

Family Online Safety Agreement

“The internet, in particular, offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity.” Pope Francis

When creating a family online safety agreement, consider the following elements:

- promote open and supportive communication
- learn about social media apps together
- encourage privacy and safety by
 - reviewing social media apps’ privacy and safety settings together
 - using passwords with numbers, capitals, and symbols
 - keeping passwords private and changing them often
 - avoiding the posting of personal information
 - turning off location settings and not using geotags.



Think before you post: Is it true? helpful? inspiring? necessary?

See something, say something (if you see negative or unsafe behaviour online).

Is there an immediate concern that we need to address (excessive gaming/use of tools, inappropriate content, bullying, etc.)?

When designing a Family Online Safety Agreement together, discuss the content of the two main sections of the agreement (**content** and **signatory** sections).

Content Section

This family online safety agreement

- is designed to understand proper technology use and set expectations between at least two people (parent/guardian and child[ren])
- captures an open conversation
- is a tool to make smart decisions about online interactions and technology use
- identifies goals that set realistic rules that make sense for our family so we can make the most out of media and tech time
- builds our skills and understandings about the digital world
- establishes boundaries that outline rewards and consequences
- can address an immediate or ongoing concern.

Signatory Section

This family online safety agreement

- is designed with input from parent/guardian and child(ren)
- is active when signed by parent/guardian and child(ren)
- allows family members to revisit and edit the agreement as needed, together
- will reflect ongoing online safety family conversations
- will not be signed and forgotten about.

Questions to ponder when designing a Family Online Safety Agreement

Is it private?

- Do I know about and use privacy settings?
- Do I know who is involved? Is this person a stranger?
- Is my location sharing turned on? Is it dangerous for me to let people to know my location?
- Do I add people I do not know?
- If this is shared in the news/media, how will I feel?

Is it positive?

- Is this action helping or hurting me?
- Would I do/say this in person?
- Am I being a good faith-filled person/friend/citizen?
- Is this making the situation better?
- Am I sharing too much? How do I know?

Is it real?

- How do I know this is real?
- Is the other person a friend or pretending to be one?
- Do I feel good about what is happening and what I am doing?
- Can this be undone? Is it permanent? Will it last into adulthood?
- If a person of authority sees this, what would be the response?

Is it healthy?

- Is this good for me mentally, spiritually, physically, socially, or emotionally?
- Does this represent Gospel values and Catholic Social Teachings?
- Will I or someone else get hurt mentally, spiritually, physically, socially, or emotionally?
- Does this bring balance to my life?
- Will I be proud of my actions tomorrow or in the future?

Is it good for me and my family?

- Does this improve my relationship with my family, with friends, with God?
- Would my parish priest or school Principal be proud of my contribution/involvement?
- Am I willing to talk to my family about this?
- Should I talk to a family member first?
- Will I want to share with or explain this to my grandparents?



“The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity, a network not of wires but of people.” Pope Francis

Parent/guardian and child(ren) agreement statements to consider when designing a family internet/online safety agreement

Child(ren) Sample Agreement Considerations

I agree to:

Respect our family’s privacy

- create strong passwords
- keep my passwords secret, except from my parents/guardians
- keep personal information private/confidential
(**YAPPY** = **Y**our full name, **A**ddress, **P**hone number, **P**asswords, **Y**our birthday, plans, school...)
- keep my location information turned off (geotags)



Talk to my parents/guardians

- if something happened that makes me feel uncomfortable, scared, worried
- if a friend is being harassed or bullied
- if I am being harassed or bullied
- when I see something bad/inappropriate online

Be smart and cautious when online

- accept friend requests only from people I know
- share appropriate information, pictures, comments (things your family, principal, teachers, parish priest, friends and future employers would enjoy seeing)
- navigate on the web safely and think critically (don’t believe everything you read)
- think before opening messages, emails or texts from strangers or people I do not trust as they may contain viruses
- never answer a video call from an unknown number
- do not meet with someone in person whom I have only met online (talk to my parents/guardians if someone I have never met asks to meet in person)
- choose age-appropriate and quality content to view
- visit websites suitable for someone my age

Be kind when I am online

- say/share nice things
- think before I type or share texts or images
- be polite and kind
- Treat others online how I would like to be treated **Matthew 7:12** “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you”.

Respect my parents'/guardians' expectations

- ask permission before downloading anything
- balance green time and screen time at home
- respect age restrictions when signing up for sites
- set my device aside during mealtimes and prayer times
- shut down my devices at bedtime (8 p.m.) and do not use my device in my bedroom
- do not talk to or connect with strangers
- limit my gaming to an agreed upon amount of time per day
- be accountable and take responsibility for my actions on social media and online

Parents/Guardians Sample Agreement Considerations

- set an example with my own device use
- create a “screen-free zone” or “screen-free time” to spend time together with child(ren)
- set boundaries with the child(ren)’s input
- make time to listen, question, help, support child(ren)
- investigate and implement parental control where appropriate
- model responsible social media behaviour
- report any serious concerns to authorities
- safely keep your child(ren)s’ passwords, password updates, and pins for devices and apps
- show interest in their online activity (apps, sites, social media)
- model limiting time for my internet usage
- educate my child(ren) about cyber security and learn from my child(ren)s’ experiences and knowledge
- install an antivirus on all devices
- monitor child(ren)s’ online activities where appropriate
- model using social media by putting it to good use.

“An Effective Communicator is one who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively responding critically in light of gospel values.” [OCSGE](#)

#EffectiveCommunicator



In a digital world:
I communicate with others as Jesus would want me to.

Institute for Catholic Education

Family Online Safety Agreement Examples

This Family Online Safety Agreement is jointly discussed and agreed upon. The purpose is to ensure safety and maximum use and enjoyment out of online tools and technology. This applies to personal devices and technologies used on the devices.

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Parents: I agree	Child(ren): I agree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to set an example with my own device use - to create a 'screen-free zone' or 'screen-free time' to spend time together with child(ren) - to model responsible social media behaviour - to safely keep you child(ren)'s passwords and pins for devices and apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep personal information private/confidential (YAPPY = Your full name, Address, Phone number, Passwords, Your birthday, plans, school...) - to visit websites suitable for someone my age - to tell my parents when I see something bad/inappropriate online - to ask permission before downloading anything

What are some other agreed upon rules for our family?

I agree to these rules.

Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Child Signature	Date
Child Signature	Date

This Family Online Safety Agreement is jointly discussed and agreed upon. The purpose is to ensure safety and maximum use and enjoyment out of online tools and technology. This applies to personal devices and technologies used on the devices.

We agree to respect our family's privacy by:

- keeping our passwords secret,
- keeping our family's personal information private (YAPPY).

We agree to keep an open dialogue about online experiences:

- if I feel uncomfortable/scared/worried, I will tell my parents,
- if I see something bad/inappropriate online, I will tell my parents.

We agree to be smart/cautious when online:

- to accept friend requests only from people I know,
- to share appropriate information, pictures, comments (things your family, teachers, friends and future employers would enjoy seeing).

We agree to be kind when online:

- to be polite and kind, treat others online how I would like to be treated (if you would not say it in real life, do not say it or type it online)

Other agreed upon rules for our family?

We agreed to these rules on (date) _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature	Child Signature
Parent/Guardian Signature	Child Signature

"If a family uses the net to be more connected, to then meet at table and look into others' eyes, then it is a resource."

Pope Francis

Sample Agreement Templates (Boxes Expand)

These sample templates are designed to expand and be customized for your family.

Example 1

This Family Online Safety Agreement is jointly discussed and agreed upon. The purpose is to ensure safety and maximum use and enjoyment out of online tools and technology. This applies to personal devices and technologies used on the devices.

<i>Parent/Guardian</i>	<i>Child(ren)</i>
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What are some other agreed upon rules for our family?

I agree to these rules.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Child(ren) Signature

Date

***“Communication, wherever and however it takes place,
has opened up broader horizons for many people.
This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility.
I like to refer to this power of communication as ‘closeness’.”***

Pope Francis

Example 2

This Family Online Safety Agreement is jointly discussed and agreed upon. The purpose is to ensure safety and maximum use and enjoyment out of online tools and technology. This applies to personal devices and technologies used on the devices.

We agree to... (As many as agreed by parent/guardian and child[ren])

What are some other agreed upon rules for our family?

I agree to these rules.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Child(ren) Signature

Date

“Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can be fully human forms of communication...use social media for tools for good”.

Pope Francis

This document is not a legal document.
It is a resource for parents/guardians, caregivers, and students to support communication about online risks.