

A cell phone contract between parents and kids

A contract is a great way to open a conversation about mobile phone use. Below is a basic agreement which can be adapted to your family. Discuss each item with your child, hear their suggestions and come to an agreement.

Mobile phones are great fun and very useful, but kids need to master a range of skills to be responsible phone users.

- Can they care for an expensive device?
- Are they aware how calls and data usage can run up big bills?
- Do they have the maturity not to use their phones for mischief?
- Are they aware of the risks?

A contract gives parents the opportunity to coach their child and maintain some oversight.

There are some decisions you may like to think about before you discuss the contract with your child:

- **Will they own the phone, or will it be a 'family' phone?**
A family phone is great intermediate step to phone ownership
- **Will you be paying for their texts and calls, or will they?**
If you *require* them to have a phone for safety reasons, it seems fair that you would pay for at least some of the costs
- **Will you permit them to purchase data?**
Controlling their access to unsuitable material is a lot harder if they can access data over a mobile network

Don't just drop the contract on your child as a done deal. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this whole exercise is the discussion you will have together as you work out the details. Make sure that, as well as the rules, your child understands your concern for their safety, and the consequences if they fail to honour the contract – losing the phone, at least for a period of time. It may be their phone, but they are still accountable to you for their behaviour.



Cell phone contract

The User's responsibilities

I will not text, or reply to texts, or place phone calls after ___ pm.

I will not use any of my phone's functions (games, music etc) after ___ pm. on school nights. My phone will then be switched off and unable to receive texts until morning.

or

My phone will be in the charger basket in the kitchen after ___ pm.

I will not use my phone during meals or while someone is talking to me.

I will prepay for all my calls and services.

or

I will pay for any charges over the limit of my plan. I will surrender my phone until my debt is paid.

I may /may not purchase data over the mobile network.

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 send indecent or embarrassing photos of my family or friends to others. In addition, I will not use my phone's camera to take embarrassing photos of others.

I will not lend 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 other people'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 adhere 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.

Parent responsibilities

I will support my child when he or she alerts me to an alarming text message that he or she has received.

I may check your phone occasionally.

OR

I will respect your privacy and not check your phone unless I have reason to believe that you have misused it.

Signed (user) _____

Signed (parent/s) _____

Date _____

Date to be reviewed _____