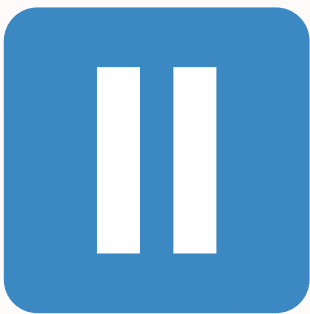




## **Secret Social Media Accounts**

Discovering that your 11–16 year old has a hidden social media account can feel confronting. In many cases, these accounts are created for playful reasons or to share things more privately with friends.

In other cases, they may contain riskier content, such as suggestive photos or posts copied from online trends. Whatever the reason, the way you respond now will set the tone for safety and trust in the future. This guide offers simple, research-based steps you can use right away to help you keep building a trusting relationship with your child.



### **Pause before replying**

Take a moment to breathe before you speak. Young people in this age range often keep things to themselves to explore, to hold some privacy, or to manage peer pressure. Secrecy in early adolescence is common. What matters most now is how you respond; ideally with calmness, curiosity, and a focus on safety.

### **Open the Conversation Calmly**

Choose a quiet time when you won't be interrupted, and begin with reassurance. Ask questions that show **curiosity** rather than accusation.

💬 *“What do you like about this account?”*

💬 *“Who do you connect with there?”*

“ You're not in trouble for talking to me. I want to understand what's happening so I can keep you safe. ”

**Avoid shaming language. Our young people are more likely to talk honestly when they feel listened to and respected.**



## If You See a Post That Worries You 🙄

If you notice a pose, photo, or caption that feels risky or could be misunderstood by others, ask gently:

“What did this mean to you?  
Were you copying a trend, or  
did someone encourage you?”

Explain calmly that while something might feel playful to them, others may interpret it differently. Share why that matters: once something is posted, it can spread, even from a “private” account. Keep your tone educational, not judgmental.

## Do a Safety Check Together

Sit down together and look at the account side by side. This turns the audit into teamwork instead of surveillance.

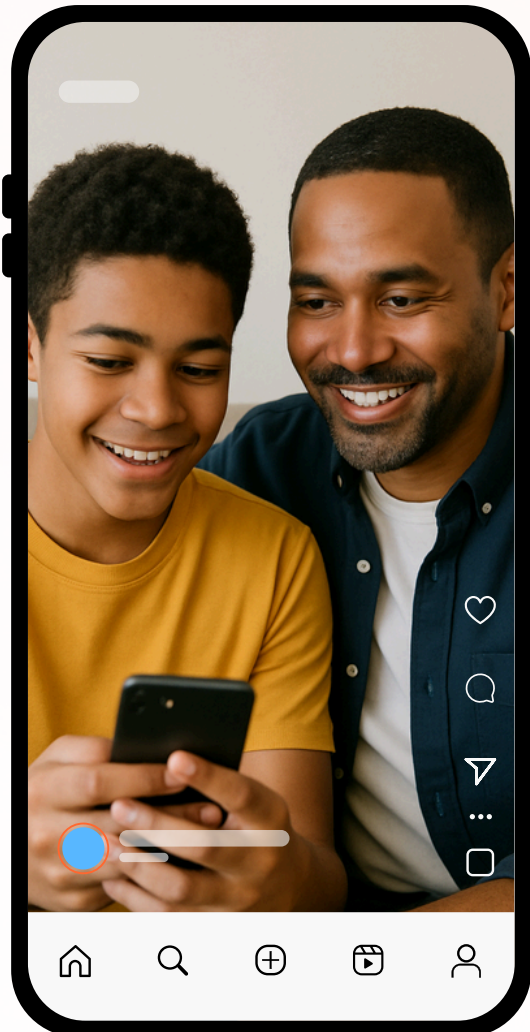
### Together you can:

🔒 **Make** the account private.

🚫 **Remove** or block any unknown followers.

👤 **Check** comments and messages for pressure, bullying, or strangers who seem older.

🕒 **Notice** when posts happen. If most activity is late at night or after conflicts, use that pattern to set healthier routines.








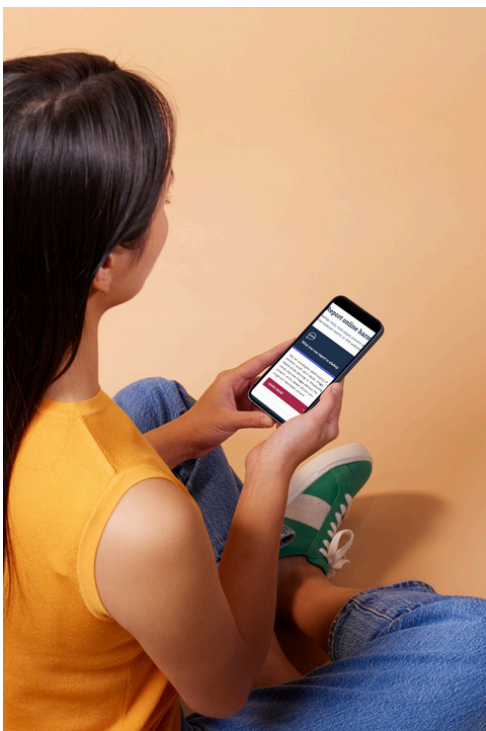
## Setting New Boundaries

Boundaries protect our young people without stripping away their dignity. Instead of a blanket ban, co-create guardrails. Ask your child to choose three “profile words” that describe how they want to be seen online, such as funny, sporty, kind. Use these as a filter for deciding whether a photo or caption is okay.

### Agree together that:

-  Followers must be real-life friends only.
-  No risky poses or revealing details (like uniforms or street signs).
-  Devices stay out of bedrooms overnight.

Download and add these agreements into your **Digital Agreement Kit** from our website, so the whole family understands and follows the same values and expectations.



## If Harm Has Already Happened

If your child has been pressured, threatened, or if a photo has been shared without consent, take these steps:

1. Save evidence such as screenshots, usernames, dates, links.
2. Report the content through the platform.
3. Use the [eSafety Commissioner's reporting portal](#) to request fast takedown of images or accounts.
4. Reassure your child: *“You are not in trouble. Thank you for telling me. We’ll get help together.”*



## Keeping the Conversation Going

The first talk is only the beginning. Keep communication alive with weekly ten-minute check-ins about their digitally blended life. Praise responsible choices and reassure your child that mistakes are part of learning, and your love is bigger than any problem.

**From December 2025, new laws in Australia will mean children under 16 cannot have accounts on major social media platforms.**

***“This isn’t just our family’s decision; soon it will be the law. You’ll get more time to grow skills and confidence before joining those big online spaces.”***

Encourage alternative ways to connect and create, like family-friendly apps, gaming with friends, or offline activities that give the same sense of belonging. If you feel nervous about how to keep these chats flowing, you can also use our **Chat. Chew. Connect. dinner conversation cards**. They’re designed to spark playful and reflective conversations about life in a blended world, making tricky topics feel easier, lighter, and part of everyday family life.

## What Matters Most

No child should feel alone in their mistakes. By staying calm, talking openly, and working together on boundaries, you turn a crisis into a lesson in trust, resilience, and safe digital citizenship.

Tell your child:

“

*You are loved, you are not alone; and together we’ll figure out safe ways for you to connect, create, and belong.*

”



You’ve got this.

*Dr Cat Forvate*

🔗 For more support, resources, and courses, visit [www.blendedcitizensproject.com.au](http://www.blendedcitizensproject.com.au)