

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities to try:

**Leverage technology for good.** Encourage your teen to find an existing cause they are interested in that uses social media or the Internet as a primary form of communication. Challenge them to think of ways they can use their own social media accounts to bring attention to the cause, and promote the organization or issue.

**THINK about it.** Help your high schooler maintain digital integrity by monitoring what they post. Make it clear that you will always “follow” and “friend” and “subscribe” to any social media app or blog they’re a part of. Talk about the permanency and ramifications of anything posted to the Internet. A good acronym to give them is *THINK*, and to ask, “Is what I’m posting . . .”

- T – True?
- H – Helpful?
- I – Inspiring?
- N – Necessary?
- K – Kind?

If the post doesn’t pass the “THINK” test, it’s not worth posting. Write down this acronym and post it somewhere visible. Also assure them that if you have an issue with something they post, you will talk with them about it offline—not online.

**Your technology world.** While all of us know that no one inherently understands technology better than a teenager, as adults we do know a thing or two. Let your teen into your technology world. Maybe you use software to keep track of your finances or pay bills online. You can be a whiz at spreadsheets, putting together a presentation, or maybe you use a Bible app or health tracker. Share your technology skills, and in turn, let your son or daughter teach you some things as well.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your high-schooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



High School

# TECHNOLOGY

## PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Is every kid ready for total privacy online just because they’re in high school? Of course not—just like every 16 year old isn’t automatically mature enough for a driver’s license. But at this age, expect your child to push back on the concept of shared passwords and shared social media accounts. If over the years they’ve earned your trust and are ready for more freedom, consider giving it to them. If they haven’t, discuss what they can do to move toward that. In a few short years they’re going to jump out into the world. Give them space to practice that freedom now in the safety of your home. Remember your role in this phase is to help them . . .

**EXPAND**  
Their potential



So your child will . . .  
**ESTABLISH PERSONAL BOUNDARIES  
& LEVERAGE ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES**

This guide is designed to help you meet your high schooler where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of technology. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind:

### **TECHNOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Leveraging the potential of online experiences to enhance my offline community and success.**

## TO HIGH SCHOOLERS, SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"How do you use Spotify®?" *(Know what apps they have and how they use them.)*

**"Can you set up a playlist for me?"**

"Who's your favorite person to follow?" *(Discover who they listen to online.)*

**"What are some freedoms I have online that you don't have yet?"** *(Discuss plans for increasing freedom and responsibility over the next four years.)*

"What you post is public, even if it feels private. And it can be permanent." *(Help them recognize potential risks related to the words, images, and videos they create.)*

**"You cannot use your phone to text or call while driving."** *(Have clear expectations for cell phones and driving.)*

"Let's split the bill 80/20." *(Consider sharing the bill.)*

"I'm so impressed with your Etsy shop."

"It would help me to share our calendars so we can coordinate meals."

**"Did you know we could write letters to our Compassion® child online?"** *(Find ways to use technology to connect to a global mission.)*

"Can I see what you've been creating lately?" *(Show interest in everything from art to engineering to design to fan websites.)*

**"What's the best way for me to talk to you during the day?"** *(This will be more efficient as well as help you learn how they communicate)*

"Look where I am today. I'm thinking about you!" *(Share pictures with each other.)*

"I'm so proud of you. Would it be okay if I post a picture to share your accomplishment?" *(Model online respect.)*

## JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The high school years are the years to mobilize their potential. Your teenager is approaching adulthood with freedom on the horizon. The conversations you have today will help prepare them to make wise choices concerning technology for the rest of their lives. Stay informed. Stay involved. And keep the conversation going.