



Social Media Delay

PARENT TOOLKIT

CYBER
SAFETY
PROJECT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource was developed by the Cyber Safety Project to support families in navigating the new under-16 social media legislation in Australia.

Special thanks to the parents, educators, and young people who shared their insights and experiences, helping us shape practical tools that encourage open conversations and resilience.

Information in this toolkit was published on:
19th of November 2025. Stay up-to-date via **eSafety.gov.au**

SOURCES

eSafety Commissioner

Social Media and Age Restrictions
official guidance on the new laws

Australian Government

Online Safety Act 2021

Cyber Safety Project

Parent Guides and Conversation Starters



SOCIAL MEDIA DELAY



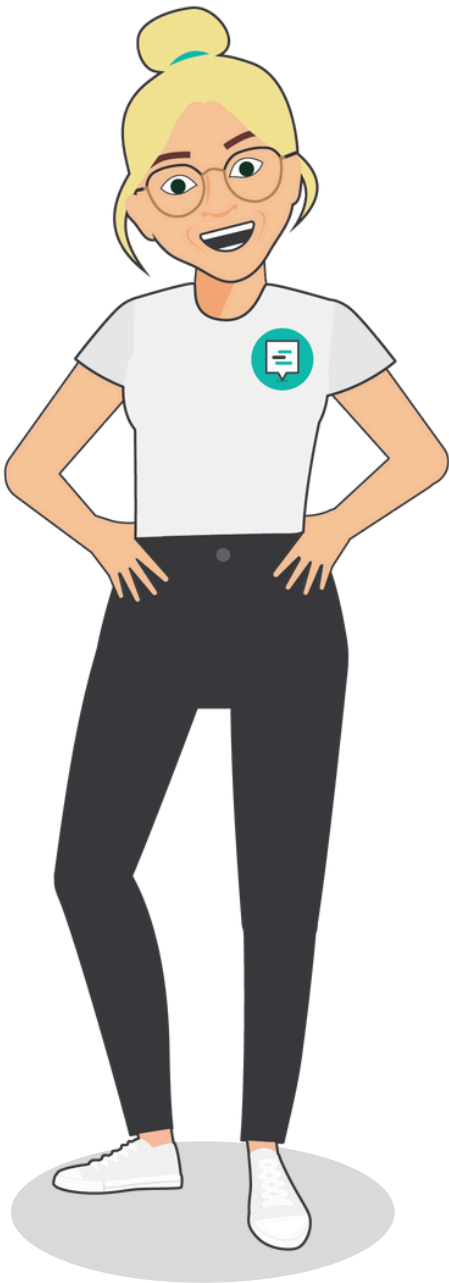
TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 ABOUT THE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES**
- 2 LIST OF RESTRICTED PLATFORMS**
- 3 AGE ASSURANCE TECHNIQUES**
- 4 MYTHS AND FACTS**
- 5 SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD**
- 6 SAVING FAVOURITE MEMORIES**
- 7 LIFE BEYOND SOCIAL MEDIA**
- 8 CONVERSATION STARTERS**
- 9 GETTING HELP**

THE SOCIAL MEDIA DELAY FOR UNDER-16S

“Social media has been part of how kids connect, create and belong. The new rules mean under-16s can’t have accounts, but this is also a chance to build safer, healthier digital habits.”

— Kiah Allen, Cyber Safety Project



Key Points for Parents:

- From **10 December 2025**, children under 16 cannot hold accounts on TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube, X and Reddit in Australia.
- Platforms carry the responsibility. They must take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s from creating or keeping accounts.
- Enforcement is through the eSafety Commissioner. If platforms fail to comply, they can face penalties of up to \$49.5 million per breach.
- The law applies to platforms, not families. Parents and children will not be fined or penalised.
- No mandatory ID checks. Platforms are not required to verify every user with government ID, but they must show they have effective systems in place.

From 10 December 2025, **children under 16 who hold accounts on social media may have their accounts suspended or permanently deleted by the platform.**



Not Yet: Building Safety and Skills First

The Delay is About Protection

Social media can expose children to bullying, scams, exploitation, harmful content and pressure to perform. Delaying access until 16 gives them time to build resilience, independence, and digital skills before stepping into those spaces.

Risks of Workarounds

Using a parent’s account, lying about age, or shifting to unsafe apps still puts kids at risk. Underage accounts may be removed, and safety settings don’t work properly if they’re pretending to be older.

Building Positive Alternatives

Encourage kids to save what matters, set up safe ways to connect with friends, explore digital tools for learning and creativity, and balance screen time with offline hobbies and friendships.



Additional Information:

- Cyber Safety Project – [Simplifying the Social Media Reset](#)
- eSafety Commissioner – [Social Media Age Restrictions Hub](#)
- OAIC – [Online Safety Act - Social Media](#)

IS IT SOCIAL MEDIA?

According to the Legislation, for a service to count as a social media platform with under-16 restrictions, it usually ticks most of these boxes:

- ✓ **It's an online service** that people in Australia can access.
- ✓ **Users can post their own content** (like photos, videos, or comments).
- ✓ **Users can interact with each other** (liking, commenting, messaging, following).
- ✓ A **main purpose** of the service is to let **people connect and socialise online**.
- ✓ It's **not mainly for** something else like **shopping, email, video calls, school platforms, or health services**.

Source: "How to assess if a service is an age-restricted social media platform" via [eSafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au).

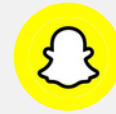
If a platform meets these points, it's likely to be covered by the new law and must block under-16s. Apps listed in this document are accurate at the time of publication (21 November 2025). Stay up-to-date by visiting [eSafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au) for live updates.

RESTRICTED

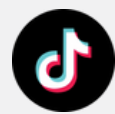
Services that currently meet this criteria:



YouTube



Snapchat



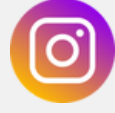
TikTok



Facebook



X



Instagram



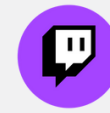
Reddit



Kick



Threads



Reddit

For a live list visit
esafety.gov.au

STILL AVAILABLE

Services still accessible by users under-16:



Messenger



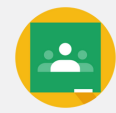
WhatsApp



Discord



YouTube Kids



Google Classroom



GitHub



Pinterest



Steam



Roblox

SO, WILL KIDS BE SAFE NOW?

"The under-16 social media delay is a strong step, but it doesn't make kids instantly safe. Platforms must remove underage accounts, yet risks remain if young people try workarounds or move to less-regulated spaces.

Real safety is built on strong values (responsibility, integrity, strength and empathy) supported by strong laws, ethical platforms, and open family conversations that help guide kids toward healthier digital habits."

— Trent Ray, Cyber Safety Project

HOW WILL SOCIAL MEDIA CHECK AGE?

Each major social media platform, such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, may use a mix of age assurance methods to comply with Australia's under-16 account restrictions. These methods help platforms detect and restrict underage accounts while protecting user privacy. **No Australian will be compelled to use government identification (including Digital ID) to prove their age online**, and platforms must offer reasonable alternatives to users.

METHOD 1: VERIFICATION

You show something official that says “I’m over 16.”

What it means:

You prove your age by showing official documents or trusted information.

How it works:

- Upload a passport, driver's licence, or other government ID.
- It could be a third-party service which checks your age using your bank or mobile provider.
- Some Digital ID Check platforms may ask for a credit card or other adult-only credentials.



METHOD 2: ESTIMATION

You show your face, and the app's AI says, “Looks like you're 16+.”

What it means:

The app uses AI to estimate your age from your face or voice.

How it works:

- You might be asked to take a selfie or short video.
- AI scans your facial features (like bone structure or skin texture) to guess your age.
- Some systems can even estimate age from your voice.



METHOD 3: INFERENCE

The app watches how you use it and makes an educated guess.

What it means:

The app guesses your age based on how you behave online.

How it works:

- Uses patterns to decide if you act more like a teen or an adult.
- Tracks how you type, swipe, scroll, and interact.
- Looks at what content you watch, how fast you move through the app, and what you post.



MYTH VS FACT: HOW TEENS MIGHT TRY TO BYPASS “THE BAN”

Young people are already brainstorming ways to “work around” Australia’s under-16 social media restrictions. Here’s a myth-and-fact guide to separate hype from reality.



MYTH ONE

“Kids will just lie about their birthday.”

Fact: While changing a birthdate is the oldest trick, platforms are adding AI age estimation and behavioural checks to catch underage users. A false birthday alone is unlikely to be enough in the long run.



MYTH TWO

“Facial age checks can’t be fooled.”

Fact: Research shows that inexpensive disguises, masks, or video game character cameras can sometimes mislead facial age estimation tools. While not always reliable, repeated attempts may yield success.



MYTH THREE

“VPNs will let kids bypass everything.”

Fact: A VPN can hide location, but it doesn’t hide age. Platforms still run age checks, so a VPN alone won’t guarantee access. It may help with region-based restrictions, but not with age-based bans.



MYTH FOUR

Adding “This is a parent run account” in the account bio.

Fact: Some teens are already putting “managed by parents” in their bios. Platforms are expected to tighten checks and may require proof of parental management, not just a claim.



MYTH FIVE

“Everyone will just switch to secret or alternative apps.”

Fact: Teens may migrate to lesser-known apps or messaging platforms that aren’t covered by the ban. But these apps may be less safe and lack moderation, which could increase risks rather than reduce them.



MYTH SIX

“Parental consent makes it okay.”

Fact: Unlike some other online rules, the Australian legislation does not allow parental consent as an exception. Even if a parent says it’s fine, the platform must block the child from having or using the account.

PROACTIVELY SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THROUGH THE SOCIAL MEDIA DELAY

ACKNOWLEDGE THE SENSE OF LOSS

For many young people, social media is more than entertainment, it's how they connect, belong, and express themselves. Losing access may feel like losing part of their social world. Parents can help by naming and validating those feelings: "I know this feels unfair and hard, and it's okay to feel upset." Treating it as a genuine loss helps children feel understood rather than dismissed.

PLAN FOR THE "HARD MOMENTS"

There will be times when the loss feels sharper, like when friends are talking about something they saw online. Parents can prepare by asking:

- "What could you do if you feel left out?"
- "Who could you talk to when it feels tough?"
- "What's a quick activity that helps you feel better?"

Having a toolkit of coping strategies ready makes those moments easier to manage.

WORK OUT HEALTHY SUBSTITUTES TOGETHER

Instead of focusing only on what's being taken away, create a plan for what can replace it. This might include:

- Safer platforms designed for younger users
- Offline activities that meet the same needs (e.g. group chats becoming in-person hangouts, creative expression through art, sport, or music)
- Family or community projects that give a sense of belonging
- The key is to co-design the plan with your child, so they feel ownership and choice.

BUILD RESILIENCE FOR THE FUTURE

This isn't just about restriction, it's a chance to help kids develop digital wellbeing, spot unhealthy patterns, think critically about content, and see balanced tech use modelled at home. Treated as a growth period, the delay builds confidence and independence for when they return to social media at 16.

SAVE YOUR PHOTOS, VIDEOS & CONTACTS

Will my account and all my content be deleted?

Meta (Instagram, Facebook & Threads) say you'll be able to archive your accounts and re-access them when you are 16.

TikTok Australia said that the platform will give users identified as U16 a choice to delete or archive their account.



Instagram

Save Your Photos & Videos

Go to your profile. Tap a **video** > tap the **arrow icon** ➔ > swipe to find **"Save video"**.

Download Your Data

Request your 'information download'. This includes information about what you shared or related to your account. Go to **Settings & Activity** > in search type 🔍 **"Download"** > **Download your information** > **Create Export** and follow steps.

YouTube

Save Your Videos

Go to your profile > select **YouTube Studio** > **Content** > Select **one video at a time** > **More Actions** > **Download**.

Download Your Data

Go to **takeout.google.com** > **sign in** using your YouTube account credentials > scroll down and select > **YouTube and YouTube Music** > **Next** > Choose a **method + file type** > **Create Export**.

TikTok

Save Your Videos

Go to your profile. Tap a **video** > tap the **arrow icon** ➔ > swipe to find **"Save video"**.

Download Your Data

Request your archive. This includes your followers, who you follow, comments, messages etc. Go to **Settings & Privacy** > **Account** > **Download your data**.

Snapchat

Save Your Memories

> Go to **Memories** (swipe up on the camera screen) > **Press and hold the Snap** or video.

Download Your Data

Navigate to > **Profile** (tap your Bitmoji) **Settings** > Scroll to **Memories** > **Check Backup Progress** is complete. Go back to **Settings** > **My privacy & data** > **My Data** > **Submit Request** > You'll receive an email to download your full archive including Memories.

Facebook

Save Your Photos & Videos

Go to your profile. Tap once to open video in full view mode > **three dots** > choose **"Download video"**.

Download Your Data

Navigate to > **Settings & Privacy** > **Settings** > **Meta Accounts Centre** > **See more in Accounts Centre** > Scroll down to **Your information and permissions** > **Export your information** > verify yourself and follow steps.

LIFE BEYOND SOCIALS

ACTIVITY:

Real Talk

“What feels hardest about losing socials?”

Challenge: When I can't, I can.... Write it down, then flip it - what's one way you could handle that moment? (e.g. “If I feel left out, I'll message a friend directly”).

Connect Mode ☐

“How can you keep your friendships strong without TikTok or SnapChat?”

Challenge: Make a “connection map” of your closest mates and note at least one safe way to reach each (gaming handle, text, email, phone).

In your notes or contacts in your phone: Have you and your IRL friends share your gaming handles, phone numbers or email address? Add them to your contact info.

Explore Mode ☐

“When socials are off-limits, what's something new you'd want to try just for yourself?”

Challenge:

- Pick one thing you've always been curious about (could be a sport, a skill, a place, or even a random 'how does that work?' question).
- Jot it down or make a quick mood board/playlist that captures the vibe and consider exploring this new curiosity when you'd typically be scrolling on the socials.

Create Mode ☐

“If you couldn't post online, how would you still safely share your creativity?”

Challenge: Think of three apps you have on your device you can still use to create (music, art, memes, videos). How can you share videos that are saved privately?

Safely Share Privately: Use folders in your Google Drive, OneDrive or Dropbox to share what you have created with your friends.

SCENARIOS TO SPARK THE CHAT



Using scenarios is a simple way to practise tricky conversations with your child in a safe, low-pressure setting. Open-ended questions keep the chat flowing and help your child feel heard, making it a valuable activity to build trust and connection.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOMO

MENTAL HEALTH

SAFETY

PEER PRESSURE



Kai came home from school feeling frustrated. “Everyone else is still on TikTok,” they said. “Why can’t I?” Their parent paused, then gently reminded Kai that the decision to delay social media wasn’t about control, it was about care. They talked about how social media can make people feel anxious, left out, or like they’re not good enough, and how waiting can help build confidence and emotional strength.

Together, they explored other ways Kai could stay connected with friends - like group chats, shared playlists, and offline hangouts. Kai didn’t feel completely better, but understood the delay is there to protect young people’s wellbeing and help them grow stronger before stepping into social media.

Chat about:

- What makes you feel left out when others are on social media?
- What do you think people post, and why?
- What are some ways we can stay connected without social media?
- What are the upsides of taking a break or waiting until you’re ready?

THE SECRET ACCOUNT

HONESTY

TRUST

SAFETY

HELP SEEKING

Riley had been hearing about ways to get around the social media delay. Everyone at school seemed to have ideas to bypass things and Riley didn’t want to be the only one missing out. So, they created a secret account using a fake birthday.

At first, it felt exciting. But soon, Riley was getting messages from strangers, seeing posts that made them feel anxious, and feeling pressure to keep up. It was harder than expected — and Riley didn’t know how to talk about it.

When Riley finally opened up, their parent didn’t get angry. They listened. They explained that the delay was about protecting Riley’s wellbeing, not punishing them. Together, they deleted the account and talked about what being “ready” for social media really means - emotionally, socially, and safely.

Chat about:

- What made Riley feel unsafe online?
- Why do you think Riley was scared to speak up?
- What does it mean to be honest, even when you’re worried?
- How can we work together to keep you safe online?



HELP IS NEVER FAR AWAY

Research shows that only 1 in 3 young people would turn to a parent if something went wrong online. With the new under-16 social media laws starting on 10 December 2025, this matters more than ever. Some kids may feel left out, frustrated, or even anxious about losing access to platforms their friends still use.

That's why it's so important to keep conversations open. By talking about the changes, exploring safe alternatives, and reminding your child that the delay is about care, not control, you help them feel supported and confident.

If your teen is struggling, you don't have to manage it alone. Trusted places for support include:

 **KIDS HELPLINE**



24/7 free, confidential counselling for young people and parents.

[KIDSHELPLINE.COM.AU](https://kids helpline.com.au)

 **ESAFETY**



clear guidance on the new laws and digital safety & wellbeing tips.

[ESAFETY.GOV.AU](https://esafety.gov.au)

 **HEADSPACE**



Resources and support for mental health and online challenges.

[HEADSPACE.ORG.AU](https://headspace.org.au)

PARENT LINES

There are different parent line services in each State or Territory:



Parent Helpline SA

1300 364 100

Ngala Parenting Line WA

(08) 9368 9368 or 1800 111 546

Parent Line ACT

(02) 6287 3833

Parent Line TAS

1300 808 178

Parent Line QLD & NT

1300 30 1300

VIC

Visit [*Parent Support in Victoria*](#) to find a service that matches your needs.

Parent Line NSW

1300 1300 52



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