

The Vermont Kids Code

What Educators Should Know

What is The Vermont Kids Code?

The Vermont Kids Code is a consumer protection bill that would require companies to design safer products from the start. Many online products and services are designed to keep users on, coming at the expense of kids' and teens' developmental health. Kids should be in distraction-free environments where they can focus on learning and develop healthy habits and relationships with online technologies. By addressing the design of online products, the Vermont Kids Code takes an upstream approach to ensuring healthy brain development and overall happier, healthier learners.

How Does it Help?

Just like medical professionals have a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of their patients, the Vermont Kids Code creates an overarching “duty of care” that requires companies to design their online products with the “best interests of children” in mind.

Companies will be directly responsible for designing their products to enhance kids' safety and well-being by protecting privacy and removing harmful and manipulative designs from the outset. As a result of design codes, platforms have instituted various changes, making their products better for kids. Examples include:

- Limiting endless scroll and autoplay, which reduces digital distractions to allow for maintained focus
- Restricting excessive data collection, which enables more organic exploration and self-discovery without constant profiling and targeting
- Introducing built-in screen time limits, privacy controls, and removal of negative feedback loops, which models and reinforces healthy technology use habits
- Removing manipulative features like “likes” and “streaks”, which reduces peer pressure and social comparison, allowing individuals to focus on their own interests offline

What About EdTech Programs?

Instead of focusing only on specific products, such as social media or online gaming, the Vermont Kids Code would apply to all online products reasonably likely to be accessed by kids, including AI and EdTech products. Unbeknownst to many parents and educators, online products frequently used in the classroom evade federal and state student data privacy laws. The Vermont Kids Code would close this gap and ensure that all online products used by kids, including EdTech products, are subject to the highest privacy standards, do not collect and sell kids' data, and do not use manipulative designs to trick kids into sharing their data.

- 96% of school tech products expose student data to advertisers and other third parties¹
- Kids data has been used to profile them, target them with messaging and products, and more²
- The \$3.1 billion a year EdTech Surveillance industry profits off the collection and sale of student data³

The Vermont Kids Code ensures that we create an online world that is safe and age appropriate wherever kids are online, including on the digital products used at school.

For more information visit please email info@VTKidsCode.com or visit VermontKidsCode.com

1. Keierleber, Mark. “Startling 96% of School Tech Exposes Student Data, Research Finds.” *The 74*, 3 Jan. 2023.
2. “What’s at Stake.” The Student Data Privacy Project, 20 Oct. 2021.
3. American Civil Liberties Union. *Digital Dystopia The Danger in Buying What the EdTech Surveillance Industry Is Selling*.