

To: Vermont Principals and Superintendents
 From: The Vermont Coalition for Phone- and Social Media-Free Schools
 Date: August 12, 2025
 Subject: **LEGISLATIVE ALERT** – New Law Prohibits Schools From Using Social Media to Communicate Directly With Students

Disclaimer: Nothing in this memo should be interpreted as legal advice. We are advocates and parents informed by independent peer-reviewed research sharing best practice information that maintains fidelity to the intent of the law.

On June 27, 2025, Governor Phil Scott signed [H.480/Act 72](#), the miscellaneous education bill, which includes the Phone- and Social Media-Free Schools Bill. The bill requires that students' phones and personal electronic devices be stored away from arrival to dismissal (or "bell-to-bell"), and also prohibits schools from using social media to communicate directly with students.

The provision related to storing phones and personal electronic devices from bell-to-bell requires school districts to adopt a relevant policy by July 1, 2026 to be implemented for the start of the '26-'27 school year. The Agency of Education and representatives from the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont Independent Schools Association, and the Vermont Coalition for Phone- and Social Media-Free Schools will be drafting model policy for this portion of the law and sharing it with schools by January 1, 2026.

The social media prohibition is now law in the state of Vermont. This [letter from 2022](#), signed by over 50 subject matter experts and organizations, illuminates the need for this law – we highly recommend reading it.

The intent of this memo is to support all principals and superintendents in understanding the new rules to ensure compliance and a smooth transition for schools with regard to use of social media products. Schools that fail to comply may risk legal action for non-compliance.

The provision related to social media reads as follows:

§ 584. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN EDUCATION

Schools, school districts, and supervisory unions shall be prohibited from:

(1) utilizing social media for communication with students directly unless the program or platform is approved for such communication by the school district or independent school; provided, however, that any approved communication program or platform shall allow school officials to archive all communications and prevent all communications from being edited or deleted once a communication has been sent; and

(2) requiring students to use social media for out-of-school academic work, school sports, extracurricular clubs, or any other out-of-school school sponsored activities.

Best Practices That Comply With New Social Media Law

The House and Senate Education Committees decided not to define social media in statute, seeing as technology is constantly evolving and an apt definition today may become obsolete rather quickly.

As school decision-makers, it's helpful to think about the aim of this new law. We heard numerous examples of school staff requiring students to use social media products to, for instance, participate in team sports, post about student council, or even direct message (DM) their teachers on Instagram. It is irresponsible for schools to require (or encourage) students to use any product that has not been proven safe for kids, and – according to former US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and many others – social media falls squarely in that category.

When deciding if a program or platform is an appropriate communication tool, consider the two requirements spelled out in the bill:

- 1) Can the communication be archived by school officials?
- 2) Can all communications be saved as sent, meaning unedited and complete?

If the answer to both questions is “yes,” then a school or district could approve the platform for the purpose of communicating directly with students.

Examples of existing social media platforms that schools should not use to communicate directly with students include: Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Facebook, X, and Discord. These platforms would not allow school officials to archive all communications, nor can schools guarantee that messages be preserved as sent.

Schools, school districts, and school employees may still maintain a social media presence to provide information to the public, but that account may not be used to communicate directly with students or as a way to provide information to students.

Communication Solutions

The VT Coalition for Phone- and Social Media-Free Schools encourages schools to prioritize use of the following communication methods:

- 1) The school's website
- 2) Email / e-newsletters (using school email)
- 3) In-person assemblies and meetings
- 4) Traditional communications (e.g. phone calls, letters/flyers sent home with students)
- 5) Physical bulletin board located near the school entrance and other locations where students and/or caregivers congregate

A Brief Note About YouTube

Though commonly used at all grade levels in schools today, and therefore viewed by many as an integral classroom resource, YouTube is a social media platform. The content that students access (sometimes inadvertently) can range from inappropriate to harmful, and with features like autoplay, it is designed to be addictive. School use should be limited to videos that are vetted by teachers with auto-play turned off and an ad-blocker enabled (a “how-to” memo on this practice will be available soon!). Students should not be asked to do research on YouTube.

Acceptable and Appropriate Communication Alternatives

Communication examples that are no longer in compliance with the law	Communication solution that complies with best practice and legal requirements
Student Council uses Instagram to communicate with the student body	Student Council uses school email to communicate with student body; posts meeting schedules or other announcements on school website
Coach or club advisor asks students to communicate using Snapchat or Instagram	Non-social media app that enables communication without algorithms and is visible to coaches and parents; allow families to opt-in to their preferred media – email, text, or both; group email thread; Google chat
Teacher asks students to create social media account for “digital literacy” or to “learn how” to use social media.	Teacher may create their own social media account and display on a whiteboard relevant aspects of the product while giving a “media literacy” lesson
Teacher asks students to research something on YouTube as part of a homework assignment	Teacher embeds YouTube link they want to share with students; the video needs to stop when finished and not have algorithmic recommendations that push more content As a matter of best practice, schools should disable access to YouTube from school-issued devices so that students cannot access it directly
Teacher answers student questions via Instagram direct messaging (DMs)	Teacher answers student questions in-person, via email, or through the chat function offered by the school’s email platform (e.g. Google Chat)