

# Should Canada Ban Youth from Social Media?

## General background

The Australian government recently instituted a social media ban for everyone under the age of 16. They argued that social media can cause harm to youth health and wellbeing through design features that encourage screen addiction, and that social media can expose young people to disturbing content.

So far, the ban in Australia applies to the following platforms: Instagram, Facebook, Threads, Snapchat, X, YouTube, TikTok, Reddit, Kick, and Twitch. Platforms that fail to comply with the ban can face fines of up to 50 million Australian dollars. All users under 16 have lost access to their accounts, and any content they previously posted will no longer be visible to others (although everyone remains able to view content that is accessible to those without an account). The platforms listed above are now required to take reasonable steps to check users' ages, which will include the use of age verification technology.

While some people hope that this is the first of many bills that will ban youth from accessing social media all over the world, not everyone agrees. For instance, some human rights, and technology experts argue that banning youth from accessing social media will encourage youth to use more unregulated platforms that pose an even greater risk to their health and wellbeing. There are also concerns that a ban for youth fails to hold platforms accountable for treating the issues at their roots.

Should Canada follow Australia's lead? While the federal government has not officially proposed any legislation that would ban youth from accessing social media platforms, there were two bills proposed before the dissolution of parliament in January 2025 to address online harms, both of which focused on protecting minors from harms faced online (Bill C-63 and Bill C-412). More recently, Nova Scotia's provincial government introduced a bill that would ban youth under 16 from using social media. And in January 2026, anonymous sources [reported to the Globe and Mail](#) that the Canadian government is planning to introduce a new bill that will ban youth under 14 from having social media accounts.

### **For More Information:**

- [Millions of Australian children just lost access to social media. What's happening and will it work?](#) | CNN
- [Federal officials draft plans to ban social media for children under 14](#) | The Globe and Mail
- [What is Australia's under-16 social media ban? The world-first law explained](#) | The University of Sydney
- [N.S. Liberals to table bill that would ban use of social media by children under 16](#) | CBC