

Internet and Phone Use Contract

Your teen may be starting to test their independence, may rely on your guidance less, and may be venturing more into the online world for connection, fun, and guidance.

Yes, guidance. Google may have become a very 'trusted' source of information in your teen's life.

It's important that you are involved in their online world and the choices they make.

You must be their most trusted source of guidance, and that starts with being super clear about how technology is used in your home and on your child's devices (that includes their phone, inside and outside the home).



Goal = informed decisions and actions leading to positive consequences

Teenagers (up to the age of 18) use technology most often for entertainment and communication. While technology is a great tool for such fun experiences, it comes with some real risks.

There has been a significant increase in the number of teens with access to smart phones and using wireless hot spots. Much of this sort of access happens outside of your home.

I suggest you create a technology contract WITH your teen.

This is a great place to start a conversation about how technology will be used and why these rules are important. It is a respectful discussion of the issues and allows your teen's point of view to be heard and considered. Such involvement is likely to improve the success of the contract.

Use the one attached as a place to start. Be quiet, and really listen. She or he may have some really important points to be included.

Having said that, disregard the 'but everyone else has it' or the 'everyone else is allowed to' arguments. Research conducted in Australia in 2013 found that more than 1 in 10 teenagers don't access the Internet at all (ACMA).



Consider contacting your child's school to clarify just how much of their homework requires Internet connection. You may be surprised by how little is needed in a week.

Do what is right for your family based on your research and on your child's nature. Your child will still have friends and be successful in school and sport without that app they think they can't live without right now!

Discuss the 'why' of any issues (for example, illegal downloads are not tolerated in our home; it's stealing and an offence punishable by conviction and huge fines).

Make sure the conversation stays open to ensure your teen understands you are paying attention, you're involved, and you have the skills to make informed decisions and help them.

Everyone signs and dates the contract.

You may decide to have a review date in six months to make any changes and celebrate success.

Print off the contract below, and use it as a base for the one that works for your family.

Feel free to share this with other families or with other custodial parents. These sorts of safety measures work best when all responsible adults act consistently (see also the fact sheet for 'dual household families').

In the event this isn't possible, make sure your child understands why the rules are important and that the consequences of mistakes can be life changing. They are old enough to be held criminally responsible for their behaviour.

Does your child say they're not online 'that often'?

Test it out.

Use the calendar provided in this tool box to log access to the Internet, use of social networks, TV viewing, and mobile phone use. You may all find it interesting.

Why don't you do it too and see how your example may be impacting your children?

Technology Contract

TEENAGER

I understand that the use of Internet technology is a privilege that is subject to these rules, which I agree to follow:

1. TIME

- I will not use my phone or the Internet after _____ p.m.
- I will stop using my phone or the Internet when asked by my parent(s) or carer.
- I will only use my phone or the Internet at times decided by my family.
 - Gaming is restricted to weekends only during school term.
- On weekends and the holidays, I can use technology for _____ hours a day.
- I will complete the 'Where does the time go' calendar to plan my schedule.

2. SAFETY

- When I'm at home, I will only use my phone or Internet in a place where my parents decide.
 - Public rooms such as the living room, dining room
- I will advise my parents/carers about any software, apps, or games I am downloading.
- I will not access over 18 content or images.
- I will not create or share inappropriate images.
- I will inform my parents as to which social networking, websites, and gaming accounts I have on the Internet.
- I understand my parents can ask me questions and talk to me about what programs I am using and who I am communicating with or connected to on the Internet.
- I will not share any passwords with anybody except my parents.
- I will protect my family and my identity while sharing on social networks such as Facebook (specifically photographs and identifying information).



3. RESPECT

- I will be respectful of others on the Internet.
- I will not use language online that is abusive, hurtful, or obscene.
- I will follow the rules my parent(s) make about phone and Internet use.
- I will **not** get involved in online disputes or arguments on my phone or the Internet.
- I acknowledge that the use of technology is a privilege and is extra to my responsibilities (e.g., homework, chores, work, and other commitments).
- I acknowledge that if the rules aren't abided by, I may lose access to technology for a period of time.
- I acknowledge that my parents can choose suitable consequences for my failure to work within these rules.

PARENT

I understand it is my role and responsibility to protect, educate, and empower my teenager to enjoy all of the benefits technology has to offer.

- I will remember that technology is part of my child's life.
- It is my responsibility to help my child if I am aware they are having a problem online.
- I will listen and talk to my child about technology.
- I will make sure I have rules and boundaries in place so my child knows what they can and can't do.
- I will be calm and grateful when my child comes to me with a problem, and we will work together to resolve the situation.
- I will not do more than necessary, and I will maintain my child's trust by behaving respectfully while in their online world.

Teenager

Date _____

Parent

Date _____