

OUR FAMILY TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT

We all love our gadgets - phones, games, tablets, computers - but we love each other more. So, let's talk about how we can use technology in a good way and especially, how we can stay safe. It will take some time to talk about all the topics - allow at least 15 minutes. Don't rush, let's take time to listen to each other's ideas.

Let's put our decisions into a contract we sign so we can be clear about what we have agreed. We can change the contract if we want to. By the way, this contract is for parents, as well as children. Below are some examples of what you might want in your contract. Print it off, put ticks next to the suggested rules you like and adapt it any way you like to suit your family. Then sign it, shake hands and 'seal the deal' with some fun food.

GENERAL RULES

People First

Discuss - Technology makes it easy to connect with people far away but it can make it harder to connect with people who are close to us. How can we make sure gadgets don't get in the way of face-to-face contact?

Suggestions

- We will always answer if someone speaks to us
- If we want to talk to someone who is using a gadget or watching TV, we will say, "Excuse me" and give them time to pause what they are doing
- We will not use any gadget during meals together
- If someone is talking to us we will not look at our phones
- We will stop using technology and respond promptly when requested to
- If possible, we will give enough warning to save games etc. before requiring you to stop
- We will think very carefully about whether we are paying each other enough attention and won't be offended if someone requests more of our time.

The right time

Discuss - So that everyone can get the sleep they need and have time to do important things, there needs to be limits on when technology can be used and for how long. Parents, the best way to give kids self-control is to model it. Do you want to add your names to the list as well?

For each member of the family

Name	No gadget use before	No gadget use after	Maximum time gaming, browsing or watching TV
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Discuss - Will you have different rules for weekends and holidays?



Is there something else you should be doing?

Discuss - Watching TV, browsing, chatting, gaming - they can all be fine as long as there isn't something more important to be done. What are some times gadgets should not be used?

Suggestions - Unless we get clear permission from a parent, we cannot watch TV or play on phones, tablets or computers if:

- there are chores you are supposed to do
- there is homework to be done
- it is a mealtime or some other family time you are expected to take part in
- it is not inconvenient to the rest of the family

Staying safe

Discuss - Some kids are very clever but there are dangers that even clever kids might not be aware of. Older, more mature brains (like the brains parents have) seem to be better at understanding risks and dangers. That's why parents have to have the final say on this topic. The different dangers and some suggested rules

Viruses and malware

- I will not install any downloaded programs without permission

Thieves and scams

- I will never give out a credit card number. I will always get a parent to do it for me.

Creeps and stalkers

- I will never arrange to meet alone with someone I've met online
- I will not give phone numbers or addresses to people I meet online
- I will tell parents about anyone who is too crude or wants pictures of me
- I will not post revealing swimsuit pictures

Bullies

- I will always tell a parent about anyone who bullies me by text or online
- I will never retaliate
- I will never take part in bullying or abusing anyone

Dodgy content

- (For younger kids) I will only go on the websites approved by my parents
- Viewing porn or 'adult' material is forbidden
- If anyone send me something crude, I will delete it straight away
- I will not be sneaky! I will not turn off tracking or delete history files.
- I will follow age restriction ratings on games and videos



Phones

Suggestions

- I will pay for any charges over the limit of my plan. I will surrender my phone until my debt is paid.
- I will always keep some credit for an emergency call.
- I understand that I am responsible for knowing where my phone is, and for keeping it in good condition.
- I will be considerate about how I use my phone in public, especially quiet places.
- I will obey any rules my school has regarding cell phones.
- I will not take or send indecent pictures of myself or anyone else.
- I promise I will alert my parents when I receive suspicious or alarming phone calls or text messages.
- I will not use obscene language in my texts.
- I will not send threatening or mean texts or bully anyone in any way.
- I will not use my phone to view obscene images or movies.
- I will not use my phone while riding a bike, driving, crossing the road or in any other unsafe way.
- I will not take or send indecent or embarrassing photos of anyone.
- I will not lend out my phone for unsupervised use.
- I will not allow my phone to be used by anyone else to do anything that I am not allowed to do.
- I will not obtain another phone without permission. If I do get another phone, it is covered by this contract as well.
- I will not use someone else's phones to do anything prohibited in this contract.
- I understand that having a cell phone is a privilege, and that if I fail to keep to this contract or other family rules, my cell phone may be taken, or some other consequence may be carried out.
- I understand that my parents may check my phone, including contacts, pictures, videos, text messages, or anything else stored in it.

Search for 'family contracts' on theparentingplace.com for a separate discussion guide and contract for mobile phone use.

The contract above applies both at home and away from home. I realise that breaking this contract will mean penalties (such as losing pocket money or access to technology). This contract can be changed in the future if we want to, but we will keep to these rules until we agree to new ones.

Signed (parent) _____

Signed (child) _____

Date _____