



UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA CHANGES FOR LEADERS OF *young people*

The upcoming social media changes will impact the young people you lead, especially those whose friendships and support networks exist mainly online. Many teenagers rely on digital communication to stay connected, feel included, and build relationships.

When access changes, it can feel confusing, isolating, or even frightening. Your guidance will play a vital role in keeping young people supported and heard.

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. Platforms that don't comply may face significant penalties.

Age-restricted platforms include:

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

Platforms not restricted include:

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

Keep up to date with which platforms are impacted 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 create safer online environments for under-16s. To encourage healthier patterns of technology use and more face-to-face connections.

To limit practices that may exploit vulnerable young people.



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT *young people?*

For many young people, especially those who struggle socially, live in remote areas, or feel like outsiders, their online friends are their closest community. Losing access can feel like losing their entire social world. Here's how you can help:

Talk early and often.

Explain why changes are happening, but also ask how they feel about possibly losing access to platforms where they talk with friends. Be patient and listen; fear of disconnection is real and valid.

Acknowledge the emotional impact.

Some young people may experience loneliness, isolation, or exclusion if their peers continue conversations on platforms they can't use. For others, online friendships may be their only friendships. Let them know their feelings matter and that you understand how significant those connections are.

Recognise both benefits and challenges.

While reduced exposure to harmful content can support mental well-being, losing online communication may increase anxiety or sadness for some. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds may also lose peer support, study help, or safe spaces they rely on.

Encourage digital literacy and resilience.

Help them navigate issues like cyber-bullying, fake news, and pressure to use older siblings' accounts or VPNs. Remind them that their worth and identity are not defined by online popularity or comments, but by their creator.

Explore alternative ways to stay connected.

Work with your youth group to create safe, moderated online spaces that don't require age-restricted platforms. Brainstorm ways for young people to express creativity, maintain friendships, and remain connected.

Check in regularly.

Ask how they're going socially. Do they feel more isolated? Are friendships changing? How is their mood? Being consistent helps them feel supported.

Keep watching for updates.

Stay aware of how platforms implement the new rules, including privacy policies and age-assurance tools.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *youth groups*

- **How are you feeling about the social media changes?**
- **Who do you connect with online, and what might change if you lose access?**
- **What might you miss the most?**
- **What are some good things about stepping back from certain platforms?**
- **Do you think there are better or safer ways for young people to stay connected?**

Encourage young people to reflect not just on social media itself, but on how deeply our time and attention shape our thoughts and relationships. This isn't about denying the real world; they're learning to process life through God's truth, hope, and love.

BIBLE VERSES THAT MAY HELP *discussions*

Philippians 4:6-8
Romans 12:2
Colossians 3:2-4
Psalm 1:1-3

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)

