Supporting your kids through the upcoming social media ban

The social media ban may come as a relief for many parents/carers who have been concerned about its impacts on their children and young people. However, many young people will feel upset, worried or angry about these changes, which are set to come into effect on December 10, 2025.

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation have created some helpful resources and practical tips for families and young people navigating the social media ban.

What are the key things families and carers need to know about the social media ban

- The Government has legislated that it will be against the law for social media companies to allow people under the age of 16 to sign up for new social media accounts or continue their social media use.
- This legislation will come into effect on December 10 2025.
- As of 7 November, the ban includes TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Reddit, Instagram, Facebook and X.
- YouTube kids and messaging apps and services with the primary purpose of supporting health and education are exempt (including headspace, Kids Helpline and Google Classroom).
- Under the legislation, even if young people already have accounts, after the ban comes into effect, anyone under 16 will not be allowed on certain social media platforms.
- Parents (or other guardians) won't be able to give their consent for their young people to access social media before they are 16 years of age.
- Social media platforms will be required to use technologies such as facial analysis software, behavioural data or ID checks to verify a user's age before allowing them to sign up for an account. Each social media company will be responsible for deciding which age verification method to use based on the system that will work best for their platform

How can I support my young person through this change?

Uncertainty around change can be unsettling for young people, so now is a great time to have a chat to young people in your life about their social media use and their thoughts on the ban. Here are some tips from headspace about how you can better support the young people in your life:

- Educate yourself about the different social media and online platforms out there, and understand the potential harms, and how to protect yourself and your young person against them. Find out more information: https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents
- Recognise that whatever form the ban takes, children and young people will still need support to navigate and handle the challenges of being a teenager and how to manage their online and offline worlds.
- Have a constructive conversation with your young person about the ban. Some tips for this include:
  - Ask them to share with you what they do (or were looking forward to doing) on social media.
  - Try to avoid having a rigid stance like ‘this is for your own good,’ as this shuts down conversation.
  - Be open to their feelings and try not to minimise - this may well feel punitive and unfair to young people.
  - Be curious and accepting of what they say are the good things - even if you don’t agree.

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- Validate and take seriously their concerns. For example, if your child is younger than their friends, they may be concerned about being excluded/ feeling left out if their friends are able to access social media before them. Even a few weeks difference could feel like a lifetime to them.

- Some ideas for opening a conversation

  - What do you think about the ban? (Be open and let them finish…)
  - What do you like about social media and what might you miss?
  - What might be the benefits of a ban - what won't you miss? Are there things you're glad younger kids won't be exposed to?
  - Do you think the ban will work?
  - Which platforms should be in or out of the ban?

Where can I find more information?

The headspace website has a ton of great information about the social media ban:

- https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/social-media-ban/

You can also connect with an eheadspace mental health clinician for guidance on supporting your young person, or share tips and advice with other family in our Adults Supporting Young People online group chat.