

Tween Cell-Phone Contract

Congratulations! We consider you trustworthy and responsible enough to communicate via cell-phone. However, in order to be given one, there are a few guardrails that you must agree to abide within. The goal of this technology is to help you communicate effectively with the world around you. It is not a toy, it is not a joke, but it is a communication **TOOL**. Like every tool, the owner must use it correctly and responsibly. So, to be clear, here are guidelines or instructions for your cell-phone usage:

Your Responsibilities

1. I understand that the cell-phone is a **TOOL** for communication. I will be positive, uplifting, and encouraging with the words I use whether spoken or in text. This means I will not engage in gossip or talking about people behind their backs. I will send Bible verses to encourage friends, and when my friends or family are having problems, I will pray with them on the phone.
2. I understand that nothing replaces face to face conversation. When in the presence of my friends or family, I will limit my cell phone use. I will show others that I value them, by making my time with them a priority. If I have people to communicate with face to face, I have no need for a cell-phone at that moment.
3. I understand that the world doesn't revolve around me.
 - a. My texts, conversations, pictures, and social media usage will invite conversation about others more than announcing what's going on in my life. I can ask questions that invite a response or post positive messages about life including Bible verses.
 - b. Selfies may not be sent or posted if they do not contain at least one other person. Life is meant to be done with others and not alone. I understand posting pictures of myself screams to the world "please pay attention to me."
 - c. Always ask friends and family for permission before posting pictures on the internet. This is a common courtesy. If you ask first, they won't be mad at you later. You will do this whether this courtesy is extended to you or not.
4. I understand that the cell-phone connects me to a dangerous world through the internet and social media.
 - a. I will not engage in conversation with people I don't know.
 - b. I will alert my parents if someone is trying to contact me that I do not know.
 - c. I will not give out personal information via games, social media, chats, or the web. Personal information includes: Last name, birthdate, school, city that you live in. I will do my best to stay on a first name basis with others.
 - d. I will not give out the personal information of my friends or family members either.
 - e. I will not share my contact information with boys.
 - f. I will give out my contact information to girlfriends sparingly.
5. I understand that I am not allowed to initiate conversation with boys for any reason, including homework. If a boy contacts me, I will immediately alert my parents and ask for permission to kindly let him know, I can't talk.
6. I understand that my phone is NEVER, under any circumstances, allowed in my bedroom. We don't invite strangers into our homes, let alone our bedrooms, therefore the cell-phone is not allowed there either.
7. I understand that I will place my phone on the charger in my parents' room each school night at 7:30pm if I am home. If I am at practice or at church, I will place it there as soon as I arrive home. On the weekends, the cell phone will be placed on the charger in my parents' room by 8:30pm or when I return home. If I am spending the night at a friend's home, I will not use the phone (but will leave it on) after 10pm or abide by any cell-phone rules in that home.
8. I understand that while talk and text are unlimited, usage of the internet and social media are not. I am aware that I am allowed to use _____GB of data and will monitor it or I will pay for overages out of my own pocket (\$_____ per GB).
9. I understand that I have the opportunity to prove myself responsible enough for social media over the next six months.
 - a. If I can live within the guardrails my parents have created to keep me safe and engage in communication effectively, I will be allowed to have social media accounts when I turn 13, which is the rule that most social media outlets have. If the creators feel you should be 13 before using them, then we agree.

- b. When the time comes to open social media accounts, you will give all account information, including passwords, to your parents. You will also “friend” your parents on all of your accounts.
 - c. However, this is not a guarantee of social media at age 13. If your choices regarding using your cell-phone demonstrate an inability to abide within the guardrails or communicate effectively, the guardrail enclosure will become smaller and social media will be withheld until a time when you demonstrate you are ready for it.
10. I understand that if I do not abide within these guardrails, my phone will be taken. I will only be given **one warning** before consequences begin.
 - a. First offense/minor offense- 2 day minimum
 - b. Second offense- 5 day minimum and it will include a weekend
 - c. Third offense- 1 month minimum and consideration of tightening the guardrails.
 - d. Fourth offense- 1 month minimum and phone will be stripped to talk/text only, no apps of any kind, no music, and social media at age 13 will be reconsidered.
 11. I understand that my cell-phone may be taken as a consequence for poor communication with parents or siblings, not keeping up with household responsibilities, failing grades or homework, not keeping up with responsibilities for church including memorizing verses, or any other infraction my parents deem worthy of taking the cell-phone for.
 12. I understand that I must abide by all cell-phone rules at school. If I disregard them and get in trouble, I will also have consequences at home (see consequences above).
 13. I understand that while at church or youth group my cell-phone will be on silent, and I will not use my phone for anything other than a Bible. I will demonstrate God is the priority in my life by placing time with Him above time with friends via texting, phone calls, or social media.
 14. I understand that while the cell-phone was a gift from my parents, it is not mine. My parents paid for the phone and the plan. Using it is a privilege and not a right, and I will treat it as such. This includes paying to replace it if I (or one of my friends) lose or damage it.
 15. I understand that a cell-phone is not a necessity. It’s okay to leave my cell-phone at home sometimes on purpose and feel safe and secure with that decision. You are bigger and more powerful than FOMO – fear of missing out.

Parents Responsibilities

1. We will be available to answer any questions you have regarding how to use the phone, apps, internet, etc.
2. We will be available to answer questions about how to communicate effectively such as, “What is the best way to say_____.”
3. We will look at apps and music that you would like to have and make a decision and/or download in a timely manner.
4. We will support you when you make us aware of alarming messages, images, or conversations via the phone, social media, or internet.
5. We will keep restrictions on your cell-phone regarding the internet and location services to protect you. We will also monitor your phone on a regular basis. It is our job as parents to protect you and to guide you. The best way to do this is to see all your activity so we can have conversations and find teachable moments.

This contract will be up for reconsideration/modification of looser guardrails _____. All decisions at that time will be based on your ability to abide within the guardrails laid out in this contract. We look forward to seeing you grow in your ability to communicate and be responsible with this new tool. The purpose of this contract is make sure we have communicated clearly with you about our expectations and to ensure your success. We believe you will make us proud.

Parents Signature: _____

Child’s Signature: _____

Date: _____