



Jo Langford MA
Therapist, Sex Educator, Author
Jo@ Beheroes.net

CONTRACT FOR RESPONSIBLE CELLULAR USAGE

I UNDERSTAND THAT A SMARTPHONE IS A TOOL, AND (THOUGH IT CAN BE ENTERTAINING) SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS A TOY. AS WITH WEAPONS OR AUTOMOBILES, SERIOUS HARM AND CONSEQUENCES CAN RESULT FROM USING IT IN IRRESPONSIBLE WAYS.

I understand that THE Smartphone is not MY Smartphone.

- I will not change or keep passwords secret from my parents.
- I will not share passwords with friends. Yes, even my best one and the one I am dating.
- I will not download anything without permission and/or paying for it myself.
- I will answer if/when a parent contacts me. If I cannot, it will be because of one of the situations listed below*, AND I will find a way to return the call/text within 15 minutes of an unanswered call.
- I will plug my cellular in overnight for charging in a common area—not in my own bedroom.
- I will not complain about spot checks of texts and/ or browser histories.

I understand that a cellular phone is simply a different way of interacting socially with the rest of the world, and that social rules still apply.

- I will be polite in my interactions with my cellular, using the same manners, language and level of respect that I do without it. I will not say anything in a text or with my phone that I would not say in person.
- I will follow “The 9-9 Rule”. This means no calls or texts before 9am or after 9pm, unless I have permission and a really, really good reason.

- Really, really good reasons will be limited to scheduling and safety issues.
- I will NOT talk on my phone* during meals, during anything requiring tickets, while riding on public transportation or while standing in any sort of line or queue.
- I will follow my school's rules around cellular use, and not text or call anyone other than family members during the school day.
- I will treat my mp3 player like the PERSONAL listening device it is. I will keep my ear bud/ headphone volume low enough for no one else but me to hear it.
- I will NEVER take, post or send or keep pictures of anyone under the age of 18 in the nude—even (and especially) my own naughty bits.
- Likewise, I will not take, post, send, pass-on or keep pictures of other people in the nude that are sent to me.

I understand that with this freedom comes responsibility.

- I will keep my cellular charged.
- I will take good care of my device—using a combination of screen protectors, cases and good judgment.
- I will monitor my minutes and data usage, and stay within the agreed upon guidelines.
- I will pay for any additional charges I accrue by not following these guidelines.
- I will be responsible for the replacement of the phone if it is lost, stolen or otherwise destroyed (which means I may be phoneless for a period of time).
- I will not give out personal information to anyone online, including my full name, address, passwords, phone number, social security or credit card numbers (or anyone else's).
- I will not make telephone contact with anyone I have met online, without the permission of my parents.
- I will specifically avoid surfing areas of the Web that focus on negative, inappropriate or unsafe sexual depictions, sites that promote hate speech, bigotry and other forms of prejudice, and sites whose main purposes revolve around violence and offensive behavior—especially when it promotes hatred or the oppression of or violence towards others based on race,

national origin, language, age, level of disability, sex, gender or orientation.

- I will come to my parents immediately if I encounter anything or am contacted by anyone who makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will not stand by the harm of another human, and will not passively take pictures of someone else being victimized physically or verbally when I should be calling for or offering help.
- I will not actively participate in violent, sexual and other hate behaviors with my device.
- I will not respond or reciprocate when others behave in such ways toward me, and will remove myself from the situation if I become too angry.
- Likewise, I will report any such cyberbullying to administrators, parents and/or police when I witness it happening to others.

I understand that electronic communication is good for connecting with others, though not for active connection--good for passing information or time, but not truly communicating.

- I will balance my online life with real-time, warm, human contact, socially responsible and age appropriate activities, relationships and physical exercise.
- I will give face-to-face interactions priority over cellular interactions.
- I will not make it easier for strangers to connect with me than my own loved ones.
- I will show self-control, critical thinking and will NOT feel obliged to immediately answer EVERY call or text (unless it is from a parent—see above).
- I will pay attention to my surroundings and not text as I walk, so as not to cut people off, lower my personal safety in the world, become a target, or miss out on what beauty and serendipity life has to offer.
- I will not text while driving, nor will I ride in a car with someone who is.
- I will not let others borrow my phone or browse the Internet with my device unless they are in my presence and also acting responsibly.

I commit to follow these and other, specific family guidelines and expectations around my media use regardless of how or where I am using my Smartphone. I will not pretend to be someone or something I am not. I will spend more time and energy in following these rules than in efforts to circumvent them. I commit to renegotiating this contract with assertiveness and maturity as I get older, as I make mistakes and as I learn.

When I choose to connect to or interact though the Internet, I will think through the consequences of my actions, understand the impact of my behavior on others in the world and behave appropriately, responsibly and safely so as to protect my family, my friends and myself.

SIGNED:
