

LIFE ONLINE

Unpleasant images in social media and games

According to the country's largest survey of children's and young people's media habits, the Swedish Agency for the Media report *Ungar & medier 2025*, the most common form of exposure online is children and young people receiving disturbing images on their social media. The images, for example, show bodies from wars, accidents or shootings.

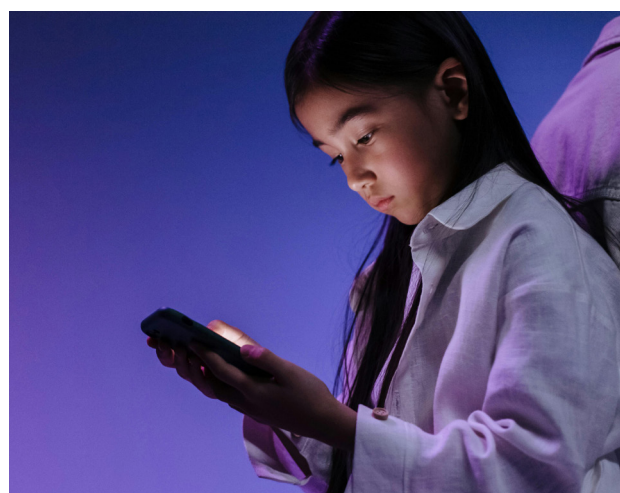
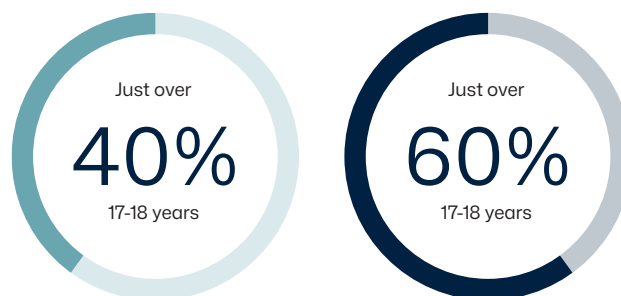
When children and young people encounter disturbing images on social media and in games, it can trigger strong emotions such as anxiety and fear. In most cases, it is enough for an adult, older sibling or friend to show understanding and offer support. Everyone feels afraid at times, and even difficult things can be discussed. At the same time, children may feel guilt or shame about having been on social media or playing games, especially if adults have previously expressed concern about them doing exactly that. The feeling among children and young people that they "should have known better" can make it harder for them to seek help or support.

Age recommendations for social media and games

For social media, the current age limit of 13 in Sweden is intended to protect children's and young people's personal privacy, whereas age recommendations for games relate to their content. Age recommendations

The proportion of children who encounter unpleasant images on their social media

Source: Youth & Media 2025 (Ungar & medier 2025), Mediemyndigheten



Tips for avoiding disturbing images in the feed

- Follow age limits and choose age-appropriate social media and games.
- Use parental controls. You can find instructions for this (parental guides) at [mediemyndigheten.se](https://www.mediemyndigheten.se).
- Be involved when your child uses social media and plays games in order to understand the content and talk about what you see and do.
- Do not blame the child if they talk about disturbing images or experiences they have encountered online. Otherwise, the child may be afraid to tell you about frightening experiences another time. Stay calm and provide support.
- Explore together what the child found disturbing or frightening and talk about how and why it created that feeling. Agree on how it can be avoided and what a better alternative would be.
- If you come across disturbing or illegal content on social media or in games, you can, under the Digital Services Act, request that platforms remove it or restrict access to it by reporting it. You can also submit a complaint to the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority if the service does not meet the requirements of the regulation.

indicate that the game contains things that may be considered inappropriate for children and young people under the specified age. For video games sold in the EU, age ratings are given in several categories: 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18 years. For video games sold in the EU, age ratings are given in several categories: 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18 years. They also label games with descriptive icons indicating violence, strong language, fear, gambling, sex, drugs, discrimination, and the ability to make in-game purchases. This gives adults an overview of a game's content without having to play it themselves, and can therefore help them decide which games are suitable for a child. Another useful source is [kollaspelet.se](https://www.kollaspelet.se), which provides information about gambling traps and monetisation in popular games but also about other risks, such as various forms of manipulative design, which are good to know about.

On the website of the Swedish Agency for the Media (Mediemyndigheten) you will find simple tips, support and materials on children's and young people's media habits for both adults and children.

The Swedish Agency for the Media monitors and analyses developments in the media sector and in children's and young people's media use. The agency also works to protect children from harmful media content.

Safer Internet Centre Sverige is a joint effort to ensure the safety of children and young people online. Swedish Agency for the Media runs Safer Internet Centre Sweden together with the children's rights organisations BRIS and ECPAT Sweden.



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