

Drawing a line in digital spaces: Taking stock of current and proposed age-based restrictions for social media

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Key messages

01

Global momentum to restrict children’s access to certain social media is accelerating, yet with almost one-third of current proposals emerging in the absence of broader platform regulation, there is a significant risk that age-based restrictions alone will fail to address the underlying drivers of harm. Even in countries where such regulation exists, there is a need for systemic, preventative safety measures instead of purely reactive, content-focused platform regulation regimes. The introduction of age restrictions alone will not keep children safe online, and may come with their [own risks](#). Governments need to implement a ‘smart mix’ of measures – including laws, policies, incentives, and voluntary standards – to ensure all businesses operating in the digital environment respect human rights, including children’s rights.¹

02

Children’s and adolescents’ perspectives must be meaningfully incorporated into policy development to ensure that any measures address their views, needs, and lived realities, and deliver on their rights. Effective regulation should aim to prevent business-related abuses of children’s rights, in line with international standards of responsible business conduct (e.g. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights) and human rights law – including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.²



03

Current and proposed frameworks vary widely in their design, including the age thresholds applied, the role of parental consent, the mechanisms for age verification and assurance, and the scope of platforms covered, creating a potentially uneven global policy landscape.

04

Robust measurement and short- and long-term evaluation are essential to understand the actual impact of age-based restrictions of social media on children's safety, rights, and digital participation.

05

Public and policymaker dissatisfaction with the current landscape should be leveraged to drive development and enforcement of stronger policies and regulation, responsive to context and in line with international human rights and child rights law, to incentivise innovation toward developing digital environments which prioritise children's rights and safety by design.

“Setting a minimum age for accessing social media alone will not eliminate risks of harm. Keeping children safe requires interventions at the family, school, and community levels. Additionally, regulations should require systemic measures to improve children's safety on social media. The introduction of age restrictions must not reduce incentives for companies to invest in safer platform design and effective content moderation for all users. Regulation must compel companies to take responsibility by proactively identifying and addressing any adverse impacts on children's rights. This includes by conducting robust child rights due diligence, including [child rights impact assessments in relation to the digital environment](#).”

UNICEF, [Drawing a line in digital spaces: Age-based restriction of social media](#), April 2025

01

Introduction and overview

Since UNICEF's publication of '[Drawing a line in digital spaces: Age-based restriction of social media](#)' in April 2025, global momentum to restrict social media access for children has accelerated markedly. While only a small number of countries were considering such measures in early 2025, one year later almost 40 jurisdictions³ are now discussing, proposing, adopting, or implementing age-based restrictions. See [Annex 1](#) for the list of jurisdictions and current status.

1.1

Purpose

This paper provides a rapid analysis of current proposals and enacted legislation introducing age-based restrictions for social media. The analysis is limited to whole-of-platform age limits and excludes measures such as content-specific prohibitions (e.g. adult pornography), time-based limits (e.g. daily caps on gaming platforms), and location-specific restrictions (e.g. bans applicable only in schools).

It serves as a snapshot of the evolving landscape and should be read alongside UNICEF's [policy brief](#),

which outlines **key considerations for legislators, policymakers, and other stakeholders considering age-based limits for social media**.

1.2

Method and limitations

This paper draws on a rapid review of publicly available information, primarily media reporting and official sources, relating to legislation to introduce age-based restrictions for social media. While all reasonable efforts have been made to check accuracy, given the pace of developments and reliance on media reporting in many jurisdictions, the analysis may not fully capture the scope or substance of proposals currently under consideration. The nature and status of discussions and proposals in several jurisdictions is subject to rapid change and may have evolved since the analysis was completed. Further, coverage is uneven across jurisdictions due to the availability and language of source material. **Readers are encouraged to verify jurisdiction-specific developments independently, particularly where legislative processes are ongoing.** The analysis reflects information available as of **13 March 2026**.

1.3

Emerging trends

The rapid analysis points to the following emerging trends:

- **While there is significant political momentum to introduce age restrictions, in the vast majority of jurisdictions these measures remain at the draft or proposal stage:** Only one of 36 jurisdictions have moved beyond discussion to implemented law (Australia). Two jurisdictions have passed a law, but have not yet moved to implementation (Indonesia and Malaysia).⁴ The vast majority remain at the proposal (10) or discussion stage (23).
 - **There is convergence on age thresholds but divergence on the role of parental consent:** Across regions, current and draft/proposed age thresholds are clustering around restrictions for children **under 15–16 years**, accounting for 24 of the 29 jurisdictions that specify an age. However, jurisdictions appear to be taking markedly different approaches to whether parental consent can override these restrictions. Most adopt a hard floor with no possibility of bypass, while others allow parental consent to override an age restriction, potentially reflecting different normative views on children’s autonomy and the role of parents in mediating access.
 - **Almost one-third of measures under discussion or proposed are standalone, while the other two-thirds are embedded in broader online platform regulation:** In approximately one-third of the proposals (primarily across Africa and some of Asia-Pacific) age restrictions are proposed without an accompanying framework addressing platform design, algorithmic systems, or harmful features.
- In the remaining jurisdictions both enacted and draft or proposed age restrictions sit within broader regulatory frameworks, many of which impose such obligations. Where restrictions are implemented in isolation, there is a risk that design features that enable harm are left unchanged. As a result, children may still be exposed to harm if they find workarounds, use borrowed accounts or shared family devices, or access platforms not covered by the restrictions.
- **Age assurance emerges as a critical and unresolved implementation challenge:** Only Australia, Malaysia, the UK, and the EU appear to have taken concrete steps to assess how age restrictions can be technically enforced. Their approaches diverge substantially: Australia adopts a principles-based model and no single mandated method; Malaysia’s [draft Codes](#) (currently open for public consultation) mandate verification against ‘Government-issued records’, raising concerns about data protection, privacy and equity. Most jurisdictions have not yet addressed how age restrictions will be implemented in practice. Stakeholders must collaborate to develop rights-respecting, technically viable solutions for age verification and assurance.
 - **Early evidence suggests that platforms are complying with the new requirements; however, it is too early to determine whether these measures are improving children’s safety and well-being:** Australia is the only jurisdiction to have implemented restrictions, and it is too recent for any findings on child well-being or harm reduction. A comprehensive [evaluation](#) has been launched. Meaningful outcome evaluation is important and will require longitudinal research over a period of years.

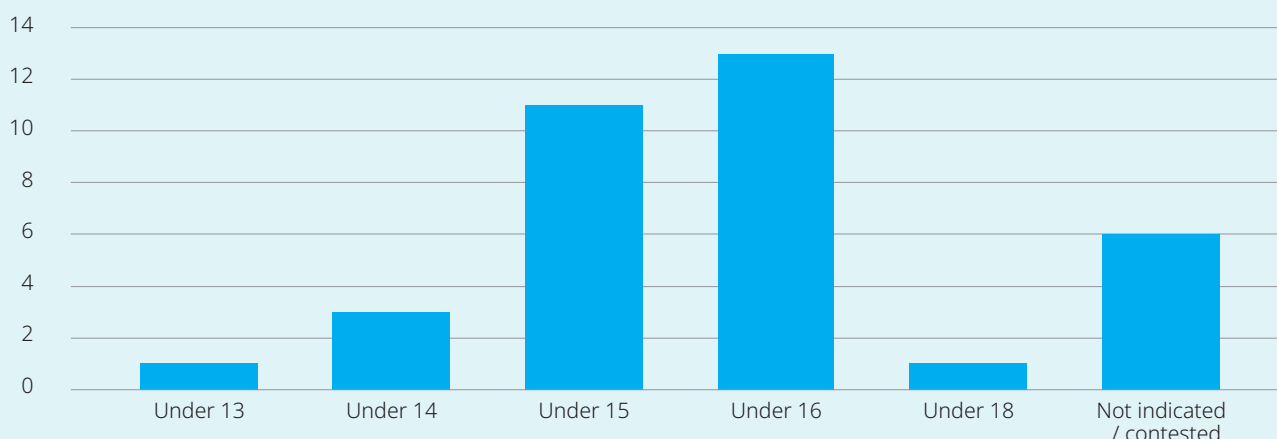
02

Determining the age threshold

Minimum age thresholds should be informed by research, including on child development, opportunities, and risk exposure. There is not yet consensus on the psychological, emotional, and cognitive factors that should be prioritised when considering the appropriate age for access to social media.

The most common age thresholds appearing in current and draft/proposed frameworks are **under 15**

(11 countries) and **under 16** (13 countries/jurisdictions), together accounting for 24 of the 29 jurisdictions that have specified an age. Zimbabwe stands out as an outlier with a hard floor threshold for under-18 being discussed, the highest age proposal of any jurisdiction. The age threshold remains undecided and/or contested in six jurisdictions. In the Philippines, for instance, age thresholds in the Bills filed range from under 18, to under 14 or tiered models, to approaches without age-based access restrictions.

Graph 1**Number of jurisdictions by age threshold****Table 1****Age threshold by jurisdiction (in current instrument or indicative, draft or proposed framework)**

Age threshold	Jurisdiction
Under 13	US
Under 14	Austria, Canada, Costa Rica ⁵
Under 15	Czech Republic, Denmark ⁶ , Ecuador, Finland ⁷ , France, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Türkiye
Under 16	Australia, Brazil, Fiji, EU, ⁸ India, ⁹ Indonesia, ¹⁰ Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, ¹¹ Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, UK
Under 18	Zimbabwe
Not indicated / contested	Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland

03

The role of parental consent

Current trends indicate a **strong lean toward absolute restrictions** rather than parental consent-based models. Of the 36 jurisdictions, only four appear to be considering parental consent (Costa Rica, Denmark, the EU, and Portugal) to override an age restriction.

There is limited official information available for why many jurisdictions opt for a hard-floor age restriction with no parental bypass. [Media reporting](#) in Australia, for example, suggests some parents feel isolated in managing social media use and see legislation as

a means to reinforce family boundaries. Therefore, it may be that governments see strict age limits as helping to ease some of the burden parents face. This policy decision might also be informed by the existing challenges that the verifiable parental consent (VPC) approach poses in practice. VPC mechanisms aim to verify that the child user's parent or guardian consents to their use of the digital service. However, these mechanisms [raise significant concerns regarding reliability and equity](#). This can be particularly stark in some contexts, such as low- and middle-income countries.

Services and platforms in scope

'Social media' covers a broad range of digital spaces, each differing in platform design, user interactions, and risks. It is necessary to clearly define what constitutes social media and whether age thresholds should apply to entire platforms or specific functionalities.

Of the 36 jurisdictions, 31 do not yet appear to have clearly defined which services fall within scope. Only five (Australia, Ecuador, France, Indonesia and Portugal) appear to have clearly defined the regulated services, typically referencing social media platforms, social networks, or video-sharing services. The lack of definitional clarity around the scope of the services covered under social media age restrictions is likely

because most of the legislation is still in discussion or proposal stage, leaving room for debate on which online platforms should be included.

Looking at Australia as a regulatory example, it becomes clear how difficult it is to clearly draw the line around the scope of such legislations. One of the [key considerations](#) in determining whether a service falls within scope is whether the service serves the sole purpose, or a significant purpose, of enabling online social interaction between two or more end-users. This requires consideration of a range of factors, including the service's features and functions and how people use the service. These factors can change over time.

Enforcement measures under consideration

Enforcement measures across the 36 jurisdictions vary in both specificity and severity. Among jurisdictions with operative or near-operative restrictions, Australia and Malaysia have the most concrete penalties. Indonesia's enforcement measures include a combination of warnings, fines and suspensions, with no concrete figure given as to the threshold for fines. European proposals are expected

to defer to [Digital Services Act](#)-aligned turnover-based fines. Brazil specifies a revenue-based cap, and Costa Rica specifies salary-based fines with additional daily non-compliance penalties, while the UK relies on Ofcom's existing [Online Safety Act](#) powers. Most jurisdictions have not yet specified any enforcement measure, reflecting the early-stage nature of most proposals.

Table 2

Examples of enforcement measures (in current instrument or indicative, draft or proposed framework)

Jurisdiction	Status	Enforcement measures
Australia	Implemented	Court-imposed fines up to AUD 49.5 million
Brazil	Proposed	Fines up to 10% of Brazil-derived turnover; or BRL 10–1,000 per user up to a cap of BRL 50 million. Other penalties include warnings (with deadlines for corrective measures), temporary suspension of activities and prohibition of activities in the country.
Costa Rica	Under discussion	Fines of 15–50 base salaries of an administrative assistant of the Judicial Branch; repeat violations: 30–50 base salaries; daily non-compliance fine: 10 base salaries; additional sanctions include cease and desist, redesign obligations, account suspension and public disclosure
France	Proposed	Not indicated (target enforcement September 2026)
Indonesia	Passed	Administrative sanctions including written warnings, administrative fines, suspension and/or termination of access
Malaysia	Passed ¹²	Fines up to RM 10,000,000
Pakistan	Under discussion	Initial withdrawn bill proposed fines of Rs 50,000–5 million per platform; adults facilitating access: up to 6 months' imprisonment

Jurisdiction	Status	Enforcement measures
Philippines	Proposed	Administrative fines of ₱1 million to ₱20 million for each act of non-compliance
Poland	Under discussion	Fines up to 6% of turnover
Portugal	Proposed	Fines up to 2% of global revenue
Türkiye	Proposed	Administrative fines, advertising bans and bandwidth reduction (up to 90%) for non-compliance; staged enforcement following notification
UK	Proposed	Fines up to £18 million or 10% of global turnover (Ofcom-enforced under Online Safety Act 2023)

06

Situating age restrictions within broader online platform regulation

A central critique of age-based restrictions of social media is that they do not address the underlying causes of harm to children, such as recommender systems that amplify illegal content and design features engineered to maximise engagement. As such, it is important to understand whether age-based restrictions of social media are proposed in isolation, or whether they are embedded in broader legal or regulatory frameworks. However, the mere existence of online safety or online platform frameworks does not guarantee that they are effective in creating a safer digital environment for children. Establishing a regulation enforcement mechanism with sufficient legal powers, expertise, and dedicated financial and human resources is crucial, alongside ongoing monitoring and research to assess whether regulations are achieving their intended goals.

In about two-thirds of the 36 jurisdictions, age restrictions are situated within established or proposed regulatory frameworks that do impose such obligations.¹³ For instance, Australia's age restriction forms part of the [Online Safety Act 2021](#), which separately imposes mandatory industry codes covering harmful content and algorithmic obligations, and also establishes the Basic Online Safety Expectations as a transparency tool, both enforced by the [eSafety Commissioner](#). Of note, eSafety has articulated its [commitments to, and actions to support, children's rights](#) while performing functions under the Online Safety Act. The [2018 Online Safety Act](#) in Fiji is a basic online safety framework establishing the online safety commission and creates a basic complaint procedure for users claiming to have suffered harm by means of digital technologies. The Act is currently [under review](#).

Malaysia's [Online Safety Act](#), which was passed but is awaiting enactment of secondary legislation, places greater responsibility on platforms to manage online risks. It outlines how platforms manage risks within their systems, including content distribution, recommendation algorithms and user interaction features. The United Kingdom's proposed age restriction would operate alongside the [Online Safety Act 2023](#), which already establishes a duty of care requiring platforms to protect children from harmful algorithms and illegal and harmful content. At the EU level, social media age restrictions sit alongside the [Digital Services Act 2022](#), a comprehensive and rights-based legal framework for digital services accountability, content moderation, and platform transparency across the European Union. If a harmonised age restriction were to be enacted within the EU, it [would be embedded](#) in the [Digital Fairness Act](#), which proposes to prohibit unfair commercial practices related to dark patterns among others.

[Brazil's Digital ECA](#) (Child and Adolescent Statute) took effect in March 2026,¹⁴ obliging providers of digital products and services likely to be accessed by minors to implement robust age verification mechanisms beyond self-declaration, parental supervision tools, and mandatory reporting and removal of content involving the sexual exploitation or abuse of minors. Indonesia's [Regulation No. 9 of 2026](#) (concerning the implementing regulation for Government Regulation No. 17 of 2025 concerning Electronic System Governance in Child Protection) obliges 'electronic system operators' to assess the risks their products pose to children, classify their services according to age-bands, and implement protective measures based on risk levels and age classifications, including age verification, age-based restrictions, and improved safeguards.



The remaining one-third of jurisdictions, primarily across Africa and some of the Asia-Pacific region, propose age restrictions without any existing or proposed accompanying framework addressing platform design. There are real risks where age restrictions are proposed as standalone measures, leaving unchanged the design features that enable harm. As a result, children may still be exposed to harm if they find workarounds, use borrowed accounts or shared family devices, or access platforms not covered by the restrictions.

UNICEF's policy brief, [Keeping Children Safe Online: Trends in Online Platform Regulation and Emerging Lessons](#), offers a comparative analysis of platform regulation in six jurisdictions and provides guidance for developing and implementing online platform regulation that works for children. This should be read alongside UNICEF's guidance on [children and digital marketing](#).

07

Enforcing age restrictions through age assurance

Age assurance sits at the technical heart of every social media age restriction, yet its implications for children's rights and human rights remain poorly scrutinised in public debate.¹⁵ While the debate across the world currently focuses on whether and how social media age restriction should be regulated, only a few countries, namely Australia, Malaysia, the UK and the EU have taken steps to assess how such regulations can be implemented through age assurance.

The Australian framework is designed as a pure age assurance regime, with legal prohibitions on using collected data for any other purposes. Its architecture of binary outputs, mandatory destruction, prohibition on government ID as the sole method, reflects a deliberate policy choice to largely separate age from identity.¹⁶ Malaysia's draft Child Protection Code, which is the subsidiary instrument for operationalising the [Online Safety Act 2025](#), prescribes a very different path by requiring age verification using [government-issued identity credentials](#) (such as MyDigital ID, passport, identity documents), anchoring social media access to a rapidly expanding national identity infrastructure. The UK, although not yet imposing a social media age threshold, has introduced mandatory age assurance for access to specific content under the [Online Safety Act](#). Under the Act, Ofcom requires 'highly effective age assurance'. As per Ofcom's [principles-based guidance](#), this requires that age assurance be technically accurate, robust against circumvention, privacy-preserving and non-discriminatory.

Meanwhile, the EU has developed a blueprint for an [open-source age-verification tool](#) using

selective-disclosure and zero-knowledge-proof techniques to minimise data exposure. Noting that the blueprint is designed for [18+ verification](#), EU member states debating lower age thresholds would need to customise the tool to their national legal requirements. [Eleven](#) EU member states have now urged the European Commission to move away from the current status quo and consider mandatory, high-assurance age verification for access to social media. Indonesia requires age verification, but neither [Government Regulation No. 17/2025](#) nor [Ministerial Regulation No. 9/2026](#) sets out guidance on privacy safeguards, data-minimisation expectations, or specific verification methods.

7.1 Age assurance and data protection laws

The protection of personal data is a key factor in ensuring that age assurance protects users' right to privacy. As enforcement of social media age restriction relies on age assurance, such laws should consider setting regulatory protections for the deployment of age assurance, including, but not limited to, the protection of data processed for the purpose of age assurance. Further analysis is required to determine whether the existing data protection laws in the countries intending to introduce a social media age restriction set sufficient safeguards for the deployment of age assurance technologies. It would also be important to investigate the degree to which national data protection authorities have the enforcement powers and sufficient resources to proactively implement such regulations.

Monitoring and evaluating impact over time

Australia is the only jurisdiction globally to have implemented age restrictions for certain social media to date. However, the law is too recent for evidence on its impact on children's well-being or harm reduction. What exists is early compliance data, public opinion polling, and a body of academic and expert commentary. Within the first month of the ban, social media platforms in Australia collectively [deactivated approximately 4.7 million accounts](#). However, the eSafety Commissioner cautioned that some underage accounts remain active and that it was too early to declare full compliance. In any case, the number of underage accounts deactivated does not show that the age restrictions are achieving their policy objectives. Rather, it shows that the online platforms are complying. To assess its effectiveness, the eSafety Commissioner launched a comprehensive [evaluation](#) of Australia's world-first social media minimum

age to understand how the new obligation on platforms is working in practice and what impact it is having on children, young people and families. The study will follow over 4,000 children and families over more than two-years. Findings will be released progressively through public reports and peer reviewed publications starting later in 2026 and across 2027 and 2028.

Meaningful outcome evaluation will require longitudinal research over a period of years. For those jurisdictions still debating proposals, **metrics and evaluation frameworks must be developed to assess how well age-restrictions (and other measures) meet their intended goals and outcomes**. This could include, for example, tracking behavioural changes, reported incidents of harm, and broader social outcomes to determine the effectiveness of such measures.

ANNEX 1

Overview of age-based restrictions of social media around the world

This list was initially developed with reference to the Tech Policy Press [Global Social Media Age Restriction Tracker](#), with the addition of Costa Rica, Fiji and Zimbabwe. It has been cross-checked against primary sources where available and with UNICEF Country Offices and National Committees where possible. Six countries included in the Tech Policy Press tracker are not counted here because they are not debating or implementing social media age restrictions as defined, or current discussions at the country-level indicate that age restrictions are an unlikely policy option, despite some media reporting to the contrary.¹⁷

While all reasonable efforts have been made to check accuracy, given the pace of developments in this area, and the reliance on media reporting in many jurisdictions, this list may not fully capture the scope or substance of proposals currently under consideration. The information presented reflects what was available as of **13 March 2026**. **Readers are encouraged to verify jurisdiction-specific developments independently, particularly where legislative processes are ongoing.**

Legend

Under discussion

A policy idea or legislative proposal is actively debated by government, parliament, or relevant authorities but has not yet been formally introduced as a draft law or bill.

Proposed

A draft law or bill that has been formally introduced into the legislative process but has not yet been voted on or adopted by the relevant legislative body.

Passed

A law that has been adopted by the relevant legislative body and has received any required executive assent or promulgation, giving it legal force on the statute book.

Implemented

A law that is in force and being actively applied and enforced, including where any necessary secondary legislation, regulatory infrastructure, or transitional periods required for its practical operation are in place.

Region	Jurisdiction/ country	Current status
Europe	1. European Union	Under discussion
	2. Austria	Under discussion
	3. Czech Republic	Under discussion
	4. Denmark	Under discussion
	5. Finland	Under discussion
	6. France	Proposed
	7. Germany	Under discussion
	8. Greece	Under discussion
	9. Netherlands	Under discussion
	10. Norway	Proposed
	11. Poland	Under discussion
	12. Portugal	Proposed ¹⁸
	13. Slovenia	Under discussion
	14. Spain	Under discussion

Region	Jurisdiction/ country	Current status
Europe	15. Sweden	Under discussion
	16. Switzerland	Under discussion
	17. Türkiye	Proposed
	18. UK ¹⁹	Under discussion
North America	19. Canada	Under discussion
	20. US (and 8 states)	Proposed
Latin America	21. Brazil	Proposed
	22. Costa Rica	Proposed
	23. Ecuador	Proposed
Africa	24. Egypt	Under discussion
	25. Nigeria	Under discussion
	26. South Africa	Under discussion
	27. Zimbabwe	Under discussion
Asia Pacific	28. Australia	Implemented (December 2025)
	29. Fiji	Under discussion
	30. India (and 2 states)	Under discussion
	31. Indonesia	Passed
	32. Malaysia	Passed ²⁰
	33. New Zealand	Under discussion
	34. Pakistan	Under discussion
	35. Philippines	Proposed
	36. Republic of Korea	Proposed ²¹

Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund and UN Human Rights, [Taking a child rights-based approach to implementing the UNGPs in the digital environment](#), 2024, p. 5.
- 2 See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No. 25 \(2021\)](#) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, UN Doc CRC/C/GC/25 (2 March 2021), which explains how States parties should implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to the digital environment and provides guidance on relevant legislative, policy and other measures to ensure full compliance with their obligations under the Convention and the Optional Protocols.
- 3 As of 13 March 2026, age-based restrictions on social media are being discussed, proposed, adopted, or implemented in 36 jurisdictions worldwide. See [Annex 1](#) for the list of jurisdictions and their current status.
- 4 In Indonesia, the initial stage of implementation is [set to commence on 28 March](#). Malaysia has passed the underlying Act, but the secondary legislation relating to age restrictions remains at the draft stage.
- 5 The current proposal prohibits children under 14 from accessing social media entirely. Parental consent can override age restriction for social media for children aged 14 -18 years. Children under 14 years of age will be limited exclusively to certified children's services or versions explicitly designed for minors.
- 6 The current proposal prohibits children under 13 from accessing social media entirely. Parental consent can override age restriction for children aged 13 -14 years.
- 7 The age thresholds currently being discussed in Finland vary between 13 and 15.
- 8 The proposal under discussion prohibits children under 13 from accessing social media entirely. Parental consent can override age restriction for children aged 13 -15 years.
- 9 There are also discussions at state level, with [some states](#) having progressed proposals. However, implementation frameworks at both national and state levels remain unclear.
- 10 'Networks and social media services' are designated as high risk, unless otherwise determined by the Minister, and are obliged to deactivate accounts for children under 16 years.
- 11 The current proposal prohibits children under 13 from accessing social media entirely. Parental consent can override age restriction for children aged 13 -15 years.
- 12 Malaysia's Online Safety Act entered into force on 1 January 2026. However, the age restriction requirements are not included in the Act itself, but in the [Draft Child Protection Code](#) (subsidiary instrument to the Online Safety Act). The current timeline for finalisation of the Draft Code is July 2026.
- 13 Jurisdictions with implemented broader online platform regulation: Australia, Brazil, Fiji, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, South Africa, the UK, and EU member states. Jurisdictions with draft broader online platform regulation: Canada, Costa Rica, Norway, Switzerland, US.
- 14 The legislation as entered into force on 17 March 2026.
- 15 For further discussion on age assurance and content age-gating in the context of online platform regulation, see United Nations Children's Fund, ['Keeping children safe online: Trends in online platform regulation and emerging lessons, Policy brief'](#), UNICEF, New York, December 2025, pp. 19-20

- 16 Australia's [Online Safety Amendment \(Social Media Minimum Age\) Act 2024](#) does not mandate any single age assurance method. It provides that platforms must take "reasonable steps" to comply with the social media age restriction. Amongst others, the steps taken by the provider should be reliable, accurate, robust and effective; privacy-preserving and data-minimising; accessible, inclusive and fair. This principles-based approach is set out in the [eSafety Commissioner's regulatory guidance](#) on the social media age restriction.
- 17 As noted in the Introduction, the focus of this paper is on whole-of-platform age restrictions. It excludes measures such as content-specific prohibitions (e.g. adult pornography), time-based limits (e.g. daily caps on gaming platforms), and location-specific restrictions (e.g. bans applicable only in schools). **Albania** introduced a blanket TikTok ban for all users, which the Constitutional Court declared [unconstitutional](#) on 11 March 2026); Belgium's **Wallonia-Brussels Federation** is not considering any national age restriction, though it [supports an EU-wide approach](#); **China's** measures focus on content controls and curfews rather than whole-of-platform bans; and the **United Arab Emirates** has enacted a [child safety law](#) that does not introduce social media age restrictions. Based on current discussions in country, age restrictions for social media is not a policy option being considered by the governments of **Japan** and **Thailand**, despite suggestions from some media reporting.
- 18 The draft law has been approved in the general stage and is now under discussion in the specialised standing committee in Parliament, which then will be presented again to final voting. The final text is expected to undergo changes during the legislative process.
- 19 A proposal for a social media age restriction for under 16s was [rejected on 10 March 2026](#). However, a ban could still come in future after the Commons supported a government bid to give additional powers to the Secretary of State. Under the amendment in lieu, Science Secretary Liz Kendall could 'restrict or ban children of certain ages from accessing social media services and chat bots'.
- 20 Malaysia's Online Safety Act entered into force on 1 January 2026. However, the age restriction provision is not included in the Act itself, but in the [Draft Child Protection Code](#) (subsidiary instrument to the Online Safety Act). The current timeline for finalisation of the Draft Code is July 2026.
- 21 A set of bills has been introduced, focusing on measures such as limiting social media usage time for children under 16 and mandating parental consent. In addition, multiple amendment bills aimed at restricting social media use among children and adolescents have been introduced and are currently under discussion at the committee level.

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