

Device Use

Discussion Guide

and Agreement



Set clear expectations with your teens when it comes to device and internet use to help keep them safe online. When you include your teens in creating the rules, you're helping prepare them to be responsible and thoughtful adults.

How it works: Below are questions to guide your discussion about online behavior, rules for teens, and what your teens can expect from you. Pick the agreement terms that work for you and your teens, and fill in the blanks to create a personal device user agreement.

Discussion Guide

Decide ahead of time: Whether or not you will provide a device, or if you expect your teens to pay a portion.

Ask: How will you get your devices and access to cell and internet service?

Decide ahead of time: Whether or not you will provide any help to pay for extra costs.

Ask: How will you pay for any additional costs like app purchases, broken screens, insurance, etc.?

Decide ahead of time: If you are comfortable with your teen downloading apps or games to their devices or not. Should they check in with you or ask permission before downloading or purchasing anything.

Ask: What kind of apps and games do you want to download to your phone or device? How will you let me/us know that you've added something to your device?

Decide ahead of time: Whether your teen needs permission to provide their full name or address online. Giving out personal information like full names, addresses and passwords online can be dangerous.

Ask: What actions will we each take to keep our personal information private (for example, password protecting phones)? How will you check in with me before you share personal information like names and addresses?

Decide ahead of time: What times, if any, will device use not be allowed by family members, like dinner time.

Ask: What do you think is a healthy amount of screen time? When we spend time together as a family, will devices be allowed? When is a reasonable time of night to put your device away?

Decide ahead of time: The people who will need to be able to contact each other.

Ask: Who should you always answer calls and texts from?

Device Use Terms

To pay for my device, cell and internet service, _____ amount will be paid for by me; _____ amount will be paid for by my parent/guardian.

To pay for extra costs associated with use, _____ amount will be paid for by me; _____ amount will be paid for by my parent/guardian.

I can download software
 on my own
 after checking in with parent/guardian
 on my own, but I need to let parent/guardian know
Other _____

Each of us will protect personal information and not share anything online like addresses and passwords.

I will respect a request to put my devices away.
My parent/guardian will respect a request to put their devices away.
I agree to the following device-free times: _____
My parent/guardian agrees to the following device-free times: _____
I agree to the following screen limits: _____
I will not use my device after _____ p.m. on a school night or _____ p.m. on a nonschool night.

I will always answer calls and texts from:
_____ (e.g. parent/guardian; siblings; babysitters, etc.)

Discussion Guide

Decide ahead of time: If you're sharing a device with other family members, determine how you will create a private space for each person (for example, separate user accounts, folders). Also decide if certain file types will be off limits. Private space is important, even online.

Ask: What does 'privacy' mean to you? How will we respect each other's space on a shared device?

Decide ahead of time: Determine what will prompt you to monitor your teen's phone or online account (for example, a safety issue or broken rule). Discuss with your teen that sometimes it may be necessary for you to monitor your teen's phone or online account use by looking through them.

Ask: What safety issues or rules will determine if I need to look through your device? What can you expect from me if I need to look through your device?

Determine ahead of time: What kind of behavior you expect from your teen online.

Ask: Why is it important to be careful about what you post online or send digitally? What language is appropriate to use online? Sometimes sending certain photos or messages can be illegal and unsafe. What pictures or files should not be sent?

Decide ahead of time: What situations or events online are important for you to know about. How you can offer support to your teen.

Ask: If something happens online that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, what should you do? What can I do in those moments to support you?

Decide ahead of time: Think about what consequences your teen will face for violating this agreement. Be ready to discuss ways you and your teen can successfully follow this agreement.

Ask: If rules about device and internet use are broken, what consequences will you face? How will we hold each other accountable to this agreement?

Device Use Terms

Each of us will respect the privacy of others who also use the same device. I will not open files that are not mine.

I will let my parent/guardian look through my device and online accounts if they believe I am being unsafe or not meeting expectations for use.

My parent/guardian will respect my privacy by only looking through my device if they have reason to believe I am not safe. They will look through my device when I am with them.

I will only send or say things using my device that I would be comfortable with my family seeing or knowing about.

I will not post or share images that would violate another person or any laws.

I will come to my parent/guardian immediately if something ever happens online or on my device that makes me feel unsafe or uncomfortable. My parent/guardian will respond by listening first to help me find a solution.

Consequences for not meeting device-use expectations include: _____
(e.g. loss of social media account or recreational device use; deleting problem apps; grounding)

Parent Signature

Teen Signature

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

Device Use Agreement



1. To pay for my device, cell and internet service, _____ amount will be paid for by me; _____ amount will be paid for by my parent/guardian.

2. To pay for extra costs associated with use, _____ amount will be paid for by me; _____ amount will be paid for by my parent/guardian.

3. I can download software
 on my own
 after checking in with parent/guardian
 on my own, but I need to let parent/guardian know
Other _____

4. Each of us will protect personal information and not share anything online like addresses and passwords.

5. I will respect a request to put my devices away.
My parent/guardian will respect a request to put their devices away.
I agree to the following device-free times: _____
My parent/guardian agrees to the following device-free times: _____
I agree to the following screen limits: _____
I will not use my device after _____ p.m. on a school night or _____ p.m. on a nonschool night.

6. I will always answer calls and texts from: _____ (e.g. parent/guardian; siblings; babysitters, etc.)

7. Each of us will respect the privacy of others who also use the same device and will not open files that are not mine.

8. I will let my parent/guardian look through my device and online accounts if they believe I am being unsafe or not meeting expectations for use.
My parent/guardian will respect my privacy by only looking through my device if they have reason to believe I am not safe. They will look through my device when I am with them.

9. I will respect a request to put my devices away.
My parent/guardian will respect a request to put their devices away.
I agree to the following device-free times: _____
My parent/guardian agrees to the following device-free times: _____
I agree to the following screen limits: _____
I will not use my device after _____ p.m. on a school night or _____ p.m. on a nonschool night.

10. I will come to my parent/guardian immediately if something ever happens online or on my device that makes me feel unsafe or uncomfortable. My parent/guardian will respond by listening first to help me find a solution.

11. Consequences for not meeting device-use expectations include: _____
(e.g. loss of social media account or recreational device use; deleting problem apps; grounding)

Set clear expectations with your teens when it comes to device and internet use to help keep them safe online.

Pick the agreement terms that work for you and your teens, and fill in the blanks to create a personal device user agreement for your teens.

Parent Signature

Teen Signature

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____