so no one is removed unfairly.

Frequently asked questions (cont.)

Platforms should also provide clear ways for people to report underage accounts, or to request a review if they have been age restricted by mistake.

Platforms that fail to take reasonable steps to prevent underage users from having accounts on their platforms could face penalties of up to \$49.5 million AUD.

Are there penalties for under 16s if they get around the age restrictions?

The responsibility is on the social media platforms, not parents, carers or children, to follow this law.

Age-restricted social media platforms may face penalties of up to \$49.5 million AUD if they don't take reasonable steps to prevent under 16s from having accounts on their platforms.

eSafety is monitoring compliance and enforcing the law through a range of regulatory powers provided in the Online Safety Act.

What if someone under 16 finds a way around the restrictions and something bad happens to them online (like cyberbullying or sextortion)?

No Australian under 16, or their parent or carer, will get in trouble with the law if they're found to have a social media account.

Remember, the onus is on the social media platforms to comply with the law, not young people or their parents and carers.

If someone has a bad experience online, regardless of their age, it should be reported.

To report cyberbullying of a minor (under 18):

- The first step is to report it to the platform. If you're unsure how to do this, check the [eSafety website](#) for links.
- If the service doesn't help, [report it to eSafety](#). Choose the 'Cyberbullying of a child (under 18 years)' form.

To report sextortion of a minor (under 18):

- Report it to the [Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation \(ACCCE\)](#).
- You can also [report it to eSafety](#) so they can remove the content or help stop the threats. Choose the 'Image-based abuse' form.

Visit the [eSafety website](#) for more information and advice on what to do if things go wrong online.

Frequently asked questions (cont.)

Do age restrictions stop under 16s from accessing important benefits of being online?

The social media age restrictions are designed to make sure under 16s are not over-exposed to negative experiences that can cause immediate and long-term harms to their health and wellbeing.

Under 16s are still able to use online services, sites and apps that are not covered by the social media age restrictions.

Can my students still watch YouTube videos as part of their learning?

Some learning management systems allow teachers to embed public video content from other platforms, such as YouTube. If the content is publicly available and does not require the student to log into an age-restricted social media platform, students are still able to watch this content.

What proof of age methods are allowed?

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

- **Age inference:** 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:** 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 to age assurance and **no Australian can be forced to use government ID to prove their age online**. Social media platforms must comply with Australian law to protect the data provided to assure a person's age.

Read about how the major platforms are verifying ages:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Kick](#)
- [Reddit](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [Threads](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [X](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Frequently asked questions (cont.)

How can young people interact with family and friends off social media?

Young people can still access messaging apps (like WhatsApp or Messenger) and online gaming to connect with family and friends online, as these services are exempt from the social media minimum age. They can connect with family and friends offline by organising in-person activities.

What if a young person isn't coping with the changes?

There are things parents, carers, educators and other young people can do if someone in their life isn't coping with the changes.

- Have a conversation about the social media minimum age, including what they think and feel about its benefits and impacts. There are helpful conversation guides on the [Headspace](#) and [eSafety websites](#).
- Connect with friends and family in other ways, such as in-person or via online games or messaging apps.
- If needed, encourage them to contact a professional service for more support:
- **ehelpspace: 1800 650 890 or ehelpspace.org.au**
 - A phone and online service for young people aged 12 and over and family seeking support to help a young person (aged 12–25). Available 3pm – 10pm every day.

- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.org.au**

- Free and confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for 5–25 year olds. You can also join [My Circle](#), a private, safe and confidential social platform for 12–25 year olds across Australia, run by Kids Helpline.

- **ReachOut: 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 yarn.org.au**

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

Where can I get more information?

The social media age restrictions hub on the [eSafety website](#) has the latest information about the social media minimum age.


You can also read more FAQs on the [eSafety website](#).

Social media

You can share a social media post to promote awareness of the social media minimum age law and direct your networks to the [eSafety website](#) for information, resources and tips.

Choose the most appropriate social copy for your audience. You're welcome to edit the copy to suit your channel.


Parent/carer focused

 Australians under 16 are no longer allowed to sign up or keep social media accounts.

The new law delays their access to the most harmful parts of social media (👋 hello, predatory algorithms) and gives young people extra time to develop real world connections and digital literacy skills. Talk to your kids about the changes and encourage them to stay connected with friends in other ways, such as using messenger apps (like WhatsApp or Messenger), online gaming, or catching up in person. Visit www.eSafety.gov.au for more information.

@eSafetyOffice

Educator focused

 Australians under 16 are no longer allowed to sign up or keep social media accounts.

While the new law delays their access to the most harmful parts of social media (👋 hello, predatory algorithms), it doesn't stop their learning. In fact, you can still use services like YouTube for education in the classroom. This is because the law stops under 16s from having an account on platforms, not from watching content in a logged-out state.

Visit www.eSafety.gov.au/educators for more information and sign up to get eSafety's educator news delivered to your inbox.

@eSafetyOffice



**Download social tiles
and social copy**

Newsletter / Web copy

This article contains key details about the social media minimum age law. Feel free to use it in your next newsletter, or upload it to your website's news section.

We've also provided a thumbnail for you to use.

A new age for social media

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.

The new law started on 10 December 2025 and requires social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from having a social media account.

Delaying access to social media accounts until the age of 16 protects young Australians at a critical stage of their development, giving them 3 more years to build real world connections and online resilience.

It reduces access for young people to the harmful parts of social media, such as **algorithms** that recommend content, **infinite scrolling**, and other features designed to keep users **continuously engaged**. The eSafety Commissioner considers **Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X** and **YouTube** to be age-restricted social media platforms. Check [eSafety's website](#) for the most up to date advice on age-restricted platforms.

But the law doesn't stop young people from staying in touch with friends online, playing games, learning new things and being entertained. In fact, they can still access 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.

This delay to social media will give young Australians more time to develop real world connections and digital literacy skills before they join global platforms.

For more information and tips for helping under 16s adjust to the change, visit the [eSafety website](#).



Download template
and thumbnails

PowerPoint template

We've developed a PowerPoint slide deck with key details about the social media minimum age law, which started on 10 December 2025. Feel free to use it when presenting to your networks or community.

You may like to present specifically on the social media minimum age law or insert the slides into a broader presentation.



[Download PowerPoint](#)

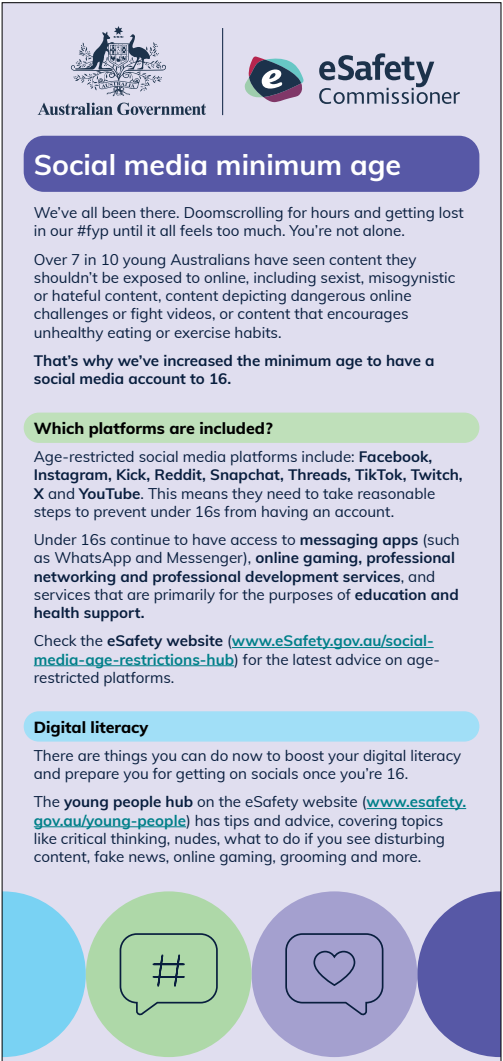
Printable resources

We’ve produced a range of hard copy products that you can download, print and distribute to your networks.

You can choose from a print-ready file for professional printing, or a PDF for printing in your office / home.

Products include:

- Fact sheet
- Poster
- Flyer for under 16s



Download products

Digital literacy resources

The safety and wellbeing of young people is a top priority for the Australian Government, which is why we've introduced measures to support online safety including our world-leading social media minimum age, and to deal with issues like cyberbullying and illegal and offensive content.

There are a range of resources available to help boost the digital literacy of our young people. This will help equip them to deal with or try to prevent some of the more negative aspects of being online, when they're ready to be on these platforms.

Below are some useful links to information, but you can also visit www.esafety.gov.au to find out more.

Young people

- [Critical thinking: Deciding what to trust in a world of AI, scams and fake news](#)
- [I'm being pressured to send nudes](#)
- [Disturbing content](#) – what it is and what to do when you come across it
- [Fake news](#) – how to question what we read and watch, before trusting that it's right
- [Online gaming](#) – tips to protect yourself and help everyone have positive and safe experiences
- Browse eSafety's [young people hub](#) for more topics and resources.

Parents

- [Setting up parental controls](#)
- Sign up for free live [eSafety webinars](#) for parents and carers on a range of topics, including:
 - Social media age restrictions explained
 - Influencers, ideology and impact: How algorithms influence and reinforce harmful beliefs
 - Recognising online coercive control in young people's lives
 - Supporting healthy tech use as your child transitions into secondary school
 - Understanding and using parental controls to help protect your child online
- [Downloadable parent resources](#) to help you start the chat about online safety issues and strategies with your child. Resources include videos, books, information sheets, audio files and activities.
- Read eSafety's family book: [Let's talk about being safe online](#). Designed to help children from age 7 explore online safety through simple, open conversations.
- Subscribe to eSafety's [parent newsletter](#).
- Browse [eSafety's parents' hub](#) for more topics and resources.

Digital literacy resources (cont.)


The Alannah and Madeline Foundation has a range of information and resources to help support families to build digital skills. Check out [DigiTalk](#), their online safety hub for parents, which you can filter by age.

Educators


Browse [eSafety's educator hub](#) for classroom resources to help young people stay safer online. You can also [subscribe](#) to eSafety's education newsletter.

Sign up to the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's [eSmart program](#). The program provides resources aligned with the national curriculum to help keep students safe, smart and responsible in a digital world. Learning tools are tailored for specific age groups throughout primary and high school, with lesson plans crafted by learning designers, professional educators and through co-design with children and young people.


Digital literacy resources – Educators



eSmart gives educators lesson plans aligned with the national curriculum to help keep students safe, smart and responsible in a digital world. Lesson plans are crafted by learning designers, professional educators and through co-design with children and young people.




Scan the QR code to explore the program and sign up.



Check out **eSafety's Educators hub** for resources to help young people stay safer online. You can also subscribe to eSafety's education newsletter.

Turn me over for parent and young people resources



INFR47070

Download and share our digital literacy postcard

Resources and support

For young people



[eSafety](#)

Includes FAQs, quick facts, 8-step action plan, health and wellbeing advice.



[Headspace](#)

Includes tips for navigating the change, other ways to connect, such as Headspace's Online Communities group chat, and how to get online and phone support through Headspace.



[Kids Helpline](#)

Includes tips to help young people cope with the change to social media, mental health hacks, ideas for other activities to get involved in, and a [guide for teens: the good, the bad and your brain](#)



[Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)

Includes a fact sheet, explainer about age assurance and how young people can best protect their personal information online.

For parents, carers and educators



[eSafety](#)

Includes FAQs, quick facts, conversation prompts and webinar registrations.



[Headspace](#)

Includes tips for navigating the change, 7 tips for starting a supportive conversation and how to get online and phone support through Headspace.



[Parentline](#)

Includes a guide for parents on the social media minimum age, an [article](#) about supporting teens with the social media ban, and how to contact Parentline for confidential phone and webchat counselling.



[Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#)

Includes a fact sheet for parents, explainer about age assurance and tips for having a conversation with young people about online privacy.

Support

If you, or a young person in your life, needs to talk to someone about how to deal with the change, contact:

- **ehedspace: 1800 650 890 or ehedspace.org.au**
 - A phone and online service for young people aged 12 and over and family seeking support to help a young person (aged 12–25). Available 3pm – 10pm every day.
- **Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au**
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 - You can also join [My Circle](#), a private, safe and confidential social platform for 12–25 year olds across Australia, run by Kids Helpline.
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- **13YARN: 13 92 76 or 13yarn.org.au**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support line.
 - Available 24/7 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Thank you

For more information, visit [eSafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au)