

How to prepare for a social media ban

A guide for the whole family

- 1 Discuss what you do online**

Each of you may use the same apps very differently. Is Instagram for scrolling or messaging? Who do you actually talk to on WhatsApp? Where do you find news, learn things, have fun? Map your uses as a family: this will help you see where the post-ban gaps will be.
- 2 Know exactly what is in and out**

Read the formal announcements together (on gov.uk), not just news articles. Make sure you all agree on what is *explicitly* in and out of scope. You might need to read between the lines for what it means for you as a family.
- 3 Manage post-ban communication**

If some of you rely on Instagram or TikTok to talk to friends, prepare to find alternatives: other apps, or more offline contact — which someone (usually a parent) has to organise. This may be a community conversation, not just a family one.
- 4 Expect different screen time — not less screen time**

Research suggests removing one online activity just shifts it to another — no one does the dishes because TikTok is gone. Remember that screen time isn't inherently bad: discuss the uses you enjoy together and lean into those.
- 5 Stay informed citizens — all of you**

News, politics and public debate now live on social platforms, and research from Australia suggests banned young people learn less about the world. A ban until 16 means you could be allowed to open your first Instagram account and vote in your first general election on the same day — so plan how to keep up with news and politics.
- 6 The internet is where you find your tribe**

Figuring out who you are is part of being young, and the internet can be a lifeline — and a place to experiment. Not everything will be discussed openly in a family: it never has been, and never will be. Use this moment to start building mutual respect around personal technology use by thinking through these points together.

Every young person deserves a supportive, non-judgmental adult to turn to when things don't feel good.

