

AGES 8 TO 10

Ages 8 to 10: the phone is a household object

At this age you set the phone up and it is used in plain sight. The rules are few, concrete and not up for debate; the most important one is where it spends the night.

I, _____, commit to:

- ☐ ¹ The phone sleeps outside my room, charging in the place in the house we agreed on.
Why it is here: It is the rule that pays off most at any age, and it is far easier to keep from age 9 than to impose at 14.
- ☐ ² I use the phone in the shared areas of the house, not shut in my bedroom.
Why it is here: What is used in plain sight does not need surveillance: being nearby is enough.
- ☐ ³ Mom or Dad install the apps. If I want a new one, I ask and we look at it together.
Why it is here: The supervised child account already allows this, and the decision gets talked about instead of discovered.
- ☐ ⁴ I do not have social media yet. It is not a punishment: the apps themselves require age 13.
Why it is here: The minimum is set by the platforms, not the parents; saying it that way avoids the argument.
- ☐ ⁵ If someone I do not know writes to me, I do not reply and I show it to Mom or Dad.
Why it is here: At this age they still do not know what to do with a stranger; the plan has to include you.
- ☐ ⁶ If I see something that scares me or makes me uncomfortable, I tell. Telling will never cost me the phone.
Why it is here: If telling is expensive, they do not tell, and you lose exactly what you need to know.
- ☐ ⁷ I do not send photos of myself or others without permission, and never photos without clothes.
Why it is here: It is one of the four rules that do not change with age.
- ☐ ⁸ At the table and at school the phone is put away.
Why it is here: Clear, few screen-free zones that apply to the adults too.

As a mother, father or guardian, I commit to:

- ☐ ¹ I tell you clearly what I can see on your phone and what I cannot, and I will not look at it behind your back.
- ☐ ² If you tell me about something you saw or that happened to you, I listen first and I do not punish you for telling.
- ☐ ³ When you ask for an app, we look at it together and I explain why yes or why no.
- ☐ ⁴ The phone-free zones apply to me too: at the table, mine is put away as well.
- ☐ ⁵ We review this agreement on the date written below, and every time we review it you will gain something.

What I will look at and what I will not

At this age I manage the accounts, so I can see which apps there are, how much they are used and where the phone is. If I use a parental-control app, such as Family Link or CatWatchful, I tell you which one it is and what it shows me. There is no secret surveillance in this house.

If a rule is broken

If a rule is broken, the consequence is known in advance, is proportionate and has an end date: for example, the phone stays put away until tomorrow. It is not taken away indefinitely, because that switches off the rule about telling without fear.

Reviewing the agreement

We review this agreement on _____ (a birthday or the start of the school year) and each side gives something up.

Child's signature

Signature of the mother, father or guardian

Date