



KEA GUIDANCE REGARDING SB181

BY KEA LEGAL SERVICES, June 2025

During the 2025 Legislative Session the Kentucky General Assembly passed SB181 requiring any and all electronic communications between school employees/volunteers and students to occur on a traceable communication system (application or program) designated by the local board of education. The KEA Board voted to oppose the bill, as we shared with members via KEA communications and the online KEA Bill Tracker Report during the session. The bill becomes law effective June 27, 2025, and must be implemented by local districts for the coming school year.

BILL SUMMARY

- **ANY** electronic communication between a district employee or volunteer and a student must occur on the traceable communication system adopted by the local board.
- **ANY** electronic communication with a student outside of that system is deemed an “unauthorized electronic communication” and shall result in disciplinary action against the employee by the district and the EPSB. Any volunteer violating the policy shall be banned.

EXCEPTIONS

- If the employee/volunteer is a family member of the student, defined as a parent, brother, sister, son, daughter, aunt, uncle or grandparent, or;
- If the student’s parent signs and files a written consent authorizing a specific school employee to communicate electronically with their child outside of the board’s designated system and files it with the school office BEFORE the student communication occurs. A separate form must be filed for each employee or volunteer being granted consent and the consent is not transferable to any other school employee/volunteer. WRITTEN PARENTAL CONSENT CAN BE REVOKED AT ANY TIME.

NOT EXCEPTED

- Family members not specifically listed in the statute (step-parents, cousins, family friends, etc.).

- Outside work activities that do not involve school duties but require communicating with students of the district (i.e. summer leagues, church groups, boy/girl scouts, tutoring, music lessons, summer camps, etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do NOT volunteer to load the district's designated program(s) or app(s) on your personal phone due to privacy and security concerns. Only use the designated program/app on a school supplied device (laptop, tablet, work cellphone).
- DO follow your local board policy.
- Do NOT communicate directly with any student (other than a family member fitting the definition above) through your personal cellphone, personal email, or social media apps.
- Do NOT provide students with your personal cellphone number, personal email, or social media addresses.
- DO obtain written consent from the parent and file a copy with the administrative office of the student's school PRIOR TO any electronic communication with a student if the communication will occur outside of the district designated program(s). Keep a copy.
- Do NOT respond to any unsolicited electronic communication from any student outside of the designated program(s)/app(s) if written parental consent has not been obtained and properly filed.
- If you have non-school related obligations that require you to communicate with students outside of the school setting, contact your KEA Uniserv Director for guidance prior to engaging in communications.
- Do not worry about hypothetical situations but do contact KEA if you have a real-life conflict with the new law BEFORE you act.