

KIDS Act

The proposal will require online services to be safe by design and defines 15 as the age to create autonomous social media accounts.

Learning to navigate the online world should be like learning to drive: Young people should rightly have access to its benefits, but only when they are able to manage the risks. This is what the EU KIDS Act aims to address.

Children and teenagers are spending more and more time online across the EU. A recent survey found that on average, adolescents age 13-18 spend 4.5 hours a day on screens on school days, and 6.1 hours at weekends.

This time spent online, in particular on social media, is leading to risks to their health and well-being:

- Only half of children aged 9-16 across Europe say they feel safe online
- 38% report difficulties falling asleep because of social media
- 33% often feel stressed or anxious because of social media
- Cyberbullying is consistently the main reason for contacting Safer Internet Centres

The EU KIDS Act is built around four pillars that enhance the EU's protection of children online and minimise these risks. These pillars are:

1. A social media delay
2. Safety by design principles
3. Age assurance and parental responsibility
4. Strong enforcement

The Act will complement existing rules to [protect children online](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/protecting-young-people-online) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/protecting-young-people-online>).

It will apply to social media, video-sharing platforms, online games, AI chatbots or companions, as well as app stores and operating systems. Some services are proposed to be exempt from the rules, like key services for access to information such as encyclopaedias, educational platforms, and digital news.

The 4 pillars of the EU Kids Act

1. Social media delay

The EU KIDS Act proposes a gradual uptake of social media and video-sharing platforms, with an EU-wide minimum age of 15 for minors to create autonomous accounts.

Age access phases:

- **From 3 to under 13:** No accounts. However, Children can access specially-designed child-friendly video-sharing services through their guardians' accounts, if their guardian permits.
- **From 13 to under 15:** Minors can have mini social media and video-sharing accounts set up and supervised by their guardians. These accounts should have limited features and screen time.
- **From 15 to under 18:** Minors can set up autonomous accounts without prior parental consent, operating within a safe-by-design environment. Parental guidance remains essential during this stage.

At all ages, online services must respect safety by design principles.

2. Safety-by-design

The EU KIDS Act obliges all online services designed for children to follow strict rules and principles to ensure children safety online, such as:

- **No addictive design features**, such as infinite scrolling and push notifications during sleep hours
- **Recommender algorithms that are safe for children**, giving minors more options to choose, tune and control recommended content and reducing the chance of being dragged down 'rabbit holes'
- **Safe account settings** to keep content private and minimise the risk of unwanted contact
- **Easy to use parental controls** and tools to block and mute other users
- **No options for minors to livestream**

3. Age assurance

Platforms must verify the age of users opening an account, as well as check the age of users who already have an account once the rules enter into force. This can be done via the EU age verification tool or other third-party solutions that offer reliable, secure and privacy-preserving means to verify the user's age.

4. Enforcement

The proposal reverses the burden of proof when it comes to online safety: Providers of very large online platforms will have to prove their services are safe by design with an *ex-ante* report.

To ensure swift action can be taken, the EU KIDS Act will introduce expedited enforcement procedures, with the aim of concluding investigations within 90 days. It will use existing structures under the [Digital Services Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-services-act) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-services-act>) and the [AI Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>).

Very large online platforms – those with 45 million or more actively monthly users in the EU – will have to submit a compliance plan to the Commission for new services, features or functionalities.

These will be assessed within 30 days and can only be rolled out after positive opinion by the Commission.

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