

Please read through these FAQs before signing the pledge:

The pledge is meant to support parents who feel that they can benefit from being part of a collective approach. We want to make sure everyone is on the same page because collaboration leads to increased success for all.

Q: What happens if I don't sign the pledge?

A: This is a completely **voluntary** pledge. We are simply creating a framework to help parents who decide that a smartphone-free childhood is best for their child. We respect that so many different factors go into decisions that we make as parents and encourage everyone to help ensure this is a judgment-free endeavor.

Q: What if I need a way to be in touch with my child or track where they are?

A: You can do this with the smartphone alternatives listed [here](#). During the school day you can always reach out to the school office.

Q: My child is in 1st grade where nobody even has a smartphone. Is there a point to signing this pledge?

A: Yes! The pledge is meant to last through the end of the 8th grade. Making these healthy choices is likely to be much easier for families with younger children as they do not yet face the strong social pressures that exist for older children. We hope that our communal efforts decrease the social pressure for these children as they grow up with a peer group whose families are committed to healthy tech habits for their children.

Q: What if I believe in this initiative but I'm afraid to commit all the way through the end of 8th?

A: Although we hope that you will be able to remain committed to this pledge through the end of 8th grade, we understand that there may be a situation where you would choose to opt out later based on new information or circumstances that change. We will be checking in with those who sign on a yearly basis to reaffirm ongoing commitment. If you want to participate in this communal effort and you feel ready to commit today, this concern should not prevent you from signing now.

Q: If I sign the pledge does it have to apply to all of my children who attend Yavneh?

A: No. You will sign a separate form for each participating child; you can sign for any or all of your children.

Q: What social media platforms and apps would I be agreeing to delay if I sign the pledge?

A: By signing this pledge you'd be agreeing to delay social media apps or access on *any* device. Specifically, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Facebook, Twitter, (re: YouTube see question below), and other similar platforms. The pledge does *not* include games, group texting or WhatsApp. Those are things many parents may still choose to delay, but we decided (after much debate) not to include them in the pledge.

Q: What about YouTube? I'm ok with my child watching some YouTube videos and don't feel that I can agree to delay YouTube until after 8th grade.

A: YouTube is a bit more nuanced. Under this pledge, we'd like to collectively avoid YouTube access for children *on their phones* - in this context children often spend many hours mindlessly scrolling through curated feeds of videos, very much like TikTok and other social media platforms. So, the pledge envisions that children will not have access to YouTube on a personal phone, but families signing the pledge can still feel comfortable with their child watching YouTube on a shared/supervised family device. In this way, YouTube is treated differently under the pledge than other social media platforms (like Snapchat, TikTok, etc), which parents would agree to delay on ANY device.

Q: What about internet browsers?

A: The pledge anticipates that children will not have internet browsers *on their phones*. Not only does web browsing provide a consistent and time consuming source of distraction from socializing and other activities, but it can also provide children with access to a variety of potentially harmful content in unsupervised settings. At the same time, we recognize that the internet can be an invaluable asset that children use for productive purposes. Therefore, as with YouTube, there would be an agreement among those who sign the pledge to delay having web browsers on a child's *phone*, but they may choose to allow a web browser on a monitored home device.

Q: Why is there a different pledge for current 1st-5th grades and current 6th-8th grades? Does this mean that things will change when my 5th grader becomes a 6th grader?

A: The plan is for there to be only one pledge for grades 1-8 in a few years. Since the reality is that many students in our current grades 6 -8 have smartphones, we made a modified pledge **for the graduating classes of 2025 and 2026 only**. For all other graduating classes, the pledge will be the same one offered in all future grades all the way through 8th.

Q: What if my child already has a smartphone? Or already uses social media? Or I promised my child an iPhone?

A: If you decide based on new information that you want to reverse this decision, you have options. Of course, you can discuss with your child that you've changed your mind based on current research and give them a smartphone alternative instead, if you are comfortable with that. Otherwise, there are many different ways to filter a smartphone to remove social media apps and even the internet browser. Our webpage will have the latest information on how to do this. We know that this can be so difficult. If you feel that you cannot take away social media (all grades) or the internet browser (current 5th grade and below) from your child's phone then it would not make sense for you to sign the pledge.

Q: How can Yavneh encourage us to sign a pledge like this when the school gives homework on an iPad or computer even at a young age? What about the school's use of iPads in the classroom? And will the school be enforcing no phones during school hours?

A: The Yavneh Healthy Tech Committee has two main goals. One is the pledge, to help parents make healthy choices for their kids. The other is to partner with Yavneh in the ongoing quest to make healthier tech choices for our kids at school and with homework assignments. The Yavneh administration team is very committed to both of these goals. Rabbi Knapp expressed this in his recent email: “we continuously review our educational use of technology to make sure it is aligned with best practices.” He also reinforced that Yavneh is a no-phone zone for students, and that Yavneh is working to make this even more clear and consistent.

Q: What if I have more questions about this? Who can I contact?

A: Your grade ambassadors have already reached out to you and they are a great resource. You can also reach the Steering Committee at yavnehtechcommittee@gmail.com or reach out to any of us individually.