

# CELL PHONE SAFETY

**Quick Fact:** 58% of 12-year-olds have a cell phone.

<http://www.netSMART.org/cellphones>



Clark Parents, when you think about your children’s online activities, do you consider their cell phones? Mobile phones range from the most basic, like those for younger children that can place calls only to restricted numbers, to smartphones that are essentially tiny computers. For example, smartphones have operating systems similar to that of computers which allow users to download programs or “apps.” These apps help users do

things like access e-mail and play games. Also, most cell phones allow users to download and upload content from the Internet just as they would on a computer. However, cell phones can be more difficult to monitor than a computer, and children often use them without adult supervision. Make sure to review your family’s Internet safety rules with your children and become aware of the following risks before allowing them to own cell phones:

- ☑ Use of camera and video can be fun, but also provide opportunity for bullies and others, and enable taking and sharing suggestive photos or videos (known as sexting).
- ☑ GPS tracking that makes it possible to pinpoint the location of the phone—and the child. Parents can use this to monitor where kids are, but if it is not used carefully, so can others. Furthermore, smartphones may tag a photo (geotagging), revealing precisely where and when it was taken.

<http://www.netSMART.org/Parents>

<http://www.safekids.com/cell-phone-safety-tips/>

# TIPS FOR TEENS

- ☑ Only give out your cell phone number to people you know for sure you can trust.
- ☑ Do not take any cell phone pictures or video that are sexual in nature. First off, if they involve nudity or partial nudity, they may be illegal and can be classified as child pornography - a felony offense in most states. The intent of the parties does not matter, nor does whether permission was granted. Secondly, they have the tendency to get into the hands of the wrong people. Think about your reputation.
- ☑ Do not send texts or capture pictures or video on your cell phone that you wouldn't feel comfortable sharing with your parents. Ask yourself how you'd feel if the text you sent or the picture or video you captured were broadcast all across the school, and all across the Internet. Even if you personally don't send it around, others can and often do. Remember that all of the text, photos, and videos you create with your phone are saved and available as digital evidence. They are either stored on the servers of your cell phone provider, or on your cell phone provider's web site in your individual webaccessible account, or on the flash memory or SIM card of your phone and on other phones - even if you have deleted them.
- ☑ Never text and drive. No text is worth losing your life over, or taking someone else's. If something is urgent, pull the vehicle over to a safe place before dealing with it.
- ☑ Many youngsters have sabotaged their future (e.g., admission into college, scholarships, job opportunities, legal problems and costs, criminal prosecution, being placed on sex offender registries) because they have misused computers or cell phones. It is NOT worth it!
- ☑ Don't respond to text messages from numbers and people you don't know. Learn how you can block certain individuals (via their cell phone numbers) from contacting you. Don't subject yourself unnecessarily to people who are mean to you when you can keep them from sending you any messages.
- ☑ Keep your cell phone keypad locked (and the PIN or password safe and private), so that others can't grab it, unlock it, and use it to get you into trouble when you're not looking.

