

10 Cell Phone Rules For Kids

Let's just dive right into this cell phone contract:

We know that having this phone is not only a necessity, but it can be a good, fun and useful tool.

But don't forget that you live in the real world. Not behind a screen or a camera.

We want you to live a healthy and quality life, not a life concerned with how many "followers" or "likes" you have.

Now, more than ever, it is important for you to remember that you must stand up for what is right, walk away from what is wrong, and ask us for help if you aren't sure. We promise not to judge you.

And if you decide you don't need to engage with others on your cell phone, that's great too!

You are responsible for using this phone appropriately, and as your parents we are ultimately responsible for your behavior.

We will have access to your phone content, because it is our responsibility to ensure that you are communicating safely and respectfully. (this may change as your kids get older I talk about this in my [post about reading your kid's texts](#))

Please remember this: You will never get into trouble for reporting ANY suspicious behavior, as well as any behavior that scares or worries you. If you made a mistake come tell us about it and we can deal with it. Do not try to hide it as it make it worse.

10 Non-Negotiable Cell Phone Rules

1. Whose Phone is This?

It is our phone. We bought it. We paid for it. Essentially, we are loaning it to you.

The main reasons you are receiving this phone are for communication with your parents and for personal safety (the ability to get help or assistance if you need it). Not as a toy.

We will always know the password. The phone has a password so that no one can pick it up and play with your apps, send emails on your behalf, update your status, etc.

This password will be known by us at all times. Same applies for any app or email address that needs a password.

2. Appropriate Time Uses

Phone or text communication should not occur before 7:00 AM in the morning or after 8:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 PM on weekends, unless you are communicating with parents or other adult family members.

After 8:00 your phone should be turned off and charged in my room.
(again negotiable for older kids)

4. Etiquette

If the phone rings, answer it. It is a phone. Say hello, use your manners. Do not ever ignore a phone call if the screen reads "Mom" or "Dad." Not ever.

5. Common Sense

No taking videos or pictures of unsuspecting people. No videos or pictures in the name of humor at the expense of another human. Siblings included.

Parents too. **Always get permission to post.**

Do not take photos of other people's embarrassing situations. If someone falls, hurts themselves the **correct reaction is to help not put it on YouTube**. You would not like your face plastered all over YouTube.

6. Cyber Bullying

The phone is not an excuse to be rude, hurtful or mean. A text is the exact same thing as verbally saying it out loud. If you would not say something in person do not text it with the phone.

Remember that text messages can be forwarded to many other people. You cannot get back a text message after sending it and a message lives on long after you send it.

If other people are being mean and hurtful to another on their phone, behave as you would in real life. Do not be part of the conversation. Report all bullying instantly.

If I check your phone, there should be nothing in there that I would be horrified to find.

If you are not sure: ask yourself if you would be happy to say it out loud in the room with me listening...if there is a doubt – don't say it.

Be a good friend.

7. The Phone at Home

Basic courtesy applies. You know when it's acceptable to speak on the phone and when it's not. Same rule applies to texting. If we are having dinner, do not sit on your phone texting. That is just rude. Family time is golden and just like Mom and Dad put away their phones – so will you.

No phone calls should be made or text messages sent during homework time

8. Friending People

Never accept as a friend anyone you don't know personally. This is especially true for Social Media. There are a lot of sick people out there who try to friend kids via mobile phone and social media apps, they can pretend to be your friend. They are not.

Never tell anyone where you live or where you are.

Never post a public picture that shows where you are with signs or identifying features or buildings.

The "Don't talk to strangers" rule applies for mobile phone too.

9. XXX Behavior (Decide how to approach this based on your child's age)

Do not, under any circumstances, take photos of your private parts or receive pictures of anyone else's private parts. This is known as Sexting. Don't laugh. I am fully aware that there are people out there who do these [stupid things](#) and since you are not stupid do not be one of those. It is risky and could ruin your teenage/college/adult life. It is always a bad idea. Cyberspace is vast and more powerful than you. And it is hard to make anything of this magnitude disappear — including a bad reputation.

As a rule, assume that any picture that you take or that someone takes of you with your phone will be on the front page of the newspaper and shown to everyone at school.

9b. XXX content (Also decide the language based on your child's age, but don't ignore this part)

The internet is full of inappropriate images and videos which can be accessed by mobile phones. You will stumble on it. Curious? Got Questions? Superb – We are here to answer everything. What your friends tell you "they know" is nonsense and your phone is not the tool to find out – 99% of the time your friends make stuff up to seem cool.

Yes, it is going to be embarrassing to ask Mom and Dad. But we *promise* we will never mock the question or shy away from it and will give you the info you want.

10. The Care and Feeding of Your Phone

If it falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, or disappears, you are responsible for the replacement costs or repairs. Start thinking now about how you will earn that money, because chances are something will happen. Be prepared.

Final Comment About Your Cell Phone and this Cell Phone Contract

It is a privilege, not a right, to own a cell phone. If there is a problem with content, a decision will be made based on what happened, not what you *thought* would happen. If at any time this tool is misused, we reserve the option of removing this phone from your care for a time to enable you to think about appropriate use of your cell phone.

You will mess up. We will take away your phone. We will sit down and talk about it. We will start over again. We are always learning. We are in this together.