



PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2025

Welcome to our final Digital Tweens parents' newsletter for 2025!

Thank you for being part of our first year, whether you have attended a presentation, taken part in a workshop or webinar, or simply read our newsletters. Your support has meant a great deal, and I hope the information we have shared has helped you feel more informed, more confident, and more empowered as a digital parent.

Don't forget there's an array of information and resources to support you on our website: www.digitaltweens.com.au. The website will undergo a major update early in the new year, bringing you even more support and guidance.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited about the new resources and expanded support we are developing, and I look forward to

sharing more early in the new year.

In this final edition, we explore what Australia's new social media restrictions for under-16s, coming into effect on 10 December, may mean for families. We also offer guidance on choosing technology-related Christmas gifts and setting children up for safe and positive use from the beginning, along with practical ideas to help you plan a balanced and enjoyable school holiday period that is not totally dominated by screens.

Thank you again for your engagement and encouragement throughout the year. Wishing you and your family a joyful Christmas, a happy New Year, and a restorative summer break. I look forward to continuing to support you in 2026.

Mark Geowell

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COUNTING DOWN TO THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA DELAY FOR UNDER-16S



On 10 December 2025, the new restrictions on social media access for under-16s in Australia take effect. For many young people this will be the most significant change they have experienced in their online lives. Some families may feel relieved. Others may feel unsure, especially if their child is already using one of the platforms that will be affected. Both responses are completely understandable.

The change is happening, so what matters most right now is staying

open to conversation and connected to your child as these changes unfold. You don't need to be an expert. A calm, supportive approach and a willingness to talk are what make the biggest difference.

Over the past few years, many parents have described how their children have struggled with aspects of social media. They have seen them encounter content that feels too mature, face the pressure of constant comparison, or become caught up in group-chat drama. They've watched how quickly the online pace and

performance expectations can become overwhelming. This national delay offers families a chance to pause, reset and create breathing space around social media.

It's not too late to talk about the changes. A simple conversation over the next few weeks can help your child feel prepared. A question such as "Have you heard about the new rules coming in December for

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...under 16s?" keeps things relaxed and non-judgemental. Children often take their emotional cues from adults; when you sound positive and confident, it helps them feel the same.

One of the biggest worries children raise is the fear of losing connection with friends, especially those they don't see regularly. It helps to reinforce what is not changing. They can still message friends using texts, make voice and video calls and some messaging apps will still be accessible. They can also still play games together and chat within games. Their friendships are not disappearing, only the way they used to communicate may be changing, and young people tend to adjust and adapt more quickly than we expect.

It also helps to frame the change positively. Even children who appear to enjoy social media often describe the pressure to respond instantly, stay 'caught up', and manage the constant flow of opinions, messages and posts. Many also talk about encountering content they would rather not see. Stepping back from these large platforms can feel like a mental exhale. These new rules give young people permission to slow down, focus on their in-person friendships, and invest more in activities that genuinely make them feel good.

As December approaches, it is important to remember that enforcing the new age rules is the responsibility of social media companies, not parents. Platforms will be required to verify age, restrict under-16 accounts, and make changes to how their systems operate. Families are not expected to police this transition.

There are, however, a few practical steps worth considering. If your child has photos, videos or creative work stored inside an account that may soon be restricted, it is sensible to download anything they want to keep.



For children who have been active in uploading videos or other content, the change may feel more noticeable. Taking time to save their content and exploring other options for sharing it with friends or family can help them feel prepared and in control.

It is also helpful to be clear about what will and won't change. Young people will still be able to watch videos on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. They will still be able to enjoy much of the content they love. What will change is their ability to hold an account, post content or participate as users on platforms covered by the new age rules. For many children, having that pressure lifted, no notifications, no need to respond, no expectation to perform, may actually be a relief.

This shift is not intended to be punitive or about removing opportunities and connection. It is about helping young people build healthier digital habits at a stage when their social and emotional skills are still developing, and when large algorithm-driven platforms can be difficult for them to navigate safely. A steady adult presence and open conversations give children the support they need to move through this change confidently. You don't need to know everything about technology to guide them well. Being present, calm and approachable is enough. The online world will continue to evolve, but your relationship with your child, built on trust, curiosity and connection, can remain the strongest protective influence of all.

FINDING BALANCE THIS SUMMER:

SETTING CHILDREN UP FOR A GREAT HOLIDAY, NOT A SCREEN-FILLED ONE.

The long summer holidays can feel like both a gift and a challenge. Children look forward to freedom, late mornings and unstructured days, while parents juggle work, family commitments and the desire to create a meaningful break. As the school year ends, one question sits quietly in the background for many families: how do we help children enjoy their holidays without drifting into weeks dominated by screens?



The reassuring answer is that balance does not require strict timetables or constant supervision. It grows from a few clear expectations, a gentle reset and a family culture that values variety. After the intensity of a

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school term, children shift into holiday mode quickly, and this natural transition creates the perfect moment for a light conversation about the weeks ahead. Keeping the tone relaxed helps everyone. It signals that the goal is enjoyment, not control, and reminds children that screens are just one part of a much bigger and exciting summer.

Holidays work best when there is a loose sense of rhythm to the day. This does not need to be a schedule, and it definitely does not need to be rigid. Many families find it helpful to think in terms of a simple daily flow that includes time outside, creative or hands-on activities, some rest, moments to connect with friends or family and screen time that fits around everything else. When screens are part of the day rather than the centre of it, children find it easier to move between activities and are less likely to slip into long, unfocused stretches of digital time.

Screens are genuinely enjoyable for children. They play, build, watch, learn and stay connected there. The aim is not to take this away but to keep it in proportion. Predictable, agreed time windows often make a big difference because they reduce negotiation and let children know what to expect. Younger children tend to respond well to visual reminders such as a simple list on the fridge or a jar of activity ideas. Older children appreciate being included in the process. When they help shape the overall balance, they are far more likely to stick to it.

Inevitably, boredom appears during the summer break, and this is not something to fear. A little boredom nudges children back into creativity, imagination and independent play. It gives them the space to rediscover toys, books, craft, baking, building, backyard adventures and the kinds of activities that often get squeezed out during the school term. Having a few low-cost family experiences in mind, such as a picnic, a beach morning, a walk with an ice cream or a library visit, helps anchor the holiday and creates moments everyone can enjoy together.



For many children, the challenge of summer is the reduced daily contact with friends. Screens can help them stay connected, but the holidays are also an opportunity to strengthen in-person relationships. Casual playdates, short catch-ups with neighbours or cousins and joining a friend for an outing can go a long way toward reducing reliance on online interaction alone. Even occasional face-to-face connection helps children feel grounded and less dependent on screens for company.

There will still be moments when children say they are bored and cannot find the next thing to do. Often this simply means they need a small nudge. A shared list of ideas, a box of holiday supplies or a set of go-to activities can help them shift gears without relying on screens to fill every gap. These small tools can support independence and help children practise moving between activities on their own.

HELP I'M A DIGITAL PARENT!



FANTASTIC RESOURCES

Childnet

- Provides practical, easy-to-understand advice to help families keep children safe online.
- Offers clear guidance on social media, gaming, privacy settings and managing online risks.
- Includes conversation starters and advice tailored for both younger children and teens.
- Backed by long-standing expertise in children's online safety and digital wellbeing.
- Ideal for parents wanting simple, trustworthy steps they can use at home right away.

www.childnet.com

Media Smarts

Canada's leading centre for digital and media literacy, with a strong focus on online safety.

- Provides clear, research-informed guidance on online safety, privacy, gaming and social media.
- Offers practical conversation starters and easy-to-use digital-parenting tools.
- Focuses on digital wellbeing and helping families build healthy online habits.
- Includes age-appropriate advice for children and young people at different developmental stages.
- Neutral, educational and highly trustworthy, ideal for parents wanting balanced, evidence-based information.

www.mediasmarts.ca

TRICKY ISSUES

Saying "Not Yet" When Your Child Isn't Ready

Sometimes you need to hold off on a game or app because the content or social dynamics are more than your child can manage right now. Instead of a firm no, try framing it as "not yet." Explain the skills, behaviours, or maturity they are still developing and what readiness will look like when the time comes. This approach protects them in the present while keeping hope and possibility alive for the future.

Keeping Phones Out of Bedrooms

Bedrooms can quickly become late-night screen spaces, even for adults, so making it a whole-family habit helps the rule feel fair. A brief chat about how screens affect sleep sets the context, and simple swaps like a bedside clock or shared charging spot make the routine easier to follow. Keeping devices out of bedrooms becomes a small change that supports better rest for everyone.



Curiosity Counts

Stay genuinely curious about your child's digital world. Instead of approaching their online life with suspicion or focusing only on rules, start by inviting them to show you what they enjoy. Ask them to walk you through a game they are playing, a creator they follow, or a trend they are noticing. Listen for what excites them, what challenges them, and what they find funny or interesting.

When tweens feel your interest is real, they are more open to discussions about risks, privacy, and healthy boundaries. Curiosity also helps you understand the social side of their digital life, which often matters to them just as much as the content itself. Over time, these small conversations build strong trust, and that trust is what encourages them to come to you when something online feels confusing, uncomfortable, or unsafe.

THE DIGITAL TWEENS BLOG

The Digital Tweens Blog is FREE and is published most **Fridays**.

Each edition focuses on a different topic and is packed with information and practical ideas to support busy parents trying to help their child to thrive in the digital world.

You can find the blog on our website

www.digitaltweens.com.au

OR

Sign up by clicking the link below and we'll send the blog straight to your email.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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DIGITAL PARENTING

YOU'RE THE DRIVER - NOT YOUR CHILD!

- DELAY** - WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE CONFIDENT YOUR CHILD IS READY FOR A DEVICE, THEY ACTUALLY NEED IT, AND YOU CAN ACTIVELY SUPPORT AND GUIDE THEM.
- RESTRICT** - SET AND MAINTAIN CLEAR BOUNDARIES. AS YOUR CHILD CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATES RESPONSIBILITY AND CAPABILITY, GRADUALLY RELAX THEM.
- INVOLVED** - STAY ENGAGED AND SHOW GENUINE CURIOSITY ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S DIGITAL WORLD. ASK QUESTIONS AND USE TECHNOLOGY TOGETHER TO REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE DOING ONLINE.
- VISIBILITY** - KEEP DEVICES IN SHARED SPACES (NOT BEDROOMS) AND ENSURE ONLINE ACTIVITY IS OPEN AND TRANSPARENT, ALLOWING YOU TO MONITOR, GUIDE, AND SUPPORT THEM.
- EDUCATE** - EXPLICITLY TEACH YOUR CHILD DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP SKILLS, ALONG WITH STRATEGIES TO MANAGE TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT ON THEIR WELLBEING.
- ROLE MODEL** - DEMONSTRATE THE DIGITAL BEHAVIOURS YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO ADOPT. THEY'RE WATCHING AND LEARNING MORE FROM WHAT YOU DO THAN WHAT YOU SAY!



THINKING ABOUT TECH GIFTS THIS CHRISTMAS?

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE BUYING SMARTPHONES, TABLETS OR CONSOLES.



As Christmas approaches, many young people start hoping for their own device. Phones, tablets, smartwatches and consoles often sit at the top of wishlists, and technology often plays a significant role in their friendships and their play. It is completely natural for children to be curious about devices and to want to feel included in the digital experiences their friends talk about.

Before deciding on a gift, it helps to pause and think about what your child actually needs right now. A phone, for example, is not just a camera or a way to stay in touch. It introduces group chats, notifications, comparison, the expectation of instant replies and the emotional load of being constantly available. Some children manage this confidently, but others benefit from waiting a little longer or beginning with something simpler that offers connection without the full pressure of a smartphone.

A shared family device can be a helpful middle step. A tablet, laptop or basic phone that everyone uses gives children opportunities to explore digital skills, creativity and communication while keeping their use visible and supported. Many families find that shared devices encourage healthier habits because the device remains part of family life rather than something a child feels responsible for managing alone.



Tablets, laptops and gaming consoles *can* make wonderful gifts too, especially when they spark creativity, problem solving or shared hobbies. If your child enjoys gaming, it is worth checking which games include online chat, in game purchases or open multiplayer environments. It also helps to think about where the console will be kept. Devices used in shared spaces tend to sit more naturally alongside homework, outdoor play, family time and rest, and they make it easier for parents to stay gently aware of what is happening without feeling intrusive.

If you decide to give a device this Christmas, waiting until later in the day to set it up can make a meaningful difference. Christmas morning is full of excitement, and a device that is already signed in and ready to use often leads straight into long stretches of screen time. Setting it up together later gives you space to put safety settings in place, adjust defaults, review privacy options and talk about how the device will fit into everyday routines. Beginning slowly helps children see technology as something to enjoy, not something to disappear into.

As children begin using a new device, clarity about kindness, privacy and balance still matter, but this does not need to feel heavy or overly serious. Children rarely need long lectures. They simply need gentle guidance and the reassurance that learning to use technology responsibly is something they will grow into with your support. Technology works best when it sits alongside outdoor play, friendships, creativity, downtime, boredom and the many experiences that help children grow.

Introducing technology thoughtfully works best when the focus stays on your child's wellbeing and on the habits you want to help them build. Choosing a device is really about matching the technology to their maturity, interests and confidence so it supports their growth rather than overwhelming them. A good tech gift is exciting on Christmas morning and can continue to add value long after the holidays through learning, creativity, connection and play.

With a little reflection and a steady, supportive approach, technology becomes one part of a rich and varied childhood. When devices sit comfortably alongside all the other experiences that support development and wellbeing, they can enhance life rather than dominate it. Aim for using technology with balance, purpose and to support in-person connection; the elements that help children and young people to thrive in a digital world.