WHAT THE SOCIAL MEDIA BAN ANNOUNCEMENT MEANS FOR FAMILIES

While some will see the recent update on children's online safety as a sign of progress, others may have concerns about its impact.

What remains clear is that parents will continue to play a vital role in helping children navigate the ongoing risks of harm, abuse and other online safety challenges.

These announcements are also raising questions, confusion and strong feelings for children.

Your role is not to have all the answers, but to help them feel heard, reassured and supported as things evolve.

MOLLY ROSE FOUNDATION

WHAT HAS ACTUALLY BEEN ANNOUNCED?

- Social media ban for under 16s to include platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and X.
- Under 16s blocked from livestreaming, including on gaming platforms.
- Safety restrictions will default on for under 17s to avoid a sudden change at 16
- Potential overnight curfews and limits on infinite scrolling for under 18s coming later.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

Changes will not come into place until early 2027 and will take time to be enforced.

WHAT DON'T WE KNOW YET?

- The full list of platforms which will be included
- Exactly when changes will fully go live
- How rules will be enforced
- How wider safety concerns such as harmful algorithms will be addressed

A REALITY CHECK

- This is not a full ban on social media for under 16s
- Only a limited number of apps are likely to be included
- There are hundreds of platforms, so children will still have access to social media before 16
- Age checks will play a major role but these continue to be ineffective and easy to bypass
- Workarounds are already common and likely to continue

THE MESSAGE CHILDREN GET NEXT MATTERS

- If children hear “you should not be on social media”, they may feel unable to speak up.
- This can make it harder for them to ask for help if something goes wrong.
- We want children to feel safe coming to us, not worried about getting in trouble.

HELP THEM UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED

- Keep explanations simple and balanced
- Some platforms may introduce age restrictions
- Certain features may change
- Not everything will happen straight away
- Be honest about the uncertainty. It is okay to say we do not know everything yet

BE READY FOR WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY

You may hear:

- Concerns about losing their accounts, content or connections
- Questions about fairness
- Ideas about how people might get around the rules

Try to stay calm and curious. These conversations are an opportunity to better understand their online world

MAKE SPACE FOR HOW THEY FEEL

- Children may respond in very different ways and these might be different from how you feel
- Some may agree with the changes
- Some may feel frustrated or angry
- Others may feel worried or confused

They may also worry about losing contact with friends or access to content they enjoy.

ALL OF THESE REACTIONS ARE VALID.

WHAT FAMILIES CAN FOCUS ON RIGHT NOW

While we wait for changes:

- Expect your child may still be using social media
- Keep conversations open and judgement free
- Avoid sharing videos or pictures of your child's reaction or concerns online
- Work together to navigate the changes and ongoing uncertainty
- Talk regularly about what they see and who they interact with
- Help them recognise harmful content and behaviour
- Make sure they know they can come to you anytime

Keep the message safe and supportive

Children should know that whatever happens online, they can always come to you for help.

Maintaining trust is more important than enforcing rules or restrictions.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE PROTECTION IS STILL A STRONG, SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIP AT HOME.

Harmful tech should never be accepted as inevitable

We will continue to demand better for children and families.