



SHAPE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

A Family Technology and AI Agreement

The conversation comes first. The contract comes second.

This document is designed to be read and discussed together. Part One is the human conversation: why a parent is setting expectations and what the family wants technology to support rather than replace. Part Two turns that conversation into clear, adjustable terms for smartphones, social media, gaming, artificial intelligence, and other connected technologies.

Families should cross out what does not fit, add what does, and review the agreement as the child grows and technology changes.

Part One: The Conversation

Dear Son, Daughter, Child I Love,

You are at that age when you may be asking for a smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, gaming device, laptop, or another connected device that can open the door to a much larger world. If we are reading this together because you want your first device, I am considering whether you are ready for this next stage of your life. If you already have a device, understand that I am trying to parent thoughtfully in a world that keeps changing.

I am readjusting how I watch over you, teach you, guide you, and love you to meet the challenges of the world today: a digital landscape of messages, group chats, likes, streaks, followers, videos, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and people or content that may not always be what they seem. Yes, I am on board with technology. Do not roll your eyes at me. 😊 I also know that simply giving you a device without talking about how it will fit into your life would not be responsible parenting.

Here are a few things we need to talk about if we are going to work together, as a family, to safely and responsibly make technology part of our lives.

Your “Before Technology” Requirements

Before you are eligible to have or independently use connected technology, you need to show that you are growing into a responsible person. A device does not create maturity. It requires maturity. I need to see that you can:

- ✓ Consistently demonstrate integrity. Integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is watching - including when a parent, teacher, coach, or other adult cannot see what is happening on your screen.
- ✓ Consistently show kindness and respect to other people. How you treat people in person is how you will be expected to treat them through messages, games, group chats, social media, and AI tools.
- ✓ Consistently put effort into school by completing assignments, studying, asking for help, and doing work that honestly reflects your own learning.
- ✓ Consistently complete chores, tasks, and household responsibilities without needing repeated reminders.
- ✓ Consistently take care of important and expensive belongings. This means not leaving things at school, outside, in unsafe places, or where they can easily be lost or damaged.
- ✓ Tell the truth when something goes wrong. Responsibility is not never making a mistake. It is being honest, asking for help, and working to repair the problem.

I or we will not consider giving you greater independence with connected technology until you have shown the growth, responsibility, and maturity needed to manage it. The amount of freedom you have with technology will grow as your judgment and responsibility grow.

Your Before-Technology Balance

Before technology became a major part of your life, there were many things that helped create balance. You may have:

- 😊 Played outside with friends, siblings, or neighbors.
- 😊 Had playdates, made up games, and played with toys that did not need to be charged.
- 😊 Talked face-to-face with friends, family members, teachers, and other kids.
- 😊 Made art, built with blocks or Legos, worked on projects, or created things with your hands.
- 😊 Gone to movies, read books, listened to music, cooked, built something, or spent time on a hobby.
- 😊 Told me about your school day and the things your teachers or friends said.
- 😊 Shared jokes, wishes, worries, stories, and ideas without turning them into posts or content.
- 😊 Ridden a bike, scooter, skateboard, or something else with wheels.
- 😊 Played sports, exercised, explored outside, or simply moved your body.
- 😊 Created something that ended up on the refrigerator instead of in a feed.
- 😊 Experienced quiet, boredom, imagination, and time when no one expected you to respond immediately.

All of these things - and many more - helped create balance in your life. You must not allow them to disappear because you now have a device. Technology should be added to your life, not quietly replace the parts of childhood and family life that help you grow. If I see that sleep, school, hobbies, movement, family time, friendships, creativity, or your emotional health are disappearing, I will help you step back and restore balance. That is not because technology is always bad. It is because your life must remain bigger than your screen.

A Reminder of What Words Mean

Words change when technology changes, and I do not want important human experiences to become confused with the numbers and labels used by apps.

A friend is someone who knows you over time. A friend is someone who can hear the tone of your voice, notice when you are quiet, laugh with you, disagree with you, forgive you, and stand beside you in real life. Online friendships can be meaningful, especially when people share interests or cannot be together in person. But followers, subscribers, viewers, contacts, and people in a server or group chat are not automatically close friends. Your goal in life should not be to accumulate an audience. It should be to build relationships with people who know and care about the real you.

“Talking to someone” usually means sharing a real conversation in which both people can listen, respond, clarify, and notice how the other person is feeling. A text is a text. A DM is a direct message. A snap is a snap. A comment is a comment. A message from an AI chatbot is generated by software. These forms of communication can be useful, but they can also be incomplete. Many hurt feelings, arguments, and damaged friendships begin when a short message is misread or when someone tries to handle a serious conversation through a screen.

When something is important, emotional, confusing, or likely to be misunderstood, slow down. Call the person, speak face-to-face, or ask a trusted adult to help you decide what to do.

Being Left Out

With a connected device, you will have more opportunities to see events that you were not invited to attend. You will not be included in every trip, party, sleepover, game, group chat, or weekend plan. That is painful, but it is also part of growing up. There will also be many times when you are included, welcomed, and able to create good memories with other people.

Watching an event from the outside through stories, photos, location sharing, or live posts usually does not help your emotional health. It can turn one disappointing moment into hours of comparison and replaying what you missed. Try not to keep reopening the wound. Put down the device, step away from the story, and focus on the relationships and opportunities that are actually available to you.

If you are hurting because you feel left out, please come find me. I may not be able to make the feeling disappear, but you do not have to sit alone with it. We can talk, take a drive, get something to eat, watch a movie, or decide together what might help.

Fitting In

Growing up is an ongoing process of learning where you fit in and who you want to become. You may wonder: Will people like what I am wearing? Where should I sit? What should I post? Which app should I use? Do I need to answer right away? Do I need to take a side publicly? Do I have to send something, say something, hide something, or laugh at something I do not believe is right so that I will be accepted?

The answer is no. You should not have to compromise your values, your body, your privacy, or your dignity to fit in. You may see people use technology to embarrass others, spread rumors, exclude someone, create fake images, pressure people for pictures, or join in because everyone else appears to be doing it. Do not become unkind just to stay included.

Remember: what is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular. Choose what is right. If choosing what is right costs you approval from a group that expects you to hurt yourself or someone else, that group was not offering real belonging.

Knowledge and Wisdom

This is where we need to join forces. You have grown up surrounded by technology. You may learn new apps, devices, games, shortcuts, and AI tools faster than I do. You understand how your friends communicate and which platforms or trends are becoming popular. I need you to teach me what you know instead of hiding it from me or assuming I will never understand.

I may not know every app or feature, but I have lived through situations you have not yet experienced. I have learned about trust, pressure, manipulation, relationships, consequences, safety, and the way choices can affect people over time. Wisdom cannot be downloaded. It is built through experience, mistakes, reflection, and growth.

You bring knowledge of the technology. I bring experience and perspective. Together, we can make better decisions than either of us would make alone. Please never be afraid to ask me for help. It is why I am here. This is our partnership.

Artificial Intelligence: A Powerful Tool That Can Sound Human

AI can explain difficult ideas, help you brainstorm, create pictures or music, organize your thoughts, and answer questions at any hour. It can also be wrong, invent information, repeat bias, collect private details, imitate real people, and produce convincing fake images, voices, or videos. An AI chatbot may sound caring, confident, funny, or understanding. It may remember things you tell it and respond in a way that feels personal. But it is still a system designed to generate a response, not a person who knows your whole life or truly cares what happens to you.

Use AI as a tool, not as your only teacher, your unquestioned authority, your secret keeper, or your only source of emotional support. Do not give it private information that you would not hand to a stranger or company. Check important answers. Be honest about when you used it for schoolwork. And when you are afraid, depressed, threatened, unsafe, confused about your health, or facing a serious decision, bring a trusted human being into the conversation.

Emotional Health

Finally, I want you to understand how important it is to protect your emotional health. From the time you were young, you were taught to care for your physical health. You eat, sleep, move your body, brush your teeth, go to the doctor, and tell someone when something hurts. Your emotional health deserves the same attention.

Learn to notice your feelings, thoughts, moods, and habits. Pay attention when a device helps you feel connected, creative, informed, or supported. Also pay attention when it leaves you anxious, angry, jealous, lonely, ashamed, distracted, exhausted, or unable to stop checking. Notice when a feed repeatedly pulls you toward content about appearance, violence, self-harm, eating disorders, sex, hate, fear, or hopelessness. Notice when an AI conversation begins to replace sleep, family, friends, school, or real support.

Technology can exercise your mind in healthy ways, but it can also keep your mind in a constant state of comparison, stimulation, pressure, or worry. If you feel your balance beginning to suffer, tell me. You do not need

to wait until the problem becomes overwhelming. I am your parent. I will help you emotionally just as I would help you physically.

Part Two: The Family Technology and AI Contract

This contract is for a: ☐ New device ☐ Updated expectations for a current device ☐ Family-wide technology reset

Parent(s)/caregiver(s): _____

Child/young person: _____

Start date: _____

Initial review date: _____

Review frequency: _____

This contract applies to smartphones, tablets, computers, school devices, gaming systems, smartwatches, social media, group chats, livestreams, private or alternate accounts, online communities, virtual reality, AI tools, and AI companions.

1. Privilege, Integrity, and Responsibility

- ☐ Technology access and independence are privileges connected to responsibility, honesty, maturity, and trust.
- ☐ I will use technology with integrity and follow the expectations of my family, school, work, teams, and community.
- ☐ I will take reasonable care of devices and accept responsibility for damage caused by careless or intentional behavior.
- ☐ I will not loan my device, share an account, or allow someone to use my identity without permission.
- ☐ I will tell the truth when something goes wrong and participate in repairing the harm or rebuilding trust.

2. Time, Sleep, and Balance

- ☐ I will complete agreed responsibilities before recreational technology use.
- ☐ Technology will not regularly replace sleep, schoolwork, chores, movement, hobbies, family time, or in-person relationships.
- ☐ I will follow agreed device-free times, places, and overnight charging expectations.
- ☐ I will tell my parent if I feel unable to stop scrolling, gaming, messaging, checking, or using an AI tool.

School-day recreational limit: _____

Non-school-day recreational limit: _____

Overnight charging location: _____

Device-free times or places: _____

3. Communication and Family Access

- ☐ I will respond to reasonable calls or messages from my parent as soon as I am safely able.
- ☐ I will communicate openly about new apps, accounts, purchases, subscriptions, and online communities.
- ☐ I will not create secret or duplicate accounts to avoid family expectations.
- ☐ We will decide together what level of password access, account recovery, parental controls, and monitoring is appropriate for my age, maturity, history, and current risks.

4. Privacy, Location, and Personal Information

- ☐ I will not publicly share my home address, live location, school schedule, travel plans, financial information, passwords, identification cards, or when I am home alone.
- ☐ I will be careful about sharing my full name, age, school, phone number, birthdate, and other identifying information.
- ☐ I will review location sharing in social media, games, photographs, messaging apps, and tracking tools with my parent.

- ☐ I will not upload another person's private messages, photos, voice, schoolwork, medical information, or personal details into an AI tool without permission.

5. Online Contacts and In-Person Meetings

- ☐ I understand that a person online may not be who they claim to be.
- ☐ I will tell my parent before moving a conversation to a more private platform or sharing personal contact information.
- ☐ I will not meet an online contact in person without my parent's knowledge, involvement, and a clear safety plan.
- ☐ I will tell a trusted adult if someone asks for secrecy, money, personal information, sexual content, or an in-person meeting.

6. Images, Consent, Sexual Content, and Sextortion

- ☐ I will ask permission before photographing, recording, posting, tagging, or sharing another person.
- ☐ I will not request, create, send, post, or forward nude or sexual images or videos of myself or another young person.
- ☐ I will not use AI or editing tools to create fake nude, sexual, humiliating, violent, or embarrassing content about anyone.
- ☐ If someone sends me sexual content, I will not forward it. I will seek help from a trusted adult.
- ☐ If someone threatens to expose me, demands money, asks for more images, or threatens my family, I will stop responding, preserve evidence, and tell a trusted adult immediately.

7. Respectful Digital Conduct

- ☐ I will not use technology to bully, shame, threaten, deceive, impersonate, exclude, or intentionally hurt another person.
- ☐ I will not access another person's account, files, photographs, messages, or private information without permission.
- ☐ I will not post or share content simply because it is shocking, cruel, popular, or already circulating.
- ☐ I will slow down before responding when I am angry, embarrassed, hurt, or likely to misunderstand someone.

8. Artificial Intelligence and Schoolwork

- ☐ I may use AI to brainstorm, practice, organize, explain, or support learning when the school or teacher permits it.
- ☐ I will not use AI to avoid learning, complete work I am expected to do independently, or present AI-generated work as entirely my own.
- ☐ I will check important AI-generated information using reliable sources, teachers, parents, or other trusted adults.
- ☐ I will not enter passwords, private family information, school records, medical information, private photos, or identifying details into an AI tool without permission.

9. AI Chatbots and Companions

- ☐ I understand that an AI may sound caring, confident, or human but does not understand or care about me like a trusted person does.
- ☐ I will tell my parent if I begin regularly using an AI character, virtual friend, romantic chatbot, or companion for emotional support or personal advice.
- ☐ I will not rely on AI alone when I am scared, overwhelmed, unsafe, depressed, threatened, or making an important health or safety decision.
- ☐ I will seek help if an AI conversation becomes secretive, sexual, manipulative, frightening, or difficult to stop.

10. Misinformation, Deepfakes, and Impersonation

- ☐ I understand that photographs, voices, videos, screenshots, messages, and documents can be convincingly generated or altered.
- ☐ I will pause and verify before sharing shocking news, images, videos, or claims.

- ☐ I will not use AI to imitate or impersonate a teacher, parent, friend, classmate, public figure, or another person.
- ☐ I will tell an adult if someone creates or threatens to share fake or altered content about me or someone I know.

11. Emotional Health and Asking for Help

- ☐ I will pay attention to how technology affects my sleep, mood, confidence, attention, relationships, and self-image.
- ☐ I will tell a trusted adult if I repeatedly see content involving self-harm, suicide, eating disorders, violence, hate, sexual material, or other upsetting topics.
- ☐ I can report a mistake, threat, unsafe contact, or harmful situation without losing the right to be heard and helped.
- ☐ My immediate safety will come before punishment when I come to my parent for help.

12. Parent Commitments

- ☐ I will model reasonable technology use and participate in agreed device-free family times.
- ☐ I will listen, stay as calm as possible, and gather facts before assuming the worst.
- ☐ I will keep my child's immediate safety more important than punishment when they ask for help.
- ☐ I will explain monitoring and parental controls whenever safety allows rather than relying only on secret surveillance.
- ☐ I will respect reasonable privacy while remaining willing to act when there is a legitimate safety concern.
- ☐ I will not post embarrassing stories, images, or private information about my child without considering their dignity and consent.
- ☐ I will continue learning about the apps, games, AI tools, and online communities my child uses.
- ☐ I will adjust independence and supervision as my child demonstrates maturity, responsibility, and honesty.

13. Consequences and Restoring Trust

Consequences should be connected to the behavior, clearly explained, and focused on safety, learning, and restoring trust. The goal is not permanent punishment. We will identify what happened, what needs to change, and how privileges can be earned back.

Possible consequences: _____

Steps for restoring trust: _____

People who can help us if we get stuck: _____

14. Review and Signatures

Agreement start date: _____

Next review date: _____

Review schedule: _____

Young person signature _____	Date: _____
Parent/caregiver signature _____	Date: _____
Parent/caregiver signature _____	Date: _____
Other support person, if helpful _____	Date: _____

A signed contract does not replace conversation. Families should revisit these expectations as technology changes and as the young person grows.