

The Truth about Kooth



Kooth is digital mental health platform being piloted in Pennsylvania for grades 6-12, with school districts deciding whether or not to participate. Children 14 and over can participate *without* parental knowledge or consent.

- **Excludes The Parent:** Kooth encourages children to go around their parent or a trusted loved one for help. Parents do not get to choose the adult who will be advising their child on critical mental health concerns. If the child displays concerning signs when using the platform, Kooth contacts the school instead of the parent.¹
- **Children Become Vulnerable:** Children are not mature enough to understand the potential future consequences of discussing mental health concerns on a chat site. Additionally, Kooth admits that data that they collect will be used for research purposes and marketing purposes.²
- **Increased Social Media/Online Messaging:** Kooth does not provide therapy in-person, nor through video conferencing. Services include peer-to-peer messaging, message boards, articles, and sometimes, practitioner-to-child messaging. Students are encouraged to go online to solve mental health problems; meanwhile, the U.S. Surgeon General recently released an official advisory about the negative effects social media has on youth mental health.³ This program is experimental; no other state has used it through the public school system.

Parents deserve to be informed.

Pennsylvania's minor consent laws, which allow for children to consent to mental health services at age 14, push parents out of the picture too soon.

¹ <https://us.kooth.com/philasd/parent-faqs>

² <https://us.kooth.com/privacy>

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/23/surgeon-general-issues-new-advisory-about-effects-social-media-use-has-youth-mental-health.html>

