



UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES *for parents*

The upcoming changes to social media laws may significantly affect your child, especially if they rely on online communication to stay connected with friends.

For some young people, online friendships are their only friendships. Losing access can create real fear, loneliness, and a sense of being cut off from their social world. Understanding these changes will help you support your child through what may feel like a significant disruption.

WHAT ARE THE *changes?*

From 10 December 2025, many social media platforms must take reasonable steps to prevent users under 16 from holding an account. Non-compliant platforms may face penalties.

Age-restricted platforms include:

Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Switch, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube.

Platforms not age-restricted include:

Discord, GitHub, Google Classroom, LEGO Play, Messenger, Pinterest, Roblox, Steam, WhatsApp and YouTube Kids.

Keep up to date with the current list at

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions/which-platforms-are-age-restricted>

WHY IS IT *important?*

To reduce exposure to harmful content and promote safer online environments for under-16s. To encourage a healthy balance between technology use, in-person relationships, and real-world experiences.

To limit harmful or manipulative practices targeting vulnerable young people.

HOW TO SUPPORT *your child*

Learn what platforms your child uses and why those connections matter.

For many teenagers, online platforms are where their closest friendships exist, especially if they struggle socially, feel different from their peers, live remotely, or have limited face-to-face opportunities. Losing access may feel like they are losing their support network.

Talk early and often.

Explain why the rules exist but focus on listening to how they feel about possibly losing contact with friends. Let them speak openly about fears of being left out or disconnected.

Acknowledge both sides.

There are positive benefits, such as reduced exposure to harmful content, less pressure to compare themselves with others, and fewer risks around body image or self-harm triggers. But there are also real emotional costs, and your child may feel isolated or excluded if friends stay connected on platforms they can no longer access.

Understand unintended consequences.

Some teenagers may feel they have nowhere else to belong. Others may be tempted to use VPNs or their older siblings' accounts to stay connected. These are signs of emotional need, not rebellion.

Create clear but compassionate family rules.

Talk about screen-time, platforms allowed, privacy settings, and age expectations, but frame these in a way that acknowledges your child's feelings.

Encourage digital literacy and resilience.

Discuss cyberbullying, peer pressure, body image, fake news, and the importance of taking breaks. Help them build confidence beyond the online world.

Find safe alternatives to stay connected.

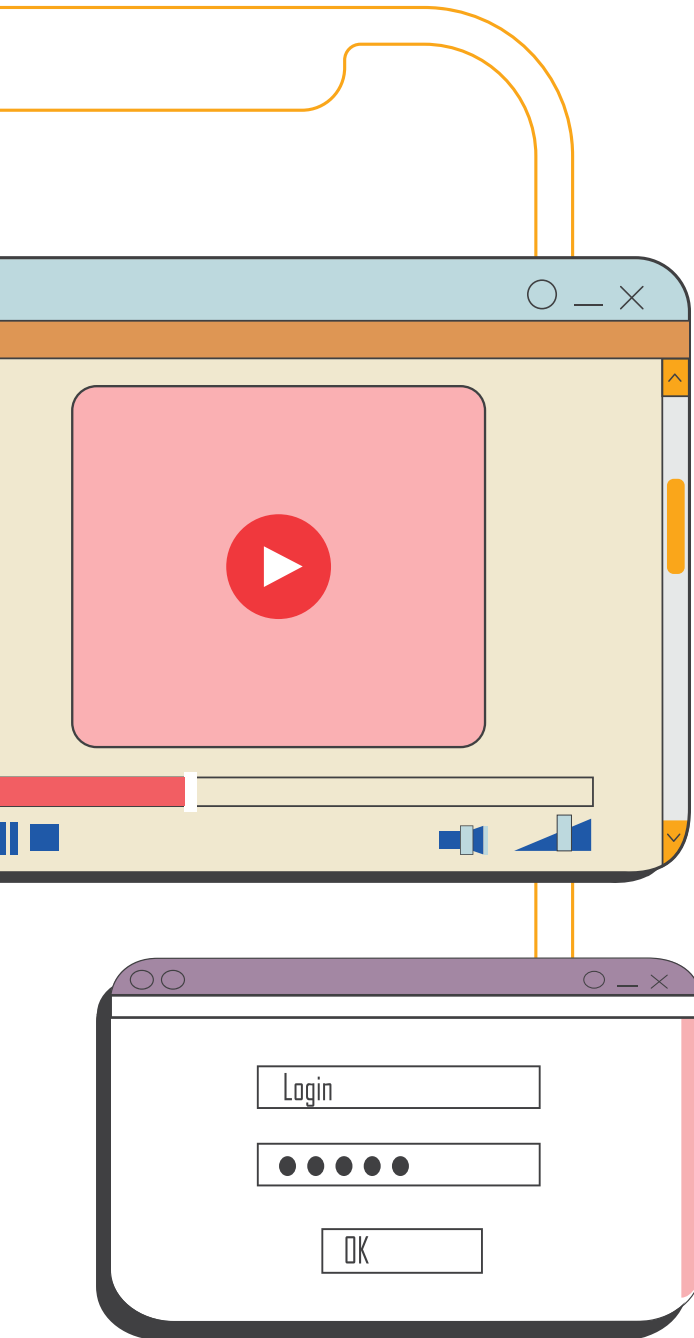
Look for age-appropriate, moderated online spaces that allow your child to maintain friendships until they are old enough for mainstream platforms.

Remember: they will still need support.

Even if platforms change, the emotional challenges of adolescence don't disappear. They still need guidance, stability, and reassurance.

Check in regularly.

Ask how their friendships are going. Are they feeling more isolated? Are they still able to connect with people who matter to them? These check-ins help them feel seen and supported.



CONVERSATION *starters*

- How are you feeling about the social media changes?
- Who do you talk to online, and what might change if you lose access?
- What do you think you'll miss the most?
- Are there parts of social media you're not sad to step back from?
- Do you think the changes will work? Why or why not?
- Which platforms do you think should or shouldn't be part of the ban?

TIPS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE *conversations*

- Avoid rigid statements like "It's for your own good."
- Don't minimise their feelings; being cut off from friends can feel devastating.
- Be curious about what they value in online spaces.
- Take their concerns seriously, especially if they fear being left behind socially.
- If they are younger than peers, acknowledge the fear of missing out and explore ways to stay connected.

Helpful websites

eSafety Commission: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics>

Headspace: <https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/mental-ill-health/>

Website: uen.gg

 [@uen.gg](https://www.instagram.com/uen.gg)

