



Canada's Safe Social Media Act

How will it affect children and youth?

The Canadian government introduced the Safe Social Media Act ([Bill C-34](#)) on June 10, 2026. Its stated purpose is to “[establish new safety requirements for social media services and AI chatbot services](#).” It is currently a bill, meaning it is not yet in effect.

The Centre for Healthy Screen Use developed this document to help parents, caregivers and others better understand what this bill could mean for children and youth in Canada. Details of the bill may change as it is reviewed and discussed in Parliament.



Centre for Healthy Screen Use
AT THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY



Last updated: September 2026.

healthyscreenuse.cps.ca

Bill C-34 applies to these services:

Social media services including:

- traditional social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)
- live streaming
- adult content services focused on user-shared pornographic content

AI chatbot services including:

- public-facing conversational chatbots that can mimic human-like relationships (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini)

Other online services identified by the Digital Safety Commission and Cabinet in regulations.

Bill C-34 does **not** cover private messaging features of social media or online services.



What are the goals of the Safe Social Media Act?

Bill C-34 aims to:

1. Reduce users' exposure to online harm, especially children (defined as anyone under 18 years of age);
2. Require online platforms and services to be more responsible, accountable and transparent; and
3. Establish special protections for children.

This legislation would regulate **social media services** and **AI chatbot services**.

What is meant by 'online harm'?

Bill C-34 describes 7 categories of harmful content:

- content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor;
- content that induces a child to harm themselves (including content or communication that promotes or encourages self-harm, disordered eating or suicide);
- content used to bully a child;
- content that incites violence;
- content that foments (that is, promotes or encourages) hatred;
- terrorism or violent extremism content; and
- intimate content communicated/shared without consent.

What would regulated services be required to do?

The *Safe Social Media Act* would set out rules that regulated services must follow:

1. Duty to protect children

All regulated services would be required to prioritize child safety by implementing age-appropriate protections and safeguards for children and youth. This includes design measures that reduce young people's exposure to harmful material and high-risk interactions. It would also require services to mitigate the risk of children being exposed to pornographic content.

Social media services identified by the regulations would be required to implement an age delay, preventing anyone under 16 years old from holding an account. However, social media services could seek an exemption by applying to the Digital Safety Commission to demonstrate the implementation of adequate safeguards for children.



2. Duty to act responsibly

Social media platforms would be required to:

- Take steps to reduce people's exposure to harmful content and report on what they are doing to address it
- Assess, mitigate and report on user risks posed by their services
- Provide user safety tools such as blocking and flagging content and a resource person for user concerns and questions
- Label harmful, bot-driven content and synthetic content (including deepfakes)

Chatbots would be required to:

- Take steps to mitigate the risk of harmful content communicated by AI systems (e.g. self-harm content or encouraging violence)
- Implement crisis intervention protocols if a user expresses suicidal thoughts, an intention to self-harm, or an intention to cause serious harm to another person
- Reduce the risk that the service engages in harmful behaviours, such as:
 - posing as a human being or otherwise being deceptive about being AI
 - posing as a medical, legal or other licensed professional and giving advice based on that deception
 - encouraging self-harm, suicide or acts of violence
 - encouraging an emotional attachment to the chatbot in a way that may lead the user to withdraw socially or disconnect from reality
- Provide user guidelines, flagging tools and a resource person for user concerns and questions

3. Duty to be transparent

All regulated services would have to:

- Keep records to show they are complying with the duties set out in the bill
- Share data with Commission-approved individuals conducting research or engaging in educational activities related to the Act
- Submit digital safety plans to the Commission that show what they have done to meet obligations under the *Safe Social Media Act*, as well as how effective those measures have been. Operators must also make digital safety plans publicly available in an accessible and easy-to-read format.

4. Duty to make certain content inaccessible

Social media services would be required to make content that sexually victimizes a child, revictimizes a survivor, or communicates intimate content without consent inaccessible to anyone in Canada.

Users would be able to flag content directly to the social media service, and content would need to be made inaccessible within 24 hours of identification. If users aren't satisfied with the response from the operator, they would be able to file a complaint with the Digital Safety Commission.

How would these rules be enforced?

The Digital Safety Commission of Canada would be created to support the *Safe Social Media Act*.

The Commission would create regulations, provide user support and be responsible for:

- Administering and enforcing the Act
- Developing regulations and guidance
- Assessing compliance, managing complaints, and enforcing obligations
- Setting online safety standards through research, guidance, and public education
- Reviewing regulated services' digital safety plans and granting exemptions to the age restriction.

This regulatory body would include 3 to 5 members appointed by the Governor General (on the advice of Cabinet).

Non-compliance could result in fines of up to \$10 million or 3% of regulated services' global revenue (whichever is greater) for administrative penalties or up to \$20 million or 5% of global revenue for offences under the Act.

What's the status of Bill C-34?

Bill C-34 was introduced in the House of Commons in June 2026. As with any Bill, it will be debated and closely studied. It could be amended at the parliamentary committee stage, and ultimately it will be voted on by Members of Parliament. If the bill is passed in the House of Commons, it will then go to the Senate where it also will be debated and studied. Only when the bill is passed by both chambers of Parliament will it receive Royal Assent and become law.

If the *Safe Social Media Act* is passed, the process of establishing the Digital Safety Commission, passing regulations and developing clear obligations, guidelines and standards for regulated services will begin.

See the current status of the bill here: <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/45-1/c-34>.



How to get involved right now

- Explore our [Community Toolkit](#) to learn how you can help shape safe and healthy online spaces for children and youth.
- Use our [email template](#) to write to your Member of Parliament urging them to support strong and enforceable digital safety legislation in Canada.
- Visit [Safer Online Spaces](#) to join a coalition of Canadian child health and safety organizations in advocating for safeguards that protect young people online and keep technology companies accountable.

Still have questions? Email us at info@cps.ca



**Centre for Healthy
Screen Use**

AT THE CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY



Canadian
Paediatric
Society