

Online safety for grandparents and carers





Scan this QR code if you'd like to view this book on a digital device.

This resource has been developed by the eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) as part of the Be Connected initiative. Be Connected aims to increase the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians.

eSafety is Australia's independent regulator for online safety. eSafety educates Australians about online safety risks and helps to remove harmful online content such as cyberbullying of children and young people, adult cyber abuse, 'revenge porn' or image-based abuse, and illegal and restricted content. Visit [eSafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au) to find out more on how to stay safe online and report online abuse.



Be Connected
Every Australian online.

beconnected.esafety.gov.au

Grandparents and carers have a special bond with the children in their lives

One of the great things about being a grandparent is that you get to experience the joy of playing with and loving your grandchildren without being responsible for them in the same way their parents are. But you also have an important role to play when it comes to online safety.

Your grandchildren have never known a world without screens. Just as you would keep them safe in the playground, it's important to keep them safe when they are online too. This guide is designed to help you protect the online safety of your grandchildren while they are in your care.

Becoming more involved in the online world your grandchildren inhabit may surprise you. Just as they turn to you for guidance, you may also find that they have plenty to teach you.

Getting involved and helping to keep your grandchildren safer online may also bring you closer together than ever.

Julie Inman Grant
eSafety Commissioner





Contents

Children are online	05	Online gaming and social media	36
Stay safer online	06	Games, apps and platforms	37
Set up for safety	07	Online gaming	38
Settings and filters	08	Tips to create safer gaming	39
Talk about what you do	09	In-app purchasing	41
Spend time online together	11	Social media use	42
Assess readiness	12	Tips for 16+ social media use	43
Model good habits	13	Help and support	44
Encourage help seeking	15	Children and teens	45
Key issues	16	Parents and carers	46
Tips for managing screen time	17	Get help with technology	47
Protecting your digital footprints	18	Supporting others	48
Digital footprint protection tips	19	Staying safer online	48
Fake news	21		
Guide to spotting fake content	22		
Cyberbullying	25		
Signs of cyberbullying	26		
What can I do?	27		
Image-based abuse	30		
Unwanted contact and grooming	32		
How to report to eSafety	33		
Protect children from online risks	35		



Children are online

From an early age children are tapping and swiping touch screens, choosing programs to watch on streaming services, video calling family and friends, playing games, and sharing photos and videos. As they grow older, much of their social life and many of their opportunities to learn and explore will be online.

Even if you don't consider yourself a tech expert, you can still play an active part in helping your grandchild build good online habits. Talking with your grandchild about online safety can help them to have safer online experiences. Explore beconnected.eSafety.gov.au/how-to-keep-your-grandkids-safe-online

This guide provides key advice about online safety issues that can affect children and young people. It includes a range of practical tips about things to watch out for as well as an outline of popular games, apps and platforms such as social media.

You will also find a list of important services and resources to support your grandchild with online safety and improve your own digital skills – whether you're just starting out online or you're a more advanced user.



Stay safer online



Set up for safety

Set up your devices with strong passwords that only you know, so your grandchild can't access them without your knowledge. Use a passphrase that is made up of four or more random words, making it longer and stronger than a standard password.

If your phone or tablet uses fingerprint or face authentication, only set this up for yourself. It's important that you control how your device is used, including what can be downloaded and seen.

Ensure your grandchild only uses their device in communal areas of your home and, if possible, doesn't use headphones. It makes it easier to keep track of their online activities.

Settings and filters

Before children begin to explore online, it's also a good idea to activate safety features such as parental controls and safe search filters on the devices they use. This is important for phones, tablets, gaming consoles, smart TVs and computers that your grandchild may use.

Parental controls are software tools that can help keep children and young people safer online by preventing access to harmful content, managing screen time and limiting who they communicate with. To be most effective, parental controls need to be set up on all devices children access, including those of friends and other family members. They should be reviewed and updated regularly.

You can activate 'SafeSearch' filters on search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo, to protect your grandchild from seeing inappropriate material like pornography. You can also help or guide younger children to explore child-friendly search engines like Google SafeSearch (safesearchkids.com) and Kiddle (kiddle.co).

Talk about what you do

The best way to support the safety of your grandchild online is to have ongoing conversations. If they know you care and want to talk, they are more likely to come to you for help if they have a bad experience online.

This includes talking with your grandchild about the controls and filters you're using so that they understand why.

Remember, no parental control or safe search filter is 100% effective. They are best used along with other online safety strategies such as supervision. Helping your grandchild to build good online safety habits is just as important.

Visit the eSafety website for more information on:

- Setting up devices safely: [eSafety.gov.au/parental-controls](https://esafety.gov.au/parental-controls)
- Developing your grandchild's online safety skills: [eSafety.gov.au/parents-good-habits](https://esafety.gov.au/parents-good-habits)
- Safety settings for specific apps, games and platforms: [eSafety.gov.au/esafety-guide](https://esafety.gov.au/esafety-guide)



Spend time online together

It's important to remain aware of how your grandchild spends their time online so you can be there to help them have safer online experiences.

Join your grandchild online to explore what they are engaging with, and encourage them to think critically and question what they are seeing. Sit with them and ask if they'd like to watch their favourite program or play a game with you. Be curious and ask what they enjoy or dislike and why. Share your own thoughts too, creating space for open conversations and mutual understanding.

For younger children, try adding variety to their time online by following their interests and choosing quality content together. While 'quality' can mean different things to different people, look for apps, games, and shows that foster values like friendship and respect, offer learning opportunities, and inspire creativity and exploration.

Assess readiness

Together with your grandchild's parents and other carers, decide how closely you need to be involved – which activities will be explored together, supervised, or done independently based on your grandchild's age, readiness and individual needs.

- For younger children, all new apps, games, and content should be explored together. Sit with them to do this. As they grow more familiar, you can move to supervising activities - where they take the lead while you stay nearby and chat about what they are doing.
- At the 'explore together' and 'supervise' stages, help children build the habit of asking permission before accessing new content or communicating online.
- Once a game or app is well known, it may be suitable for independent use – with you still close at hand.

Older children and teens may already engage independently, but it is still important to stay informed, checking in regularly and having open conversations about staying safe online.

Model good habits

Children learn by watching how we use our phones and devices, so it's important for grandparents and carers to model healthy digital habits. What we do online shapes how our grandchildren relate to the digital world. Creating device-free times and zones in the home, such as during meals or at bedtime and in the bedroom, can encourage more meaningful interactions. Talk with your grandchild about when to put devices away and involve them in setting these boundaries.

Learn more about staying safe online:
[eSafety.gov.au/parents/resources](https://esafety.gov.au/parents/resources)



Encourage help seeking

We all need help, but sometimes it can be hard to ask for it. Let your grandchild know they can come to you, their parents and carers or other trusted adults when they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable, unsure or scared. Encourage them to ask for help if they accidentally press something they shouldn't have and reassure them that they will not get into trouble. It's a good idea to have a coordinated approach to online safety, so discuss what you're doing with others who are caring for them.

Teach your grandchild to ask for help when things happen.

- They see something upsetting online.
- They are contacted online by someone who they don't know in person.
- Someone is pressuring them to do something they don't want to do.
- An offer to buy something comes up while using an app.
- A pop-up appears on the screen
(this may download malware if it is clicked).

Visit our website for more information on online safety basics:
[eSafety.gov.au/parents-safety-basics](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-safety-basics)

Key issues



Tips for managing screen time

How much time should children spend online? There is no magic figure.

Time online depends on a range of factors like age, maturity level and what they are doing online (such as schoolwork). The most important thing is that online time doesn't interfere with other activities like spending time with family and friends and in other creative and active ways.

Set screen time limits together: Talk with your grandchild about how long they can use a screen before moving to another activity. This helps them understand boundaries and makes it easier to stop when time is up.

Use tools to support limits: Timers or screen time monitors that block access can help reinforce the limits you've agreed on.

Establish device-free moments: Agree on times when devices should be put away, such as during meals or before bed. Aim to turn off screens at least an hour before bedtime to support better sleep. Where possible, avoid limiting online time as a punishment, as this can make it seem more desirable to children.

Visit eSafety for more information on managing time online:

[eSafety.gov.au/parents-time-online](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-time-online)

Protecting your digital footprints

As a grandparent or carer, it's important to be conscious about what you share online about yourself and your grandchild.

Once shared, content can be difficult to remove, so it becomes part of your 'digital footprint'. It can quickly spread beyond its intended audience, and images, videos, or words may be misinterpreted or altered. This can be especially problematic if the content was only meant for close family and friends.

It's also important to have a conversation with your grandchild about what you want to share. Taking what they think into consideration helps them build their voice and confidence and helps them develop good habits about seeking permission.

Digital footprint protection tips

Adjust privacy settings. Change your social media profiles to private so only friends can see your posts. Encourage grandchildren over 16 who can have access to social media to keep their accounts private.

Protect personal information. Avoid sharing photos or videos that contain personal information about yourself or your grandchild. Personal information includes full names, dates of birth, addresses, contact information, and school names or landmarks that could identify your location. Details like this could be used by hackers or those seeking to harm children.

Think carefully before you share, like, follow, or comment online. Ask yourself if you would be comfortable with that content appearing in a search linked to you or your grandchild. Encourage your grandchild to pause and consider how their actions might be seen by others, including future friends, employers or colleagues.

Visit eSafety for more information on protecting your grandchild's privacy: [eSafety.gov.au/parents-child-privacy](https://esafety.gov.au/parents-child-privacy)



Fake news

Fake news is false or misleading information that can look like a real news report. It may be designed to influence opinions or behaviours or simply created as a joke. While fake news has always existed, social media allows it to spread quickly and widely.

Some fake stories are clearly absurd, while others appear credible but contain false claims, misleading images or videos with AI generated content, or sensational headlines meant to attract clicks. These can be hard to spot and may shape how people think or act.

Use this guide to help you and your grandchild sort fact from fiction. Encourage them to do a little detective work before sharing online, so they don't accidentally spread misinformation.

Guide to spotting fake content

1. Check the publisher and author

Check who published the content: Is it a reputable organisation?

- Check the website domain name or URL. Be cautious of unusual domain names that mimic legitimate news or government sites.
- Check the author or publisher. Look at what else they have published and whether their content consistently pushes a particular viewpoint.

2. Look out for deep fakes

These are extremely realistic images, videos or audio files of a real person doing or saying something that they did not actually do or say.

Have non-judgmental, open and ongoing conversations about online experiences with your grandchild – talk regularly about what's 'real' content and what might be 'fake'.

3. Pay attention to quality

- Check for story or post errors. Excessive spelling mistakes, all caps, or dramatic punctuation can signal unreliable content.
- Confirm the date. Make sure the content is current and not an old story being taken out of context.
- Sort fact from opinion. Check if the content is based on evidence or personal views. Opinion pieces may lack accuracy and balanced perspectives.
- Seek diverse views. Explore a range of content sources to challenge and broaden your understanding.
- Encourage your child to pause and think before sharing any content, especially when emotions are high.

Visit the eSafety website for more information on critical thinking:

[eSafety.gov.au/young-people/critical-thinking](https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/critical-thinking)

You can also read more about echo chambers:

[eSafety.gov.au/young-people/echo-chambers](https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people/echo-chambers)



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when someone uses the internet to be mean to another person, so they feel bad or upset. It can happen on a social media site, game, app, or any other online or electronic service or platform. It can include posts, comments, texts, messages, chats, livestreams, memes, images, videos and emails.

For example, someone might send hurtful messages or share embarrassing photos or videos of a child or young person, spread nasty online gossip about them or create fake accounts in their name. Because a young person's life is closely tied to their online identity and social connections, the impact of cyberbullying can be deeply damaging.

It can be reported to the app or platform where it's happening. If they don't help, eSafety can have serious cyberbullying content removed.

As a grandparent or carer, you can support your grandchild by talking openly about cyberbullying and reassuring them that you are there to help. Encourage them to speak up if something online makes them feel uncomfortable, unsure or unsafe.

Discuss online safety with their parents and work together as a family to develop strategies for dealing with cyberbullying, such as how and when to report it and when to reach out for help from support services.

Visit eSafety for more information on cyberbullying:
[eSafety.gov.au/parents-cyberbullying](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-cyberbullying)

Signs of cyberbullying

Your grandchild may not tell you if they are being bullied online, especially if they fear adult involvement could make things worse or lead to losing access to their devices and the internet.

Signs to watch for include:

- being upset after using the internet or their devices
- appearing sad, lonely, angry, worried or upset more than usual
- feeling or looking sick or tired
- unexpected changes in friendship groups
- not wanting to be around people, even friends
- avoiding school, out of school care, clubs or social activities
- not doing as well as usual at school
- changes in personality, such as being more withdrawn or anxious
- changes in sleep patterns, eating or energy levels
- becoming secretive about their mobile phone use or what they are doing online.

What can I do?

Before you do anything else

If a child is being threatened, or if they indicate a wish to harm themselves, it's important to get help.

Call emergency services on **Triple Zero (000)** immediately if their physical safety is at risk.

Free, confidential counselling and support services like Kids Helpline (Tel: 1800 55 1800) are also standing by to talk.

Visit eSafety for more information on counselling and support services:
[eSafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services](https://www.esafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services)

Speak with them. If your grandchild doesn't raise it with you, let them know you have noticed they are feeling or behaving differently and you would like to help. Reassure them that you won't be angry with them or ban them from their devices.

Listen and be supportive. Encourage them to talk about what's happened, try to remain calm and non-judgemental, and ask them how they feel so they feel heard.

Try to understand the problem. Does it exist in a peer group or is it more widespread? Is it a few remarks here and there? Or is it ongoing and more harmful?

Don't rush to a solution. You, your grandchild and their parents may need time to consider options to address the bullying. Take things one step at a time. Explain when the next step or talk will happen and provide your grandchild with as much information as possible. This can be helpful if they are feeling anxious that things are not happening quickly enough.

Let them know there are ways to deal with cyberbullying. You could show them eSafety's pages about reporting cyberbullying ([eSafety.gov.au/report](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report)), or the ones written specially for ages 5 to 8, ages 8 to 12 or ages 13 to 18 ([eSafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/cyberbullying](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice/cyberbullying)), as a way to start discussing what to do.

Empower your grandchild. Support your grandchild to build their confidence and help-seeking skills by guiding them to make decisions for themselves, once they're aware of the options. Help them to list a safety network of trusted adults that they can talk to if anything goes wrong online and they need help.

Collect evidence in case you need to report it. Help your grandchild to note down the date and time it happened, details of the account used (URL, platform, app), and take screenshots of the content. However, make sure your grandchild doesn't save nude or sexual images or video of anyone under 18, as that is usually illegal.

Report the content to the platform. Help your grandchild and their parents to decide if they would like to report the content. If so, start by reporting it to the site or service – many services, games, apps and websites allow you to report abusive content and request that it is removed.

Report to eSafety. If the cyberbullying is serious and the service or platform does not remove the harmful content, help your grandchild to report it to eSafety: [eSafety.gov.au/report](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report).

Prevent further contact. Help your grandchild block or unfriend the person after evidence is collected. Adjust privacy settings to limit who can see posts.

Seek support. Check in regularly with your grandchildren and their parents. If you notice ongoing concerns, reach out to a counselling or support service.

Visit eSafety for more information on cyberbullying:
[eSafety.gov.au/parents-cyberbullying](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-cyberbullying)

Image-based abuse

Image-based abuse – sometimes called ‘revenge porn’ – is when someone shares, or threatens to share, an intimate image or video of a person without their consent. This includes ‘deepfakes’, which are fake but highly realistic photos, videos or sound files created using AI (artificial intelligence). Children and young people can be victims of image-based abuse.

Image-based abuse is a crime.

If no blackmail is involved, or the image or video is shared, eSafety can help have the content removed and stop the threats.

If blackmail is involved, that’s a type of image-based abuse called sexual extortion (or ‘sextortion’). The blackmailer threatens to share a real or fake nude or sexual image or video of their victim unless they give into demands for money or more intimate content.

Let your grandchildren know that if this ever happens to them there’s help available and they won’t get into trouble - even if they are under 16 and they are on social media.

Visit eSafety for more information on how to report image-based abuse:
[eSafety.gov.au/key-topics/report-image-based-abuse](https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/report-image-based-abuse)

These are the best steps that under-18s can take:

1. Stop all contact with the blackmailer and do not pay them or give them intimate content.
2. Reach out for support by telling a trusted adult who can help deal with the situation. They can also call or chat online with Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.
3. Collect evidence by saving a record of all contact made with the blackmailer, including important details like timing, dates and how they made contact.
4. Report it to Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE) for children 18 years and younger. If your grandchild is over 18 years of age, report it to any platform or service where the blackmailer contacted them. If the intimate image or video is shared, they can report it to eSafety.

Visit eSafety for more information:

[eSafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse/deal-with-sextortion](https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse/deal-with-sextortion)

Unwanted contact and grooming

Online socialising can help children support friendships, but it also comes with risks. Unwanted contact includes any communication that makes your grandchild feel uncomfortable, unsure or unsafe, even if it was welcomed at the start. It can come from strangers, people they have met online or people they know in person (including family members).

The most serious risk is grooming, where abusers usually want to persuade children into talking about sex, sending sexual images or videos, or getting sexual in a live chat or video call.

To help protect your grandchild, help (or ask) them to make their accounts private so only people they know in person and trust can contact them. Encourage them to review their followers or online friends and remove anyone they don't know in person.

Delete requests from strangers: Encourage your grandchild to ignore or delete friend, follow, or game invites from people they do not know.

Report and block: If they receive unwanted contact, help them report and block the person, whether it's a stranger or someone they know.

How to report to eSafety

Knowing what content and behaviours to report (and how to report) is important for anyone using online spaces.

If your grandchild is harmed online you can make a report together, or they can ask you to report on their behalf or report it themselves.

These are the steps to follow.

Collect evidence: This includes the webpage address (URL), user profile names and taking screenshots of what has happened and where. Learn more about how to collect evidence: [eSafety.gov.au/key-issues/how-to/collect-evidence](https://esafety.gov.au/key-issues/how-to/collect-evidence)

Report it:

- **Harmful posts, comments, messages and profiles** should be reported to the online platform or service first – many of these links are listed in The eSafety Guide: [eSafety.gov.au/safety-guide](https://www.esafety.gov.au/safety-guide).
- If the service doesn't help, and the abuse is very serious, report it to eSafety.
- **Sharing or threatening to share an intimate image or video** of a person without their consent is image-based abuse – it can be reported to eSafety immediately unless blackmail is involved. (Understand image-based abuse: [eSafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse](https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse))
 - If the person being blackmailed is under 18, the best way to get help is to report it to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE): accce.gov.au
- **Illegal and restricted online content** (such as material that shows or encourages child sexual abuse, terrorism or other extreme violence) can be reported to eSafety immediately. Report abuse: [eSafety.gov.au/report](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report)

Stop contact: Let your grandchild know they can mute the other account and they can tighten their security settings.

Get support: You can help them find counselling and support:

[eSafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services](https://www.esafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services)

For more information, explore our advice pages for parents and carers:

[eSafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/issues-and-advice)

Protect children from online risks

Stay involved in your grandchild's digital world by keeping up with the sites and apps they use and exploring them together. Build a trusting relationship through calm, open communication so they feel safe coming to you if something doesn't feel right. Teach them to spot signs of inappropriate contact, such as someone asking personal questions too soon, offering gifts, or asking them to keep secrets about a relationship or contact.

Set clear safety guidelines for older children to meet online friends in person. Explain that it's safest to keep online friendships online, but if they want to meet someone, they should check with you or a parent first and be accompanied by a trusted adult.

If something goes wrong, stay calm and supportive, find out what happened, and take action to protect them.

If their safety is at risk, call **Triple Zero (000)** immediately. You can also report abuse or grooming to local police, Crimestoppers, or the Australian Federal Police via the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation website: accce.gov.au. It may be important to seek help from a professional counselling service: [eSafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services](https://www.esafety.gov.au/counselling-support-services)

Visit our website for more information on child grooming:

[eSafety.gov.au/parents-unwanted-contact](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-unwanted-contact)



Online gaming and social media



Games, apps and platforms

Playing games online can be fun and help children socialise with others, but it also comes with risks.

Many games and other platforms include chat or messaging features that allow two-way communication. Without proper privacy settings, children may be contacted by strangers, exposed to inappropriate content, or pressured to share personal information. Check age recommendations for the games or platforms to ensure the content and level of interaction are suitable. Depending on your grandchild's age, consider setting up parental controls.

Help your grandchild stay safe by setting accounts to private, removing unknown contacts, protecting personal details, and learning how to report inappropriate content. You can also support them in managing peer pressure to join games or messaging services before they're ready. Remind them that any age limits are there for their safety.

Online gaming

Online games can be fun for your grandchild, but it's also important to understand what may go wrong and how to keep them safe.

What are the benefits and risks?

Gaming can help your grandchild develop coordination, problem-solving, and multi-tasking skills, as well as build social skills through online interactivity with other players.

However, online gaming also carries risks. Often players can communicate via chat, video or private messages. This can expose children to cyberbullying and unwanted contact including sexual grooming. It can also encourage excessive screen time, use of gambling-like features, or overspending real money on incentives such as tokens and points.

It's important to understand what's unsafe and safer. Encourage your grandchild to play age-appropriate games, use privacy settings, and avoid interacting with strangers. Help them recognise when gaming habits may be affecting their wellbeing and support them in making healthy choices.

Tips to create safer gaming

- **Prepare.** Keep the computer or games console in an open area or ask your grandchild to use their handheld device in communal areas of your home. Use available parental controls and safety features for devices, browsers and apps.
- **Check content.** Games vary in their level of violent or sexual content, and may contain themes, language and images that are unsuitable for your grandchild. Use [Australian Government classification](#) ratings as a guide.
- **Build good habits.** Help your grandchild to protect their personal information by using a screen name that does not reveal their real name. Teach them not to click on links provided by strangers, like 'cheat' programs to help with game play, which can contain viruses or malware.
- **Agree on strategies to help switch off.** Set a limit on the length of time or number of game levels they can play and discuss the consequences if they don't switch off. Use a timer to signal their game time is nearly over.
- **Control in-game or in-app purchasing.** You may be able to disable or limit in-app purchasing, so your grandchild is not able to spend money without your permission. Search for instructions on how to do this on a particular device or use parental controls.

- **Empower your grandchild.** Wherever possible, help them make wise decisions for themselves, instead of telling them what to do. Try to provide them with strategies for dealing with negative online experiences that will protect their safety and build their confidence and resilience.
- **Stay involved.** Talk regularly with your grandchild about their gaming interests and who they play with online. Play alongside them to get a better sense of how they are handling their personal information and who they are communicating with.

Visit our website for more information on online gaming:

[eSafety.gov.au/parents-gaming](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents-gaming)

In-app purchasing

An 'app' (short for software application) is a program used on phones, computers or other digital devices. Some come pre-installed, while others need to be downloaded from an app store. Apps can be free or paid and cover a wide range of uses, from games and messaging services to tools like the MyGov app for accessing government services.

Many apps, including free ones, offer in-app purchases, which let users buy extra features. In gaming apps, players can use them to purchase things such as items to customise an avatar (the character they play as) or loot boxes that generate random rewards, or to remove ads or wait times. These purchases are often linked to a credit card, making it easy to spend without noticing. If your grandchild uses your device, you can disable or limit in-app purchases by using device settings to prevent unsupervised spending.

Read more on in-app purchasing:

[eSafety.gov.au/key-topics/online-tools-and-features/app-purchasing](https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/online-tools-and-features/app-purchasing)



Social media use

Many social media platforms are no longer allowed to let Australians under 16 years old create or keep an account.

The delay provides extra time to talk about online safety and wellbeing with your grandchild, and to help them prepare for the risks and pressures of social media when they turn 16. It's breathing space for them to build digital, social and emotional skills, and to understand the importance of reaching out for help if things go wrong.

If your under 16 has something happen to them and they are on an age restricted social media platform they should still report it and get help. They will not be in trouble. It is up to the social media platform to make sure under 16s do not have accounts. Remember: no matter what apps and platforms your grandchild is using, there are risks. It's important the young people in your life know they can get help if something happens online.

Tips for 16+ social media use

Social media can be a good way for young people who are 16+ to stay in touch with friends, but sometimes it can cause them to compare their lives to others or feel like they need to be constantly connected.

If the young people in your life are starting to worry about the number of 'likes' their photos and updates get, how many people they are 'friends' with, or other pressures from social media, you can help with the following tips.

Social media does not reflect reality. Remind your grandchild to think critically about what they see online. Most posts highlight only the best moments or are staged and filtered. Reassure them that even celebrities curate their content to make life look more exciting than it really is.

Get them to think about who they might follow and unfollow. Encourage them to work out what would make them follow a person, and assess what are the things they like and don't like about their profiles. Talk about how to unfollow accounts that may not align with their interests or make them feel good about themselves.

Turn off notifications and have a phone-free day. If your grandchild is getting caught in an online loop, where they are constantly scrolling through feeds or posting updates, this could be contributing to the pressure they feel. Suggest that they turn off the app and notifications for a while and leave their phone at home sometimes.



Help and support



Children and teens

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline provides free and confidential online and phone counselling to young people aged 5 to 25. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au) or 1800 55 1800

Headspace

Headspace provides free online and telephone support and counselling to young people aged 12–25 and their families and friends. It is available 3pm to 10pm in your local time, 7 days a week. [headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support](https://www.headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support) or 1800 650 890

13YARN

13YARN is run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people providing Crisis Support Workers to yarn to. It has free and confidential services available 24/7 from any mobile or pay phone (Tel: 139276).

Also visit the eSafety website for First Nations online safety information
[eSafety.gov.au/first-nations/helping-kids](https://www.esafety.gov.au/first-nations/helping-kids)

Parents and other carers

24-hour help

Parentline offers counselling, information and a referral service. Opening hours vary by state or territory.

Parentline (QLD and NT) — 1300 30 1300

Parentline (NSW) — 1300 1300 52

Parent Helpline (SA) — 1300 364 100

Parentline (ACT) — 02 6287 3833

Parentline (TAS) — 1300 808 178

Ngala Parenting Line (WA) — 08 9368 9368

parentline.com.au/other-support-services



Get help with technology

Whether you're just starting out on the internet or more experienced, the Be Connected website can help you learn new online skills.

We have free step-by-step online courses to help you get started and build your skills, whether you want to learn how to use social media, set up online banking or get the most out of your device. If you would prefer face-to-face help in a class or community group, community organisations around Australia offer support through the Be Connected Network Partner program.

Visit Be Connected to get help and support that is right for you.
beconnected.esafety.gov.au

Supporting others

Supporting someone to get started online is a rewarding and important experience. By encouraging them to use and access the internet you could help them feel included, improve their enjoyment of life or preserve their independence. Whether you want to help a friend or volunteer to help others in your local community, the Be Connected website has tips, resources and online presentations to help you become a digital mentor.

Visit Be Connected to help others discover new skills.

beconnected.eSafety.gov.au/help-others

Staying safer online

There is so much to enjoy online, from keeping in touch with family and friends through to online shopping, but it's important to be alert to the risks. Be Connected offers free online presentations and resources to help you keep up to date with online safety, protect yourself from scammers and use the internet with confidence.

Visit Be Connected to learn more

beconnected.eSafety.gov.au



Scan this QR code if you'd like to view this book on a digital device.

This resource has been developed by eSafety as part of the Be Connected initiative. Be Connected increases the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians.



Be Connected
Every Australian online.

beconnected.eSafety.gov.au



eSafety
Commissioner

eSafety.gov.au

esafety179.2605