Social media: a family action plan

Listen first. Set a practical boundary. Keep talking.

- [ ] **Ask what they want from the app**
  Is it a friend, funny videos, a team chat or sharing something they made? Take the wish to belong seriously. Ask what would help them stay included if they wait.

- [ ] **Start with the Australian age rules**
  TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram must take reasonable steps to prevent under-16 accounts. Parental controls do not override this. The obligation is on platforms; children and parents are not penalised.

- [ ] **For under-16s, support the boundary**
  Review app approvals and website access on the devices they actually use. Deleting an app alone does not stop browser access. Choose suitable ways to stay connected and check those services' own rules.

- [ ] **Protect sleep and quiet times**
  Agree on a bedtime stopping time, unnecessary notifications to switch off and a charging spot outside the bedroom. Adults can follow the same phone-away routine. Make room for school needs.

- [ ] **For teens aged 16+, check settings together**
  Review privacy, messages, location and account security. Check TikTok Family Pairing, Snapchat Family Centre or Instagram Teen Account supervision where available. These tools help manage access; they do not guarantee safety.

- [ ] **Practise what to do if something feels wrong**
  Talk about comparison, upsetting feeds, strangers asking for photos and secrets. Practise leaving, blocking and reporting. Network filters cannot judge every video or conversation inside an app.

- [ ] **Make asking for help feel safe**
  Say: 'I'm glad you told me.' Help should not automatically mean losing their device. Keep appropriate evidence before blocking if safe; never copy or forward sexual images of children. Seek qualified help for ongoing concerns.

Research needs context

Social media can bring connection as well as risk. Observational associations do not prove that an app caused a child's difficulties. Look at sleep, content, contact and how they feel, not just a time total.

One conversation this week: _____ Check-in date: _____

Official help: eSafety: age rules and family advice | eSafety: help and reporting

Companion guide: When your child asks for social media