



**THE  
ULTIMATE  
CELL PHONE  
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

# Dear Parents,

It's important for our kids to learn to live **productive** and **good** lives in the midst of all the technology options that are afforded to them! On top of that, let's be honest, you and I will be hypocritical.

- One minute we're telling our kids to get off a game site and focus on homework.
- Five minutes later, we're calling them over to watch a funny YouTube video we saw while "working."

Our current generation of parents has the responsibility of learning, on our own, how to handle this **new world** that our parents never could have imagined—and how to pass it on to our kids.

**Technology** is just a new reality to add to the realities of growing up. It's a lot like teaching a teenager to drive. We tell them to do things we don't do well ourselves—because we love them and want them to be safe drivers.

And just like learning to drive a car, learning to use technology responsibly takes time. They'll make mistakes and we'll need to use those mistakes as teaching opportunities.

When it comes to technology, the state doesn't issue learner's permits or require written exams and field tests. We're on our own with how to hand off ownership of technology to our teenagers.

We've provided this **Discussion Guide** to help equip you with the tools to allow your students earn the "keys" to their technology.

Be a great **example**. The best thing parents can do for their students is to be the adults you want them to become.

We're cheering you on!

*Your Parkview Students Team*

# TIPS FOR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT PHONES



**A smartphone is powerful;** it's not a toy. This is difficult because we keep games on our phones. "Powerful" is not good or bad, but "powerful" is capable of much good and much bad.



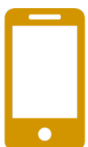
**Prepare your student;** don't protect them. This season will be marked by failures, successes, and a slow increase in the freedom and responsibility your student is trusted with.



**Cast vision for the future.** Your goal is that one day they will have total freedom on their own phone. Why not talk about that?



**Prioritize conversation above all else.** Rules and punishments are important, but as a student grows in freedom, conversations become most important. If your student isn't talking about something because of rules or the threat of a punishment, you may want to rethink your posture.



**Take time.** A smartphone can do just about "everything" don't start your student with access to everything, but take the time you need hand over more and more responsibility with time.



**Start with the basics.** Your student can maybe start with calling, texting and some preselected apps. You should "lock down" the phone in the Appl Store, Web browsing, and social media in the beginning



**Simulate emergency situations.** We all understand that learning to drive a car is about minimizing and/or avoiding emergencies. It's not about perfection. You should attempt to approach technology the same way. Spend time discussing obvious challenges like predators, safety and pornography.



# CALLING

## PARENTS



- Where does my phone **"sleep"** at night?
- What are the **"no technology times"** in the house?
- I can always be asked, **"Who am I talking to?"**

## NOW

**When can I accept and make calls?**

**Who can see my call log?**

We recommend that, for a while, parents monitor phone use through the phone service provider. This service also allows you to block certain callers, which may be helpful for both of you in the future.

**Do we need a code word?**

Students can use them to communicate information when surrounded by their friends  
(eg., "Can I spend the night?" verses "May I spend the night?"

## LATER

**As your student matures** and demonstrates responsibility in this area, the parent may discontinue monitoring service with the provider.



# TEXTING

## PARENTS



- Who can read my **text** messages?
- Who am I **accountable** to?

## NOW

### Should I delete it?

Discuss deleting texts together

### What does privacy mean?

For a season, parents will have access to text-message content.

### Will I get in trouble?

Students should not be held responsible for what other people send them, but they are responsible for what they do with it once it is on their phones.

### Discuss "emergency" situations that may happen

### What about when another student is in danger?

What do you do if someone sends you an inappropriate or illegal picture?

- Delete it right away.
- Do not show anybody.
- Call a parent right away to discuss

## LATER

**As a student approaches driving age,** model and discuss how to manage technology behind the wheel.

**As the student matures** and demonstrates responsibility in this area, the parent may discontinue monitoring service with the provider.



# INTERNET ACCESS

## PARENTS



- Who is my **accountability partner**?
- Who can see my **history**?
- How can our house be made **safer** for Internet searches?

## NOW

### Which browser is best?

For now, Safari should be disabled and replaced with a safe browser

### What are the options?

Explore the options in your browser to find ways to filter results

### Android vs. Apple

While apple is industry standard, services like "Covenant Eyes" can be installed on an android device and monitor all on screen images and activity. Meanwhile, on apple, that can only be monitored in the covenant eyes browser.

## LATER

**After a season of good choices with technology,** Safari can be enabled with some discussion and limitations

**Internet histories should be deleted together.** Remember we all make mistakes or can be tempted to visit the wrong places. Our goal is not to eliminate mistakes as much as keep the conversation open.

**There are some apps and computer programs that monitor phone usage that can be of help here.** (PhoneSheriff, TeenSafe, and CircleGo).

**Students should give access to their Internet histories to an accountability partner in addition to their parents.** This could be an older friend, a small group leader, or someone the family trusts.



# FACETIME

## PARENTS



- **Never be alone** in a room with someone of the opposite sex.
- Allow the question: **"Who was on the call?"**

## NOW

**FaceTime isn't a tool to use right away.**

Focus on making good choices with the rest of the phone and it won't be long.

## LATER

**After demonstrating wise choices with the rest of the phone,** FaceTime is a good option for increasing responsibility. Remember, when you FaceTime with someone, you are literally inviting them into your home. The same rules apply to FaceTime as would apply to someone in the house. If a person isn't allowed in your bedroom, then you shouldn't FaceTime either.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## PARENTS



- **It's permanent.** Once it's out there, it's out of your control. Even if it deletes after a period of time.
- **Content is unpredictable.** No social platform guarantees safe content
- **It impacts self-esteem.** The act of "liking" or being "liked" gives the same level of dopamine hit as cocaine. It's addictive!

## NOW

**Social Media is here to stay.** Students are going to live with social media for the rest of their lives and have to learn how to handle it. However, it's necessary for students to focus on being responsible with calls, texts, and the Internet before starting to build their own social platforms.

## LATER

**After demonstrating wise choices with the rest of the phone,** it may be time for your student to start learning to live in a world with social media.

### Things to discuss:

- There should be no **secret** accounts. You should know passwords too
- You should always have **family** as "friends" on social media.
- Discuss how many "**friends**" a student should have. Social media settings can require approval before someone can follow you.
- Discuss what to do when (not if) you come across **inappropriate** content
  - *Immediately move on*
  - *Stop following that person instantly*
  - *Do not interact with it*
- Discuss what **bullying** and abuse might look like on each of the sites.



# APPS

## PARENTS



- **Who can see the apps I download?**
- **Who is allowed to know my passwords?**

## NOW

**Who gives the thumbs-up?** Discuss general rules for downloading apps. Discuss the family account and how it works.

**Is there a budget?** Discuss the cost of the apps and how much a student can spend on apps in a month.

## LATER

**As the student demonstrates wise choices**, the monitoring and the monthly budget can change.

## MUCH LATER

**As the student approaches maturity** and is allowed to have their own phone, discuss the transition from a family account to a personal account.



**Parkview  
Students**