
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 957 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY DAVIS, MURT, DRISCOLL, FITZGERALD, KORTZ, PICKETT,
PASHINSKI, BULLOCK AND KIRKLAND, MARCH 27, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 27, 2017

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in terms and courses of study,
6 providing for Internet safety education curriculum.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
11 section to read:

12 Section 1555. Internet Safety Education Curriculum.--(a)
13 The department, in consultation with the Office of Attorney
14 General, shall establish an age-appropriate curriculum for
15 Internet safety instruction of students in kindergarten through
16 grade twelve. Beginning with the school year that commences
17 after the effective date of this section, a school district
18 shall incorporate into the school curriculum a component on
19 Internet safety to be taught at least once each school year to
20 students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The school board

1 shall determine the scope and duration of this unit of
2 instruction. The age-appropriate unit of instruction may be
3 incorporated into the current courses of study regularly taught
4 in the district's schools, as determined by the school board.
5 Such instruction shall be chosen from a menu of options
6 developed by the department, which shall include, but not be
7 limited to, the following topics:

8 (1) Safe and responsible use of social networking websites,
9 chat rooms, e-mail, bulletin boards, instant messaging and other
10 means of communication on the Internet.

11 (2) Recognizing, avoiding and reporting online solicitations
12 of students, their classmates and their friends by sexual
13 predators.

14 (3) Risks of transmitting personal information on the
15 Internet.

16 (4) Recognizing and avoiding unsolicited or deceptive
17 communications received online.

18 (5) Recognizing and reporting online harassment and cyber
19 bullying.

20 (6) Reporting illegal activities and communications on the
21 Internet.

22 (7) Copyright laws on written materials, photographs, music
23 and video.

24 (b) The department may develop curricula to serve the
25 instructional needs of multiple grades of students, such as one
26 curriculum for elementary school students, one curriculum for
27 middle school students and one curriculum for high school
28 students.

29 (c) In developing the Internet safety education curriculum,
30 the department shall take into consideration similar curricula

1 in other states and other curricular materials suggested by
2 education experts, child psychologists or technology companies
3 that work on child online safety issues. The department shall
4 also conduct a thorough review of publicly available materials
5 on the topics of safe online communications, privacy protection,
6 cyber bullying, viewing inappropriate material, file-sharing and
7 the importance of open communications with responsible adults.
8 The department shall make such resource materials that it deems
9 appropriate available on its publicly accessible Internet
10 website.

11 (d) Curricula devised in accordance with subsection (a)
12 shall be developed within six (6) months of the effective date
13 of this section.

14 (e) A parent or legal guardian of a student who is under
15 eighteen (18) years of age, within a reasonable period of time
16 after the request is made, shall be permitted to examine the
17 Internet safety curriculum instructional materials at the school
18 in which the student is enrolled.

19 (f) At the request of a parent or guardian, a student shall
20 be excused from all or parts of the Internet safety curriculum
21 instruction. The principal shall notify all parents or guardians
22 of their ability to withdraw their children from instruction in
23 the curriculum by returning a signed opt-out form.

24 (g) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
25 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

26 "Department." The Department of Education of the
27 Commonwealth.

28 "Office of Attorney General." The Office of Attorney General
29 of the Commonwealth.

30 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.