

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 and
 - turning off location settings and not using geotags.
- Think before posting: Is it true? helpful? inspiring? necessary?
- Notice something, say something (if there is negative or unsafe behaviour online).
- Is there an immediate concern that needs addressing (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 Agreement

- is designed to understand proper technology use and set expectations between at least two people (parent(s)/guardian(s) and child
- 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 the 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 Agreement

- is designed with input from the parent(s)/guardian(s) and child
- is active when signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and child
- 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 the location sharing service turned on? Is it dangerous to let people to know where I am?
- 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 harming me?
- Would I do/say this in person?
- Am I being a good 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 this 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?
- If a person of authority notices this, what would be the response?

Is it healthy?

- Is this good for me mentally, physically, socially, emotionally?
- Will I or someone else get harmed?
- Does this bring balance to my life?
- Will I be proud of my actions tomorrow?

Is it good for me and my family?

- Does this improve my relationship with my family?
- 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 or other people close to me?

Agreement statements to consider when designing a Family Online Safety Agreement

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

Child Sample Agreement Considerations

I agree to:

Respect our family’s privacy

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

Talk to my parent(s)/guardian(s)

- if something happened that feels uncomfortable, scared, worried
- if a friend is being harassed or bullied
- if I am being harassed or bullied
- when I notice something bad/inappropriate online

Be smart and cautious when online

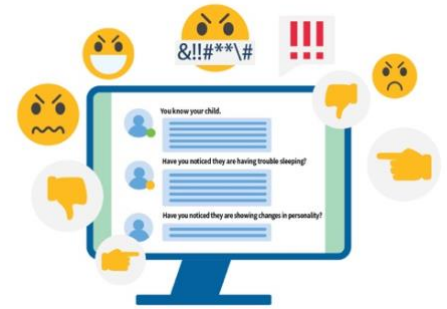
- accept friend requests only from people I know
- share appropriate information, pictures, comments (things families, teachers, friends and future employers would enjoy seeing)
- navigate on the web safely and think critically (don’t believe everything you read)
- think before opening messages, emails 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) if someone I have never met asks to meet in person)
- choose age-appropriate and quality content
- 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
(if you would not say it in person, do not say or type it online)

Respect my parent(s)/guardian(s) 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
- shut down my devices at bedtime
- not use my device in my bedroom
- not talk to or connect with strangers
- limit my gaming to ...
- be accountable and take responsibility for my actions on social media and online

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Sample Agreement Considerations

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

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	Children: 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 children - to model responsible social media behaviour - to safely keep my children's passwords and pins for devices and apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keep personal information private/confidential (NAME, Your full name, Address, Phone number, Passwords, Your birthday, 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: _____

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

Sample Agreement Templates (Boxes Expand)

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

I agree to these rules.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature

Date

Child 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(s)/guardian(s) and child)

What are some other agreed upon rules for our family?

I agree to these rules.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature

Date

Child 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 parent(s)/guardian(s), caregivers and students to support communication about online risks.