

**Digital Safety of Minors Bill, 2025**

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**Digital Safety of Minors Bill, 2025**

Acknowledging the pervasive influence of digital platforms on the development and well-being of minors in today's interconnected world, this bill seeks to establish a framework for the responsible and safe use of social media by implementing age-appropriate regulations, promoting parental oversight, encouraging the adoption of effective platform policies, and fostering digital literacy.

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**1. Short Title, Extent, and Commencement**

- a. This act may be called or referred to as the Digital Safety of Minors Bill, 2025.
- b. It shall come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2025.
- c. It extends to the States and Union Territories of India as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution.

**2. Definitions**

- a. **"Social Media"** is often defined as internet-based platforms that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content, enable social networking.
  - b. **"Educational Institution"** means any school, college, or university recognized by the Union or State governments.
  - c. **"Inhumane Content"** refers to any information, statement, visual representation, or narrative, which is perceived or strategically presented as detrimental to the public image, support, or success of a particular political policy, candidate, party, or movement).
  - d. **"Internet Service Provider"** is a legally recognized entity that holds a valid authorization under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, to provide internet access services, which are classified as a type of telecommunication service, to users within India through the establishment, operation, and maintenance of telecommunication networks.
  - e. **"Minor"** refers to a person domiciled in India who has not attained the age of eighteen (18) years.
  - f. **"Primary Caregivers"** refers to individuals designated as the principal providers of care and support for a dependent, such as a juvenile.
  - g. **"Secessionist Movement"** refers to the act of becoming independent and no longer part of a country, area, organization through violent means.
  - h. **"Whistleblower"** is an individual, who reports information within a public or private organisation about illegal, unethical, or harmful activities.
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**Chapter 1**  
**Responsibility of Educational Institutions.**

3. **Digital Literacy Curricula-** A committee called Digital Futures Council (hereinafter “DFC”) shall be established, consisting of experts in education technology, child psychology, cybersecurity, and data privacy. This interdisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive curriculum that not only imparts technical skills but also fosters responsible online behaviour. In collaboration with NCERT, the DFC shall develop and evaluate digital literacy curriculum in the following ways-
  - a. Calibration Activities- Establish regular "digital detox" periods combined with nature immersion and in-person social activities, followed by structured reflection on differences in cognition, and emotional states. Successful completion of these modules, evidenced by satisfactory scores on post-calibration cognitive assessments administered by the DFC, will be a prerequisite for eligibility to appear for the Class X and XII board examinations.
  - b. Developing School-Specific Resources- This would include infographics, case studies and first-hand experiences about the misuse of app permissions that would allow students to understand the concept of privacy on online platforms. Digital safety orientation will be incorporated from Class VI onwards. Participation in school-led digital safety orientation shall be strictly voluntary and contingent upon the explicit written consent of the student's primary caregiver.
  - c. Promoting Peer-to-Peer Digital Mentorship Programs- Wherein an established pool of older students shall act as mentors to younger students.
  - d. There shall be a "Digital Safety Officer" in every school who will conduct classes and make the students aware of safe internet usage.
4. **Reporting Systems-** To oversee the implementation and promotion of an accessible, and confidential system for students to report incidents of cyberbullying, online harassment, or exposure to harmful content, the following should be enforced-
  - a. The school shall establish and maintain a readily accessible online platform, featuring a user-friendly interface. This platform allows them to categorize the specific nature of the digital safety incident being reported (e.g., cyberbullying, harassment, exposure to harmful content, privacy violation, online threats)
  - b. Recognizing that not all students may feel comfortable or have immediate access to digital reporting, the school shall maintain clearly defined and well-publicized offline reporting pathways in the following ways-
    - i. They shall be directed towards designated personnel including school counsellors and cybersecurity experts.
    - ii. Offline reports will be prioritized based on the recency of the alleged incident.
    - iii. For offline reports involving students below the age of 16, any formal investigation that requires access to student digital devices or online accounts will necessitate consent from the primary caregiver. In cases where the consent is delayed or remains unavailable, the school may defer the investigation indefinitely, subject solely to internal review processes as determined by the institution's administrative discretion.
    - iv. Anonymous offline reports, while accepted, will be marked as lower priority for investigation, unless additional corroborating evidence is independently

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discovered within a 72 hour window. If no such evidence emerges, the report will be archived without further action.

5. **Monitoring Mechanisms-** The school shall implement a multi-layered filtering system that goes beyond simple keyword blocking. This system will dynamically assess the surrounding text and media to identify potentially harmful content, including but not limited to cyberbullying language, misinformation, and promotion of illegal activities, while striving to minimize the over-blocking of legitimate educational resources. This filtering will be regularly updated based on evolving online threats and best practices, and its effectiveness will be periodically reviewed by the DFC. However, schools shall not be liable for any content that bypasses the filtering system due to technical limitation or evolving digital language.

### **Chapter 2** **Restrictions**

#### 6. **Restrictions on Students-**

- a. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act or any other law for the time being in force, individuals below the age of 16 years shall be prohibited from purchasing a smartphone instead they will buy button phones.
- b. Across the entire territory of India, all internet service providers shall be mandated to suspend the provision of internet services to all users, between the hours of 10:00 PM Indian Standard Time (IST) and 06:00 AM IST daily.
- c. Children who are between 16 to 19 years of age, their screen time shall be monitored by their parents. Their screen time should not be more than an hour per day.

#### 7. **Restrictions on Adults-**

- a. Any adult with a criminal record cannot be on any social media app. Individuals found uploading any of the following onto any social media platform shall have their accounts banned-
  - i. Any content that deems to be a national threat relating to terrorism, planning of secessionist movements, disrupting public service, promoting hatred etc. In conjunction, any accounts which spread inhumane content shall also be banned.
  - ii. Uploading sensitive and explicit content which includes human trafficking, extortion etc.
- b. Accounts which spread barbaric content, for example mass killings of humans or even animals will also be banned.

### **Chapter 3** **Role of Stakeholders, Government Efforts, and Help Desk**

#### 8. **Roles of Social Media Site-**

- a. Sustain appropriate age verification using Aadhaar-linked ID or government-verifiable alternatives.
- b. Sustain transparency reports regarding child users.
- c. Maintains content moderation teams that are especially trained for working with youth-sensitive content.
- d. Primary caregivers shall have access to child accounts for monitoring.

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- e. Periodic audits and comply with government inspection.
- 9. **Role of Primary Caregivers-**
  - a. Primary Caregivers shall be compelled to use digital parental control software.
  - b. Government-led programmes will educate the primary care givers upon internet safety and internet threats.
  - c. Parental consent will be permitted to block material, restrict screen time, and view reports of use.
- 10. **Government Schemes-**
  - a. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Electronics and IT will launch in conjunction a nation-wide Digital Literacy Mission.
  - b. The campaign will include modules of cyberbullying, false news, privacy, ethics, and proper use of platforms.
  - c. The government will grant money to NGOs and schools to run awareness programmes for children and parents.
  - d. There will be one central portal that will track the usage pattern of social media and prepare reports on youth safety.
- 11. **Grievance Redressal and Help Desk-**
  - a. Each district will have a Child Cyber Protection Cell and trained officials to take care of grievances against children.
  - b. A national 24x7 helpline and internet portal for children who are abused, bullied, or distressed over the internet shall be provided.
  - c. The helpline shall remain in touch with law enforcement authorities, schools, and parents on a timely basis for redressal.
  - d. Whistleblowers platform for lodging complaints against violation of children shall be protected under this Act. In cases of non-response from schools or law enforcement authorities within 48 hours, the helpline may mark the case as resolved, depending on further information.

#### **Chapter 4** **Offences and Penalties**

- 12. **Provisions for Use of Button Phones-**In case a minor is caught using a smartphone as defined under this bill-
  - a. 3 hours' worth of government provided therapy sessions, and a fine of Rs 1,000. Therapy sessions can be conducted online if offline facilities are unavailable.
  - b. 10 hours' worth of government provided therapy sessions, and a fine of Rs 5,000. The fine may be waived in case of financial hardship, subject to a parental affidavit.
  - c. Offences hereafter- A minimum sentence of 30 days, with one therapy session worth one and a half hours once every three days. A fine of Rs 10,000. In case the therapy provider is unavailable, the requirement can be substituted with community service hours.
- 13. **Punishments Against Adults using social media in a Harmful Manner-**In case an adult is caught using social media in a harmful manner-
  - a. The minimum sentence for this offence would be-
    - i. Lifetime ban from all avenues of the internet. The lifetime ban shall not apply to professional or educational usage if approved by a certified psychologist.

- ii. A fine of Rs 50,000.
- iii. A minimum jail sentence of 1 month, which would be determined by the appropriate judicial body.
- iv. Government School students may be exempted on economic grounds. This exemption aims to create a level playing field, ensuring that economic constraints do not become barriers to their access to opportunities or resources deemed essential for their development.

14. **Punishments for Internet Service Providers**-If an internet service provider (hereafter referred to as “ISP”) supplies internet after 10pm-

- a. A 30 day ban on the ISP in the State where the internet was used after 10pm. The ban shall not apply if the ISP demonstrates that the usage was through unauthorized third-party tampering.
- b. A fine of Rs. 7 crores on the company.
- c. A judicial review upon the company.

**DISCLAIMER:**

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It is brought to light that any legal inconsistency is wholly unintentional and for the same we extend our apologies in advance.

**Statement of Object and Reason**

The escalating influence of digital connectivity on young individuals necessitates a robust policy framework to address the unique challenges posed by social media usage among minors. While acknowledging the educational and social benefits of these platforms, this Bill recognizes the significant risks of unchecked access, including cyberbullying, misinformation, privacy breaches, and adverse effects on mental health. Therefore, the primary object of this Bill is to establish a balanced regulatory environment that safeguards minors from online harms while fostering responsible digital citizenship. This will be achieved through age-appropriate restrictions, mandated platform responsibilities, promotion of parental involvement and digital literacy, and the creation of effective reporting and enforcement mechanisms, ultimately aiming to empower India's youth to leverage technology for learning and growth within a secure online space.

Gurugram  
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Cabinet