

How to talk about social media age restrictions with under-16s

Conversation starters quick guide

Before you begin

- Prepare yourself! Our frequently asked questions [FAQs](#) and [Get-ready guide and action plan](#) for parents and carers are a good place to start.
- Choose a place (and time) that's relaxed and free from distractions.
- Check in with yourself. Ask: 'Am I prepared for a tricky or emotional conversation?'

During the conversation

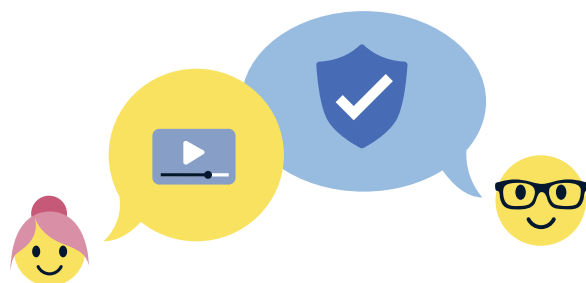
- Ask open-ended questions and listen carefully to what your child has to say.
- Gently prompt them if they need help expressing themselves, and encourage them to ask their own questions.
- It's OK not to have all the answers. You can even search the answers together – starting with our social media age restrictions [FAQs and resources for young people](#).
- If they're not ready to keep talking, respect their space and look for another time to chat.

After the conversation

- Reflect on what you learned and may need more exploration.
- If questions were raised that you couldn't answer, set aside time to [find out more](#).
- Follow up. Lots of little chats are often more effective than one big conversation and will help you both adjust to the changes.

Let them know how to find help

- Remind them they can always come to you if something goes wrong online.
- Help them map out a support network of trusted adults they can turn to for support.
- Reassure them there are no penalties for under-16s using age-restricted social media platforms, or for their parents or carers.
- Check out our [I need help: Something has happened online](#) for young people.

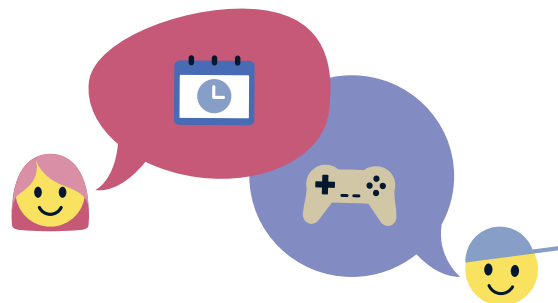


Conversation starters

Choose to follow these in order, or mix them up.
You know your child best – use that knowledge to guide the conversation in a way that works for your family.

Ask about their social media experiences

- ‘What are your favourite apps right now?’
- ‘How do you feel when using those apps?’
- ‘What do you spend most of your online time doing?’



Ask what they've heard about the social media restrictions

- ‘What have you heard about the harms of social media?’
- ‘Do you know if the apps you use are affected by the social media age restrictions?’
- ‘What do you know about why the law changed?’

Ask how they feel about the change

- ‘Researchers say the change will help protect young people from things that can be overwhelming or harmful. What do you think it's about?’
- ‘I know this change might feel unfair – and that's completely understandable. But there's been a lot of concern about how social media can affect young people, especially the pressure to keep up. What do you think?’

Discuss slowly reducing social media use and find alternatives together

- ‘How would you feel about us trying to use [app/platform] a little less each day, and seeing how it goes together?’
- ‘Let's work out a way together to stay in touch with your friends or groups you care about.’

Show you can make changes too

- ‘I'm trying to change how I'm using social media too. It'll help me feel happier and more balanced.’
- ‘It's not easy, but I'm trying to remember to take breaks and set limits.’
- ‘Sometimes I see things online that make me upset, and I talk to a friend or take a break. What would you do?’



No matter how old your child is, let them know if they have a harmful experience they can **reach out for support** – even if it happens on an age-restricted platform and they're under 16.