

## CAST A VISION

These mantras or values will guide our smartphone use:

---

---

---

These types of smartphone apps/activities support those values:

---

---

---

These types of "friction" can help us make sure the phone isn't distracting us from what matters most:

- Limiting notifications     Removing addictive apps from home screen
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## LEARNER'S PERMIT

These features/apps will be activated as a starting point on the smartphone:

---

---

App/Privilege I want to earn next: \_\_\_\_\_

How I can show I am ready to add new privileges:

---

Our goal is complete smartphone independence by your \_\_\_\_\_ year in high school.

## DEVICE FREE ZONES

These are the times and spaces we will commit to unplugging:

- Meals     Bedtimes     Family Outings     School
- Mornings     Car Rides     Sports Practice     Other

This is the time I will plug my smartphone in at night outside of bedroom: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACCOUNTABILITY

I will keep these safety nets in place:

- Setting accounts to private     Turning off location
- Blocking messages from strangers     Not using phone in private spots, like bathrooms
- We will use \_\_\_\_\_ filtering service to keep you safe

If someone shows me inappropriate content, here is my action plan:

- Look away     Let parents know  
*(we promise to not overreact)*
- Excuse yourself to go to the restroom     Other \_\_\_\_\_

If someone asks me for an inappropriate picture, here is what I can say:

---

When I create a new account or update a password, I will let my parents know by:

- Text     Email     Post-It     Updating Family Password List
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

If I am at a party and feel uncomfortable, here is our secret code I can text my parents to be picked up: \_\_\_\_\_

## TIME WELL SPENT

We will strive to limit our social media, gaming or entertainment consumption to \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours per day.

With our digital presence, we will strive to:

- Be authentic to our true selves     Be discerning about who we allow to follow us and who we follow
- Speak up for causes that matter     Fact-check information before we reshare it
- Lift others up     Other \_\_\_\_\_

Activities I consider "time well spent":

Online \_\_\_\_\_

Offline \_\_\_\_\_

A signal we can use to let each other know we need to put the phone down and have face-to-face time:

---

# smartphone

## STARTING POINTS

Ready to start your child's smartphone journey off with the gift of clear expectations, but not sure where to start? **We gotcha covered!** Here are some starting points to consider, along with example language you can use when having conversations with your child. Please know, this is simply example language – you may not be doing all of the things mentioned here. What's most important is that you get aligned, having these conversations so you and your family can honour and respect each other on the road ahead.

### THE BIG PICTURE

**This phone does not belong to you. It belongs to me, your parent.**

It is a tool, not a toy – and it has the potential to harm you if you don't learn to use it in healthy ways. I bought it, and I am giving you the gift of loaning it from me.

If it falls through the grandstand, shatters on the sidewalk, or vanishes into thin air, you are responsible for the replacement costs or repairs.

This tool is powerful, and can draw us closer together, or further apart. How we make sure that we use this new device to support the things that matter most to us?

When we accidentally phub each other (snubbing each other for our phones), what's a way we can signal to each other that we need some face-to-face time?

*Tip: At Screen Sanity, we tell our kids to alert us when our own phone use isn't following these same guidelines.*

### DEVICE FREE ZONES

Our phones need to recharge, and we do too!

That's why from this point forward, we are going to have device-free zones: mealtimes, bedrooms at night, and when it goes to school, it should stay in your yonder pouch or locker.

I will not text you during class, and I give you permission to not always be available, putting the phone away anytime you need to be present, focused, or just taking a mental break. (I won't expect an immediate response when I text you.) This is especially true at night. I'm going to show you right now where you can plug your phone in when it's time for you to unplug and go to bed. Let's talk about what time that should be.

### parents!

**Give yourself permission to create your own device-free zones.**

**You deserve a break too!**

## ACCOUNTABILITY

**I love you. The internet is not looking out for your well-being, but I am.** And there is nothing that you could do or see online that would make me love you less.

Accidents are bound to happen; you will make mistakes. And when you do, I will be here to walk you through them. **I will not freak out or judge you. I will not throw your phone in a lake somewhere. I am a safe person. You can talk to me.**

Because I love you, I'm not letting you go into the digital world unprotected. Let's talk about safety nets. First, we are going to take a moment and download a filter (like Bark or Canopy) on your phone, and make sure your accounts are all set to "private."

But, I want you to know that these won't protect you from everything. Your best way to stay safe is to keep talking to me.

Second, I need you to avoid using your phone in private (like bedrooms and bathrooms) — where it is more tempting to make choices you might regret.

Let's make a plan right now for what you will say if anyone asks you to send any pictures of yourself partially or fully naked, because there is no guarantee of privacy when it comes to sexting.

And third, I need you to keep me updated on your passwords. I won't hover over you and I'm not going to check in every day, but I need to have it in case of an emergency.

## LEARNER'S PERMIT

Someday you will have full use of this phone. But today, we will strip it down to a few features, the ones you really need. **The next few years will be a little bit like going through driver's ed, and this is your learner's permit.**

You can expect me to ride right by your side, helping you with every new challenge you run into. As you get older, I will allow you to earn more freedom as you prove you can steward your phone well.

My goal is for you to have full use of your phone by \_\_\_\_ year.

*Perhaps their senior year of high school — we recommend they have their full license sometime before they flee the nest.*

## TIME WELL SPENT

At the end of your life, all you have is your time and attention. Unfortunately, the tech companies (especially social media companies) know this well, and want you to spend as much time as possible looking at your screen. The only problem is — they don't know you or care about helping you make each moment count.

**Life is big, screens are small...and you deserve to live your fullest life.** So, let's make a plan for a reasonable amount of minutes to limit your social media or entertainment apps to. And let's talk about ways you can use social media to be authentic to your true self, speak up for causes you care about, and lift up others.

Oh, and don't be surprised when I occasionally ask if time on your phone is "time well spent?" I promise you, I'll be asking myself the same question.

Use these cards to strike up a conversation with your tween or teen about smartphone expectations. Stay curious and try to see the world through each other's eyes. Your goal? Deepened trust and empathy — a firm foundation for the road ahead.



What's the difference between **privacy** and **secrecy**?



What social media account that you follow seems the **most inauthentic**? What kinds of things does that person post?



For you, what would you say is **"time well spent"** on our phone/social media?



You post a picture to social media and see later it's getting **fewer likes** than your other posts. What do you do? How do you feel?



Have you ever felt or seen **bullying** on phones/social media?



How does social media make you feel about your **self-image**? Is comparison a thief of joy?



What **influencers** are you following? What interesting things have you learned from them recently? Do you trust them?



What **hashtags** are you following? Which ones are you avoiding? Why?



What are your **personal values**? How can you avoid posting things that go against your values?





Your best friend suggests you **swap phone passwords** because you share everything and if you don't, you must not trust them. What should you do? Are there any other bad experiences you've heard about from sharing passwords with others?





A friend of yours receives a **nude picture** from someone at school and shows it to you. How do you respond to your friend? Who can you ask for help?





Your neighbour texts you asking you to drive slower down the street. How do you respond? Are **emojis** appropriate? 


How can you **protect your attention**?   
Is it important to always be available?  
When do you keep your phone on silent and when is it okay to leave your ringer on? What about notifications?


What if you get a flat tyre and will be late for work? Is it **okay to text** bosses and colleagues? 


We all want to **feel known, seen and followed**.   
What's your personal policy for deciding who to allow to follow you on social media? What's your policy for who to follow and when to unfollow someone?


A teacher assigns a deadline for midnight on Friday evening. You work your hardest to finish the assignment, but at 10:00 you are exhausted and need a break. Will you continue to work into the night to finish the assignment? What are **your boundaries** around logging off screens and what will you say to communicate them? 


You like a photo you've taken that has other people in it, but you are not sure it is flattering to a friend who is in it. Should you **post it anyway**? 

You see pictures of friends hanging out together over the weekend and you weren't invited. What do you do? How can you move from a place of insecurity to a place of **freedom and confidence**? What can you do to practice self-care? 

You are reading a personal email and a parent, sibling or friend looks over your shoulder. How can you **kindly communicate** that you need space? 

You post a picture with a friend and later learn that you accidentally made someone feel excluded. How do you respond? What can you do to **repair the damage**? 

Your sibling left their phone on the counter and left the room. A text comes through on one of them from a friend asking a question you know the answer to. **Should you respond** on behalf of your sibling? 

What is **one goal** or resolution you have for the year ahead? How can tech help you achieve that goal? How might it stand in the way? 

For more tips, tools, and trainings to support your family in the digital world, visit **[screensanity.org.au](https://screensanity.org.au)** 