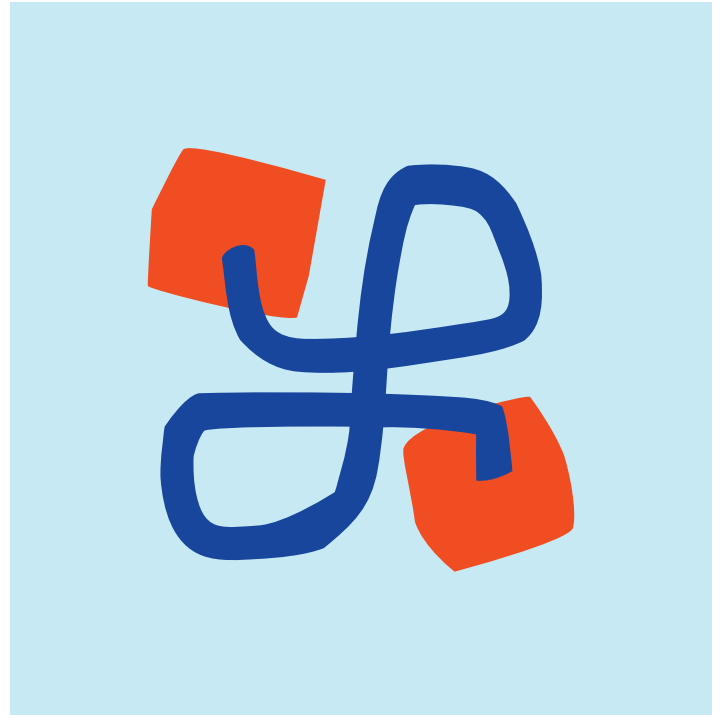


# Technology



Is every kid ready for total privacy online just because they're in high school? Of course not—just like every 16 year old isn't automatically mature enough for a driver's license. But at this age, expect your child to push back on the concept of shared passwords and shared social media accounts. If over the years they've earned your trust and are ready for more freedom, consider giving it to them. If they haven't, discuss what they can do to move toward that. In a few short years they're going to jump out into the world. Give them space to practice that freedom now in the safety of your home.

**Your role during this phase is to...**

Help them expand their potential so your child will establish personal boundaries and leverage online opportunities.

This guide is designed to help you meet your high schooler where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep

this end goal in mind: Technological responsibility means leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.

Continued on next page 

# Tips to Help High Schoolers Navigate Technology

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

## To high schoolers...

### SAY THINGS LIKE

"How do you use \_\_\_\_\_?" (Know what apps they have and how they use them.)

"Can you set up a playlist for me?"

"Who's your favorite person to follow?" (Discover who they listen to online.)

"What are some freedoms I have online that you don't have yet?" (Discuss plans for increasing freedom and responsibility over the next four years.)

"What you post is public, even if it feels private. And it can be permanent." (Help them recognize potential risks related to the words, images, and videos they create.)

"You cannot use your phone to text or call while driving." (Have clear expectations for cell phones and driving.)

"Let's split the bill 80/20." (Consider sharing the bill.)

"I'm so impressed with your Etsy shop."

"It would help me to share our calendars so we can coordinate meals."

"Did you know we could write letters to our Compassion@ child online?" (Find ways to use technology to connect to a global mission.)

"Can I see what you've been creating lately?" (Show interest in everything from art to engineering to design to fan websites.)

"What's the best way for me to talk to you during the day?" (This will be more efficient as well as help you learn how they communicate)

"Look where I am today. I'm thinking about you!" (Share pictures with each other.)

"I'm so proud of you. Would it be okay if I post a picture to share your accomplishment?" (Model online respect.)

## Remember

The high school years are the years to mobilize their potential. Your teenager is approaching adulthood with freedom on the horizon. The conversations you have today will help prepare them to make wise choices concerning technology for the rest of their lives. Stay informed. Stay involved. And keep the conversation going.

Continued on next page 

# Tips to Help High Schoolers Navigate Technology

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future.

## Enhance the Conversation

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities to try:

**Leverage technology for good.** Encourage your teen to find an existing cause they are interested in that uses social media or the Internet as a primary form of communication. Challenge them to think of ways they can use their own social media accounts to bring attention to the cause, and promote the organization or issue.

**THINK about it.** Help your high schooler maintain digital integrity by monitoring what they post. Make it clear that you will always “follow” and “friend” and “subscribe” to any social media app or site they’re a part of. Talk about the permanency and ramifications of anything posted to the Internet. A good acronym to give them is THINK, and to ask, “Is what I’m posting ...”

- T – True?
- H – Helpful?
- I – Inspiring?
- N – Necessary?
- K – Kind?

If the post doesn’t pass the “THINK” test, it’s not worth posting. Write down this acronym and post it somewhere visible. Also assure them that if you have an issue with something they post, you will talk with them about it offline—not online.

**Your technology world.** While all of us know that no one inherently understands technology better than a teenager, as adults we do know

a thing or two. Let your teen into your technology world. Maybe you use software to keep track of your finances or pay bills online. You can be a whiz at spreadsheets, putting together a presentation, or maybe you use a Bible app or health tracker. Share your technology skills, and in turn, let your son or daughter teach you some things as well.

*This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application.*

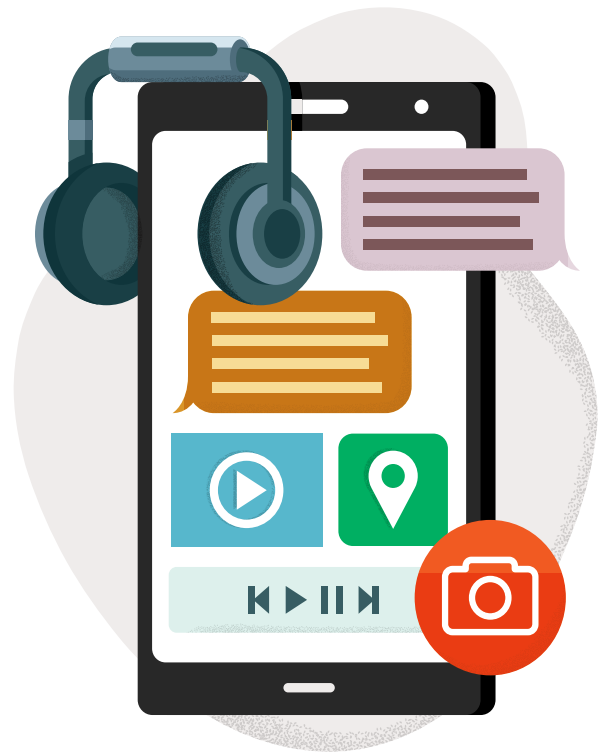
*To discover more ways to understand this phase, check out the Parenting Your... book series. For more on this subject, check out the Parenting in a Tech World online course. Both are available at [parentcuestore.org](http://parentcuestore.org).*

*It’s never too late to talk about our relationship with technology—even if your teen has had a cell phone for years. We’ve included a Cell Phone Agreement with this download so you can both talk about healthy usage, and hold one another accountable.*

**For more information on The Phase Project and other great parent resources, visit [theParentCue.org](http://theParentCue.org). ©2023 Parent Cue. All rights reserved.**

# A Letter to Parents

You're about to take a big step with your kid. Sure, they've been telling you for months that everyone has their own phone—so it shouldn't be that big of a deal, right? **Only, it is.**



A phone can mean so many things...

- Freedom
- Privacy
- Entertainment
- Access
- Connection

Most of us are attached to our phones more than we'd like to admit. Sometimes, we even call people with them! One important thing to remember is that a personal phone is a tool. A powerful tool that can be used for good, and one that can also be used for harm. That's why we believe that giving your child a smartphone should be more than just a hand-off or opening a gift. In fact, we recommend not giving it to them as a gift at all, but to make clear that it's yours and on-loan. Better yet, "lend" them a hand-me-down and you will have more leverage than you would otherwise.

Regardless, we suggest sitting down with your kid before they get their phone

to discuss a plan and set a few guidelines and expectations about how they will use it. It's helpful for them to know that having a phone is a privilege that is earned, not something they are entitled to.

It's always easier to give freedom over time than to take something away, but it's not impossible. So even if you've set things in motion before having this conversation, it's not too late to take a few steps back to re-evaluate and adjust.

In this cell phone agreement, there are expectations for both parent and kid. So, go through it together, and talk about it along the way.

And promise us this—don't let this be the last time you talk about technology. Hold each other accountable for the things you initialed. As technology changes—and technology will—talk about how each of you can use it in healthy ways. And remember, how you use your technology also becomes a model for how your kid will use it, too.

One of the best ways you will get to use it now is connecting with your child in meaningful ways. So go ahead and text them some encouraging words or share a funny meme.

And welcome to a whole new world of parenting!

# Cell Phone Agreement

## For Kids

Getting a cell phone is a big deal! And we think you're ready for this next big step toward becoming responsible with technology. You will be communicating with the world in a whole new way!

This device is a powerful tool that can be used for good, but also for harm—whether that's harm to you, or harm to others. So, to keep you safe, let's agree on some smart guidelines for how and when you will use it.

Read through the following list and initial next to each item to show agreement with each point.

- 
- |       |   |       |   |
|-------|---|-------|---|
| _____ | I understand that having a personal phone comes with great responsibility. I realize that I can't have full access at once, but can earn more freedom over time.  | _____ | If I receive any inappropriate images, I will tell my parent(s). I know I will never get in trouble for something that someone else sends me as long as I tell someone.   |
| _____ | I will always share my password(s) with my parent(s). This also includes social media accounts.   | _____ | I will tell my parent(s) if I'm being bullied or harassed by anyone, or if I receive something alarming from someone I don't know.  |
| _____ | My parent(s) has/have the right to look through my phone at any time and without my permission. I know this is for my safety as I learn to make wise decisions.   | _____ | I am aware that my parent(s) will occasionally track my location using features associated with my phone. This will keep me safe and help to earn more freedom over time.   |
| _____ | I will not take my phone to my room at night, but will leave it (Location:) _____ by _____ p.m.   | _____ | I understand that there will be filters in place to limit my access to the internet; these are for my safety.   |
| _____ | When I start to drive, I will <b>never</b> text and drive. Not only is it dangerous, but it's illegal.  | _____ | I will request permission for the apps I download. I realize that I may be told no, especially when there are age limitations.  |
| _____ | If I lose or damage my phone and want to repair it or replace it, I will work to earn the money.  | _____ | Just like I would be careful who I invite into my room, I will not video call anyone from my room or in private.  |
| _____ | I will always show good manners to any person who is in front of me by putting my phone away and looking into their eyes when they are talking.   | _____ | If I break this agreement, I know this phone will be taken away for a period of time until I can regain trust.  |
| _____ | I will never bully or harass anyone using my phone. That includes joining in on conversations that tease or make fun of others.   | _____ | I understand that how I use my phone will impact my future in ways I may never know. My goal is to learn to be responsible with how I use this powerful tool, and to always use it in positive ways. I know that this also means that even when I'm older, I will need to seek accountability from others to help me make wise decisions. |
| _____ | I understand that texting, sending, or posting naked pictures (or pictures of private parts) can forever damage my reputation and get me into serious legal trouble. I will never send these types of photos. |       |   |

Signature

Date

# Cell Phone Agreement

## For Parents

Parents, you aren't off the hook on this one. It's your turn to agree to a few guidelines, too.

Read through the following list and initial next to each item to show agreement with each point.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that when my kid gets a smart-phone, they will have instant access to the world. The way I help them learn to use it responsibly, by gradually earning more freedom, will help keep them safe and set them up for a better future.

\_\_\_\_\_ How I use my personal phone is a model for how my kid learns to use theirs.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give \_\_\_\_\_ the right to look through my phone at any time. I know this is a helpful safeguard for me, even as an adult.

\_\_\_\_\_ I care enough about my kid to monitor their cell phone usage and social media accounts.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will **never** text and drive.

\_\_\_\_\_ I refuse to be rude to others when using my phone, and will prioritize face-to-face conversations, especially with my family.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our family will use tracking features on our devices so each family member knows where we are at all times. This is for safety and convenience.

\_\_\_\_\_ I care enough about the safety of my kid to put filters in place to limit their access to the internet.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will abide by the age limitations of apps when giving my child permission to download them. (A family sharing plan requires a child to ask permission for app downloads.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will always work to use technology in positive ways and will continually seek accountability from others to help me make and model wise decisions.

Signature

Date