

Social media and online conduct

Young people and the law



Age restrictions

Age restrictions now apply to many social media platforms across Australia.

Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X and YouTube must take steps to prevent Australians under the age of **16** from having their own account.

Those under 16 will not get in trouble for using social media. Parents, carers and teachers will not be punished if children in their care see or use social media.

Because social media companies are legally required to restrict access to their platforms, they must take steps to check the age of their users. Always **take care when sharing your personal information** or identification online. Scammers may try to steal your identity or money by pretending to be a social media platform or offering you a fake ID.

Visit www.esafety.gov.au for the latest information about social media age restrictions and to access a range of resources.

Posting online

Always think carefully before sharing information, photos or videos online.

Self-incrimination is when a person says or does something that links them to a crime. If the police learn about what you have said or done, it could be used as proof that you have broken the law. You may not even realise that what you are posting about is a crime.

It is now a crime to post photos and videos online to brag about or encourage criminal activity (known as **posting and boasting**).

This includes:

- sharing a video on social media that shows a friend driving dangerously or doing burnouts
- posting photos that show you trespassing on land or causing property damage
- sharing a video of someone being punched or kicked or threatened with a weapon.

Posting and boasting is a serious crime with serious penalties including **prison**.

Police powers

Police have broad powers to access information you post online, even if you are careful about your privacy settings.

Police may apply for a **search warrant** if they believe you have committed a crime. Many social media platforms have privacy rules that say that they will share information, images and videos you post if police have a search warrant.

A search warrant may also allow police to search your personal devices, including your phone and computer. If your device is pin or password-protected, you do not have to tell police the code unless the warrant requires this information.

Police may confiscate your devices to search them and it may take time to get them back.



Online safety

Be wary of strangers sending you friend requests or seeking information about you. Check the privacy settings on all your accounts regularly.

Remember that pictures, posts and comments may still be available, even if you delete them or your account. People can save your photos or take screenshots of what you have posted online.

Never share your personal details (like your full name, date of birth, home address or school you attend) online or with people you do not know.

You may also be interested in our factsheets about **Bullying at school** and **Pornography, sexual images and online safety**.

Legal help for all South Australians

1300 366 424 Legal Helpline



Prefer to text?

Use our Legal Chat at lsc.sa.gov.au