

# FAQ FOR STUDENTS

## WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE UNDER THESE NEW RULES?

As a young person:

- 👍 You have the right to report illegal or harmful content online. Reporting functions should be easy to find and easy to use.
- 👍 When you sign up to a platform, the Terms and Conditions should be easy to understand.
- 👍 You have the right not to receive targeted ads.
- 👍 You should have more control over what you see online. Platforms must have clear information in their Terms and Conditions about how their recommender systems (e.g 'for you' feeds) work.
- 👍 You have the right to be protected from harm online.

These rules aim to protect you from illegal and harmful content online, and oblige platforms to take measures so that you don't see this content.

## WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ILLEGAL OR HARMFUL CONTENT ONLINE?

- 👍 **Illegal content** online includes terrorist content, extreme violence, pornography (if you're under 18) and child sexual abuse material. Essentially, anything that is illegal offline, is illegal online too.
- 👍 **Harmful content** online includes cyberbullying, dangerous challenges, content promoting suicide or self-harm, and content promoting eating disorders.

## ARE THERE NOT RULES ALREADY IN IRELAND FOR THE ONLINE SPACE? WHAT ABOUT COCO'S LAW?

- 👍 Yes, in the past few years, there has been an introduction of new rules in Ireland which include the online space. Coco's Law (or the Harassment, Harmful Communication and Related Offences Act, 2020) addresses the sharing of intimate images online and malicious cyberbullying.
- 👍 In general, if something is illegal in the real world (death threats or harassment), they are also illegal online.



## WHAT DO I DO IF I SEE HARMFUL OR ILLEGAL CONTENT ONLINE?

- 👍 You need to report this content on the platform where you first saw it. The new rules oblige platforms to take down illegal content and to make it easy for you to report it.
- 👍 Reporting illegal content may require a slightly different process to reporting harmful content as you may need to outline the laws that the content breaks in your country.

## DO THESE RULES APPLY TO EVERY PLATFORM ON THE INTERNET?

- 👍 No. The Digital Services Act (DSA) applies to VLOPs (very large online platforms) based in Ireland that have over 45 million users (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, etc.) or VLOSE (very large online search engines) based in Ireland (Google and Bing).
- 👍 The Online Safety Code (OSC) applies to video-sharing platforms that are based in Ireland – YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, Udemy, X and LinkedIn.

## WHAT ABOUT DISINFORMATION? THAT IS HARMFUL, BUT IT IS NOT ILLEGAL. CAN I REPORT THIS?

- 👍 Some platforms allow you to report disinformation. Platforms are not obliged to remove posts because of misinformation or disinformation.
- 👍 There may be content on the internet that isn't true, that you don't agree with or you don't like, but this doesn't mean that it will be removed if you report it.
- 👍 As long as this content is not illegal or it doesn't go against the Terms and Conditions of the platform, it is unlikely to be removed.
- 👍 It is important to talk to a trusted adult about issues that concern you online. If you need help assessing the accuracy of information, have a look at our Be Media Smart website ([www.bemediasmart.ie](http://www.bemediasmart.ie)). You will find links to fact-checking organisations that you can look into.





## IF NOTHING HAPPENS AFTER I REPORT THIS ILLEGAL/HARMFUL CONTENT, WHAT DO I DO THEN?

If there is no way to report this content, or if the platform doesn't remove the content in a timely way and doesn't explain why, you can report this to Coimisiún na Meán.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I REPORT TO COIMISIÚN NA MEÁN?

- 👍 You will be asked some questions so that we can look into the issue. Sometimes, Coimisiún na Meán will be unable to help you, and you may be directed to an organisation that can.
- 👍 Coimisiún na Meán doesn't have the powers to immediately take down illegal content from the internet. However, if it finds a platform is systematically breaking the rules, Coimisiún na Meán can start an investigation. If this investigation finds that the platform has broken the rules, the platforms can be fined up to €20 million.

**VISIT:**  
**[www.cnam.ie](http://www.cnam.ie)**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**



**Coimisiún  
na Meán**