

SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR TEENS

FIND OUT WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK...



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research@childwise.co.uk



Most young people want **safer** platforms and **better protection** from harms

62%

of 11-17s want platforms to
block or remove harmful content

“Research and child-rights organisations argue that age-based bans tend to create a false sense of security, shifting attention away from deeper issues like poor platform design, weak moderation, and the need for digital literacy”

Child aged 11-17

“We use it for good reasons and there should be higher protection on those apps and sites”

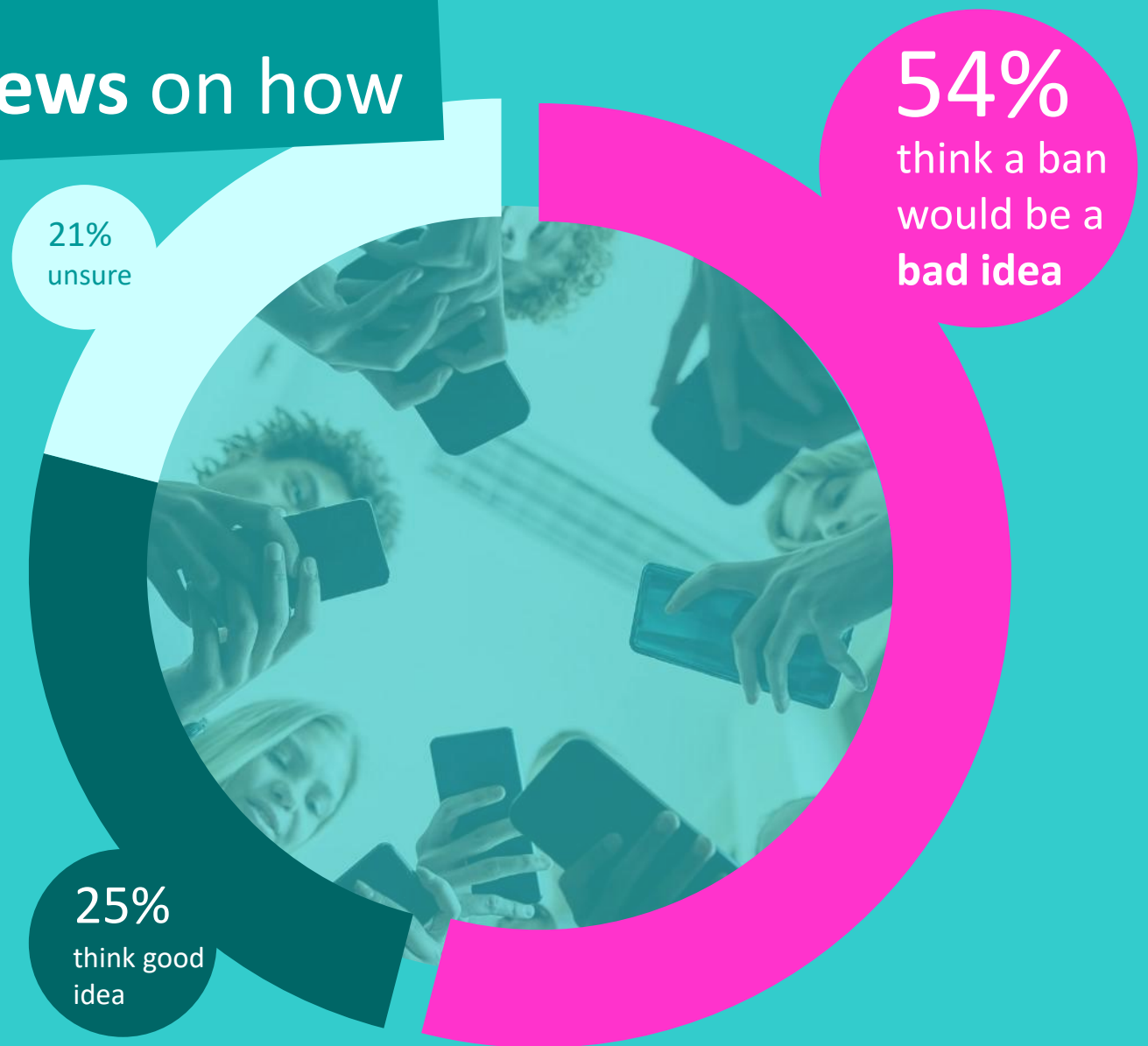
Child aged 11-17

Young people have **mixed views** on how this can be achieved

»»» Many see social media as part of who they are – a place to connect, create, and feel supported – they don't want to lose this

»»» But they also frequently come across things that affect them negatively

»»» A fifth feel unsure about whether a ban would be a good idea



Source: Survey of 1,440 children aged 7-17, conducted via the CHILDWISE Omnibus (Spring 2026)

Some children see a ban as protective...

30% think a ban would protect children from inappropriate content

12% feel it would improve physical fitness, increase time outside, and help mental health

8% argue it would reduce social media addiction and screen time and improve attention spans

8% believe it would decrease bullying

6% feel it would reduce pressures of social media and being influenced

"Makes people 'real' again and not just clones of influencers trends and each other. Stops loneliness, isolation, etc... From people who don't use social media that much like myself. Will likely be very hard to enforce though but I think it's worth it"

Child aged 11-17

"Prevents excessive influence from highly promoted misogynist, racist content and hopefully means the next generation turn out to be slightly better people on the whole"

Child aged 11-17

"I feel like kids should still have the ability to enjoy growing up without the pressures of social media"

Child aged 11-17

While others feel a ban is not the answer...

24% argue a social media ban would limit communication with their friends & family

11% feel it would limit learning and education

11% believe social media is fun and entertaining, and without it they would be bored and have nothing to do

6% think it would negatively impact mental health and restrict access to supportive online spaces

“Currently, students such as myself do not have a social space outside of schools - shops look at us as shoplifters, libraries look at us as loud nuisances, and people outside are generally threatened when they see a group of teenagers. So we use social media, and removing that would cause a decrease in students mental health”

Child aged 11-17

“A lot of people use social media as a way to feel like a part of a community that they don't have in real life”

Child aged 11-17

“I think it is a way to get young people to be unaware of politics and what is going on around the world rather than for safety. It is used to be an illusion of child safety but in reality it is for mass surveillance”

Child aged 11-17

Our qualitative work also shows nuanced relationships with social media

»»» When asked how their own lives would change without social media, kids expressed some **clear benefits** – even though they weren't in favour of an outright ban

"It would be very hard for the first month or few months, because I just use it so much to fill the time when I'm bored... there's a lot of good revising materials on social media as well. But I think if I didn't use it, then it would definitely help with sleep because. I've, I've been struggling with sleep, so I think it would just get me into a really good routine and I'd definitely like see my friends more."

Child aged 11-17

"It would be more peaceful."

Child aged 11-17

OMNIBUS

Affordable access to nationally representative youth data

Some feel the key to safer social media is
platform reform and better guidance

"It will just encourage people under the age of 16 to use those services secretly, like those under the age of 13 already do. And if something goes wrong on those platforms they know they aren't allowed to use i think it will prevent things from being spoken about and dealt with because the child will be scared to come forward if they are facing issues on social media, because they know they shouldn't actually be using it."

Child aged 11-17

✉ research@childwise.co.uk

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