

# HB166 INTRODUCED



1 HB166  
2 6D7FZ1Z-1  
3 By Representatives Hulsey, Collins, Baker, Faulkner, DuBose  
4 RFD: Education Policy  
5 First Read: 04-Feb-25

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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, a local board of education may permit a pupil to carry or use a pocket pager, cellular telephone, or other electronic communication device while on school property. This bill would repeal that law.

This bill would prohibit a student from using, operating, or possessing a wireless communications device on public elementary or secondary school grounds during the instructional day subject to certain exceptions and subject to written policies adopted by a local board of education to implement this act.

This bill would require each local board of education to adopt an internet safety policy that addresses student access to the internet on district-owned devices.

This bill would require students to receive instruction on the risks and benefits of social media and how to use social media safely prior to entering the eighth grade.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

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29           Relating to public K-12 education; to prohibit the use,  
30 operation, and possession of wireless communication devices on  
31 certain public school properties; to require local boards of  
32 education to adopt an Internet safety policy; to add Section  
33 16-40-13, Code of Alabama 1975, to require students to  
34 complete a social media safety course prior to entering the  
35 eighth grade; and to repeal Section 16-1-27.

36 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

37           Section 1. (a) The Legislature finds:

38           (1) Each student in an Alabama public K-12 school should  
39 be college- or career-ready upon high school graduation.

40           (2) Many high school teachers believe that cell phones  
41 and other electronic communication devices are distracting  
42 students in the classroom.

43           (3) Studies have shown that cell phones and other  
44 electronic communication devices are negatively impacting  
45 learning outcomes.

46           (4) Studies have shown that increased social media usage  
47 may negatively affect the mental health of school-aged  
48 children.

49           Section 2. (a) As used in this section, the following  
50 terms have the following meanings:

51           (1) INSTRUCTIONAL DAY. The period of time during which a  
52 public elementary or secondary school is open and in session  
53 for purpose of meeting the minimum number of instructional  
54 days or hours pursuant to Section 16-13-231. The term also  
55 includes any other time specified in a wireless communication  
56 device policy.

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57 (2) WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICE. A cellular telephone,  
58 tablet computer, laptop computer, pager, gaming device, or any  
59 other portable electronic device identified in a wireless  
60 communication device policy that has the capability of  
61 exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with  
62 another electronic device.

63 (3) WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICE POLICY. A written  
64 policy adopted by a local board of education to implement this  
65 section.

66 (b) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, no student  
67 shall use or operate any wireless communication device in any  
68 public elementary or secondary school building or on the  
69 grounds thereof during the instructional day.

70 (c) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, no student  
71 may possess a wireless communication device in any public  
72 elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds  
73 thereof during the instructional day unless the wireless  
74 communication device is turned off and stored in a locker,  
75 backpack, car, or similar storage location.

76 (d) Notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c), a student  
77 may use, operate, or possess a wireless communication device  
78 in a public elementary or secondary school building or on the  
79 grounds thereof during the instructional day in any of the  
80 following circumstances:

81 (1) The use, operation, or possession is pursuant to the  
82 student's Individualized Education Program, Individualized  
83 Accommodation Plan, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Health  
84 Plan.

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85           (2) The use, operation, or possession is for educational  
86 or learning purposes under the supervision of local board of  
87 education personnel.

88           (3) The use, operation, or possession occurs during an  
89 emergency threatening the health, safety, or well-being of the  
90 student or another person.

91           (4) The use, operation, or possession is for a health,  
92 safety, family or educational purpose as authorized in a  
93 wireless communication device policy.

94           (e) No later than July 1, 2026, each local board of  
95 education shall adopt a wireless communication device policy.  
96 The wireless communication device policy shall permit students  
97 to use, possess, and operate wireless communication devices  
98 for a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed ten minutes,  
99 during the instructional day during the time set by the  
100 policy. The wireless communication device policy shall include  
101 consequences for violations. The local board of education  
102 shall reasonably distribute the wireless communication device  
103 policy to students, parents, faculty, and staff.

104           Section 3. (a) No later than July 1, 2026, each local  
105 board of education shall adopt an internet safety policy that  
106 addresses student access to the internet on devices owned by  
107 the local board of education.

108           (b) The policy shall do all of the following:

109           (1) Limit internet access by students to only  
110 age-appropriate subject matters and materials deemed  
111 age-appropriate pursuant to the policy.

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112 (2) Protect the safety and security of students when  
113 using email, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic  
114 communication.

115 (3) Prohibit access by students to unlawfully obtained  
116 data or information, including hacking, and other unlawful  
117 online activity by students.

118 (4) Prevent access to websites, web applications, or  
119 software that exposes students to the disclosure, use, or  
120 dissemination of their personal information.

121 (5) Prohibit and prevent students from accessing social  
122 media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher  
123 solely for educational purposes.

124 Section 4. Section 16-40-13 is added to the Code of  
125 Alabama to read as follows:

126 "§ 16-40-13

127 (a) No later than July 1, 2026, the State Department of  
128 Education shall develop and approve an asynchronous, digitally  
129 delivered course that addresses the risks of using social  
130 media and how to use social media safely.

131 (b) At a minimum, the course shall include the following  
132 topics:

133 (1) The benefits of safely using age-appropriate social  
134 media platforms, including career and resume building for  
135 future academic or employment opportunities; sharing  
136 information with family and friends; and safely connecting  
137 with other users with similar interests.

138 (2) The risks of social media use including its negative  
139 effects on mental health, including addiction; the

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140 distribution of misinformation on social media; how social  
141 media manipulates behavior; the permanency of sharing  
142 materials online.

143 (3) Safe practices for using social media including how  
144 to report suspicious behavior; how to identify cyberbullying,  
145 phishing and scam communications, predatory behavior, and  
146 human trafficking; and maintaining personal security and  
147 preventing oversharing of personal information.

148 (c) The Department of Education shall make the course  
149 available online and each local board of education shall  
150 reasonably notify parents of its availability. Each local  
151 board of education shall deliver the course to all students  
152 prior to entering the eighth grade and shall make the course  
153 available to students in grades eight through 12 who transfer  
154 to the school district or who otherwise have not completed the  
155 course.

156 (d) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to  
157 implement the provisions of this section."

158 Section 5. Section 16-1-27, Code of Alabama 1975,  
159 providing for the use of electronic communications devices on  
160 school property, is repealed.

161 Section 6. This act shall become effective immediately  
162 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its  
163 otherwise becoming law.