

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *248
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 05.08.2026

**PROHIBITION OF HOLDING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS
FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16 YEARS**

***248. SHRI GURMEET SINGH MEET HAYER:**

Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has studied global regulatory frameworks including recent international legislations prohibiting children under 16 years from holding social media accounts to protect minors online;
- (b) if so, the details of any assessment conducted on the feasibility, digital rights implications, privacy concerns and enforcement challenges of implementing age-verification mechanisms in the country;
- (c) whether any specific guidelines put in place to regulate the use of social media platforms by educational institutions for communicating with students to protect minors from cyberbullying or harmful content and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any legislative or regulatory proposals are under consideration of the Government to mandate parental consent or age-gating measures online and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of stakeholder consultations held so far along with the proposed timeline for implementing child-safety regulations on digital platforms?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN THE REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*248 FOR 05.08.2026, REGARDING PROHIBITION OF HOLDING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16 YEARS

(a) to (e): While digital technologies have significantly enhanced access to education, communication and innovation, the Government is also cognizant of the risks associated with children's online activities, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, online exploitation and digital addiction.

The Government keeps itself informed of global developments and evolving international regulatory approaches relating to online safety, including measures adopted by different jurisdictions for protection of children in the digital environment. Such developments are examined from time to time while formulating or reviewing domestic policy and legal frameworks, keeping in view India's constitutional framework, legal requirements, technological ecosystem and the need to balance user safety, innovation, privacy and digital inclusion.

To help achieve the aim at ensuring an Open, Safe and Trusted and Accountable Internet for all users, the Government adopts a consultative approach in matters relating to the legal and regulatory framework governing the digital ecosystem and regularly engages with relevant stakeholders to examine the legal, policy and institutional framework relating to emerging issues in the cyberspace, in light of technological developments and public interest.

The Information Technology Act, 2000 ("IT Act") and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 ("IT Rules"), together, have established a framework to promote digital well-being, user safeguards and responsible digital participation.

The IT Rules require that the intermediaries observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful to children or violates any law for the time being in force.

Intermediaries, in cases where the violation involves the commission of an offence under any law currently in force such as the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 read with the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, or the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, which mandates reporting must report such offence to the appropriate authority in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law.

Recent amendments to IT Rules require social media platforms and other intermediaries to remove unlawful content within three hours of the receipt of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or reasoned intimation by the Appropriate Government or its agency.

Additionally, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 ("DPDP Act") has been enacted which establishes the legal framework to regulate the processing of digital personal data. The DPDP Act provides a legal framework for safeguarding children's privacy online. It mandates parental consent for processing children's personal data and prohibits practices detrimental to their well-being such as tracking, behavioural monitoring or targeted advertising towards children.

MeitY is implementing a project on 'Information Security Education and Awareness (ISEA)' for generating human resources in Information Security and creating general awareness on various

aspects of cyber hygiene & cyber security among the masses. So far, 6,650 awareness workshops have been conducted across the country covering 11.37 lakh+ participants, including school/college students, teachers, law enforcement, government personnel, and the general public.

Further, multilingual awareness material in the form of handbooks, short videos, posters, brochures, cartoon stories for children, etc. published and disseminated through print, electronic, social media and www.isea.gov.in & <https://staysafeonline.in/>.

CERT-In also regularly shares safety and security tips and awareness posters, info-graphics and videos on its official websites and social media handles and is aimed at sensitizing internet users on cyber security attacks and frauds including online safety measures for children.

The Ministry of Education issued the PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education in July 2020, which provide a framework for safe and effective online learning, including promotion of students' well-being and responsible use of social media and electronic devices. CBSE has supplemented these efforts through guidelines on digital etiquette, cyber-security training for teachers, publication of the 'Cyber Security Handbook', and advisories to schools for establishing Cyber Clubs to promote cyber safety awareness. NCERT has also incorporated cyber safety in its curriculum, including a chapter on "Societal Impacts" in Classes XI and XII, and CIET-NCERT has developed and disseminated resource materials on cyber safety.
