

Getting Started

1. Involve your child in the process of developing a smart phone contract from the start. Begin by having an initial brainstorming session with ideas. Take those ideas and develop a contract like the one on the following pages. There will be greater ownership if the child helps create the guidelines.
2. Share the “why” behind the contract with your child. The contract is about protecting and providing for your child. I.E. “We love you and want what’s best for your heart, mind, and soul. We want to help you protect yourself from hurt, predators, and getting addicted to technology or harmful content. We want you to thrive in life.”
3. You want to help your child develop an internal filter through empowering them to own good choices. They can develop this by understanding the “why” in your parenting choices and by having a safe and open relationship where they feel loved and accepted for who they are. Unless your child is bought into the “why,” they will find a number of ways to avoid these commitments on other devices at their friends’ houses, school, sports practice, etc.
4. It’s important that parents develop a contract for their own usage and model by example. We all need limits and accountability, even as adults. Be sure everyone in the family, including the parents, are accountable to similar standards I.E. no porn use, do not text anything you wouldn’t say in person, phone turned off at certain times.

This contract is for your protection and provision. We love you and want what's best for your heart, mind, and soul. We want to help you protect yourself from hurt, unsafe people, and getting addicted to technology or harmful content. We want you to thrive in life.

— Mom and Dad

1. It is Mom and Dad's phone. They bought it. They pay for the monthly service. They are loaning it to me because they love me.
2. Mom and Dad do trust me, but they do not trust the Internet. Their job as parents is to love me by providing for and protecting me. The phone will always have a monitoring and filtering software (Covenant Eyes, Accountable2You, Net Nanny) with reports being sent to them.
3. They will always know my passwords and passcodes to the phone, email and social media accounts. If I change them, I will inform them immediately. I will not be on Snapchat until I first show that I can follow these commitments. If I post something they disapprove of, I agree to delete it without argument. They reserve the right to check my social channels and my texts any time.
4. If I want to download something, I'll ask permission. My parents will have my phone's restriction code (I will not) so downloading can only happen with them present. If I want to buy something I will pay them.
5. If the phone rings, I'll answer it, say hello, and use manners. I won't ignore a phone call if the screen reads "Mom" or "Dad." If my parents text me, I'll text back ASAP.
6. The phone must be shut down every school night by 9pm (Monday to Thursday and Sunday) and every weekend by 10 pm (Friday, Saturday). If the phone is not shut down and plugged in my parents' room by these times, I forfeit using it the next day.
7. On Saturdays, the phone can be turned on after breakfast. On Sundays, the phone can be turned on when we leave for church. I won't turn the phone on in the car without permission.
8. There may be parent-approved exceptions to these times. Mom and Dad are always open to reasonable discussions, so I can feel free to ask. But I must ask them first. They may say yes, but reserve the right to say no.
9. I will never take the phone into bed or into my room or other isolated areas (like the bathroom) without permission. Phones in bed aid phone addiction, hinder my sleep, and have other negative side effects. Social science says so. I will lose the phone for the rest of the day if it is in my room.
10. If it falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, a friend breaks it, or it vanishes into thin air I am responsible for replacement or repairs.
11. I will not use this technology to lie, fool, or deceive another human being. I won't involve myself in conversations that are hurtful to others. I'll be a good friend first or stay out of the crossfire.

12. I won't text, email, or say anything through this device I would not say in person.
13. I won't text, email, or say anything to someone that I would not say out loud with their parents in the room.
14. I won't look at porn, nudity, or sexually suggestive content. I'll only search the web for information I would openly share with my parents. If I have a question about anything, I'll ask Mom or Dad.
15. I'll turn it off, silence it, put it away in public. Especially at family functions, in a restaurant, at the movies, or while speaking with another human being. And I'll never bring it to the dinner table. I am not a rude person; I won't allow the phone to indicate that.
16. I won't sext—sending pictures of my private parts or sexually provocative photos/videos. I am too valuable and special to do that to myself. I also won't forward or share any images people send me. My friends may have already done this. Someday I may be tempted to do this. It is risky and could ruin my teenage/college/adult life and have legal ramifications. It is always a bad idea. Cyberspace is vast and more powerful than I am. And it is virtually impossible to make anything of this magnitude disappear – including a bad reputation.
17. I won't take a million pictures and videos. There is no need to document everything or post it to social media. If I don't post it, it still happened. I will enjoy the moment and live my experiences. They will be stored in my memory forever.
18. I'll leave my phone home sometimes and feel safe and secure in that decision. It is not alive or an extension of me. I'll learn to live without it. I'll control it, and won't let it control me. I'll be bigger and more powerful than FOMO (fear of missing out).
19. I'll be wise and discerning about the music I listen to. I'll be respectful of adults, my siblings, and set an example for those who are not Christian.
20. I'll keep my eyes up and see the world happening around me. I'll enjoy life happening by: staring out a window, listening to the birds, going outside, talking to others, wondering without Googling. I won't have it out at school in a way that separates me from other students. I'll be present with people and only have it out if I need it.
21. I will mess up. My parents will take away the phone. They will sit down and talk about it. We will start over again. They and I are always learning. They are on my team and want me to win. We are in this together. This contract is for me, but I realize we as a family want to develop wisdom and character together. As we discuss this contract, they want to hear from me on how I see them living into the commitments they are trying to instill in me. They are open to my feedback and interested to see their lives through my eyes since they are learning too. They are growing into understanding a technology that I am growing up with.

22. I'll monitor myself with these rules. My parents are not going to be reminding me of these anymore. If I want to keep the phone, I'll monitor my own use of the phone carefully and will remember my parents are loaning it to me, love me, and want me to thrive in life.
23. Above all else, I'll think and reflect on how I can honor God in my phone use. From time to time, I'll ask "How does/can this help me love God?", "How does/can this help me love myself?", and "How does/can this help me to love my neighbor?" These are the two greatest commandments. These result in maximum satisfaction for myself, thriving, and the best relationships with God and others.

Read over the contract every few months to remind yourself of these things. We reserve the right to add additional rules whenever we deem it necessary.

If you choose to go against the terms of this contract, we will take the phone back and determine a course of action that may or may not include you receiving the phone again.

Your Signature

Date

Mom's Signature

Dad's Signature