

STAYING CONNECTED SAFELY

Social Media Age Restrictions: Guide for Clubs



WHAT IS CHANGING?

From 10 December 2025, age-restricted social media platforms will have to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under the age of 16 from creating or keeping an account.

- As of 5 November 2025, it is eSafety's view that Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, X, YouTube, Kick and Reddit are age-restricted platforms.
- Even though WhatsApp is not currently listed as a restricted platform, it carries child safety risks. For example, private messages between adults and children can happen, and personal details (like phone numbers) are visible in group chats.

Clubs can still use public social media pages for general updates, this only affects direct communication.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR CLUBS?

Clubs still need to communicate with junior members (under 16) and their parents about patrols, training, and events. Using non-compliant apps may put children at risk and breach child safety and privacy rules.

While Apps like WhatsApp are not proposed to be included in the ban these are not Child Safe compliant as they allow the possibility of 1:1 adult and child communication and inappropriate conduct to occur.

By choosing and implementing a safe platform we will ensure clubs adhere to the new restrictions, ensure communications are inclusive and all members receive the information they need it, and we are maintaining a safe environment for children and young people.

WHAT SHOULD CLUBS DO?

1. Check your current tools:

List all apps and platforms used to communicate with under 16s (e.g., patrol groups, training updates, coaching, youth groups, travelling teams).

2. Plan to stop using Apps below:

Prepare to phase out platforms that do not meet safety requirements in the 2025 season. Examples of platforms clubs should not use for U16s:

- Facebook Groups
- Messenger
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Discord

3. Choose a safe platform:

The preferred option is Team App, which is already used by over 1,800 Surf Life Saving groups; however other compliant platforms may be available, check with SLISA for updates.

Things to look out for when selecting a platform is:

- **Is it safe?** Does it allow private messages between adults and children.
- **Is it compliant?** Personal details (like phone numbers) can be shared in group chats (WhatsApp). Using these apps may break child safety and privacy rules.
- **Is the club relevant?** If clubs can't reach under 16s, they risk losing connection with young members.

4. Tell everyone about the change:

Use the template below to communicate changes to members and parents.

96%
10-15YRS
HAD USED A SOCIAL
MEDIA PLATFORM IN
THEIR LIFE¹

1 IN 2
CHILDREN
HAVE EXPERIENCED
CYBERBULLYING¹

77%
13-15YRS
HAD SEEN/HEARD
CONTENT ASSOCIATED
WITH HARM ONLINE¹

1 IN 4
CHILDREN
EXPERIENCE ONLINE
SEXUAL HARASSMENT¹

26%
13-15YRS
EXPERIENCED NON-
CONSENSUAL
TRACKING

1 IN 7
CHILDREN
EXPERIENCE ONLINE
GROOMING-TYPE
BEHAVIOUR¹

STAY SAFE. STAY CONNECTED.
MAKE THE SWITCH BEFORE 10 DECEMBER 2025

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FAQ FOR CLUBS

Q: Why can't we just supervise our WhatsApp or Facebook groups better?

Even with good intentions, these apps still allow private, unmonitored messages between adults and juniors, which breaches child safeguarding principles and exposes personal details. The new legislation expects organisations to use systems that technically prevent these risks, not just rely on supervision.

Q: Can parents still be included in Team App groups?

Yes. Parents or guardians must be added to a junior member's team or communication group, so they stay informed and can oversee their child's involvement, this is set out in the SLS Child Safe Policy.

Q: Do we need to stop using our club's Facebook page?

Not necessarily. Public-facing pages used for sharing news, photos or community updates can continue, the law mainly affects under 16's using social media apps.

Q: What if some members don't want to download another app?

Team App is free, widely used in community sport, and available on both Apple and Android. It can also be accessed through a web browser, so members don't need to install the app if they prefer not to. If a club picks another platform we suggest ensuring it is free for the member.

Q: Will this create extra admin work for our club?

Initially, there will be some setup time. Once set up, it actually simplifies communication because everything is managed in one place.

Q: What happens if our club doesn't change before December 2025?

Continuing to use unregulated tools after that date may place under 16's at risk of not getting the information they need to do patrol, attend training or club events.

Q: What policies are relevant?

Clubs can rely on 6.04 Child Safe, 6.05 Member Protection and 6.20 Use of Social Media.

TEMPLATES FOR CLUBS

EMAIL TO MEMBERS INTRODUCING THE CHANGE

From 10 December 2025, new national laws will limit how Australians under 16 can use social media. This means apps like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger will no longer be suitable for club communication with our younger members or meet the Child Safe Policy requirements.

To stay connected safely, our club is moving all off-beach communication (such as rosters, training updates, and team chats) to (Team App/Chosen Platform), a secure platform already used across Surf Life Saving. (Team App/Chosen Platform) keeps your information private and ensures all communication is transparent and compliant.

We'll share a quick setup guide shortly so you can join your patrol or age group. Parents will also be added to their child's group for oversight.

Thank you for helping us keep our community safe and connected.

FLYER OR NOTICEBOARD TEXT

Staying Connected Safely - Important Update for All Members

New laws mean that under 16s will soon be unable to use social media for club communication. To ensure compliance and safety, we're switching to (Team App/Chosen Platform) for all off-beach communication.

(Team App/Chosen Platform) benefits:

- Keeps your phone number private
- No direct messages between adults and juniors
- Parents can stay connected
- Is used by many surf clubs

Set-up details will be shared soon, thank you for helping make our club safer and stronger!



TEAM APP DOWNLOAD

NEED HELP?

For advice on setting up Team App or choosing the right platform, contact SLISA Integrity or your State Centre.
Please note: State centres may not have dedicated support teams for platform setup at this time.

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