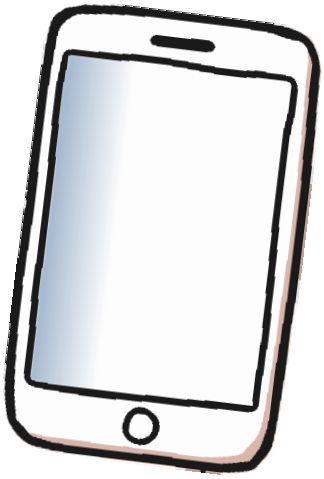
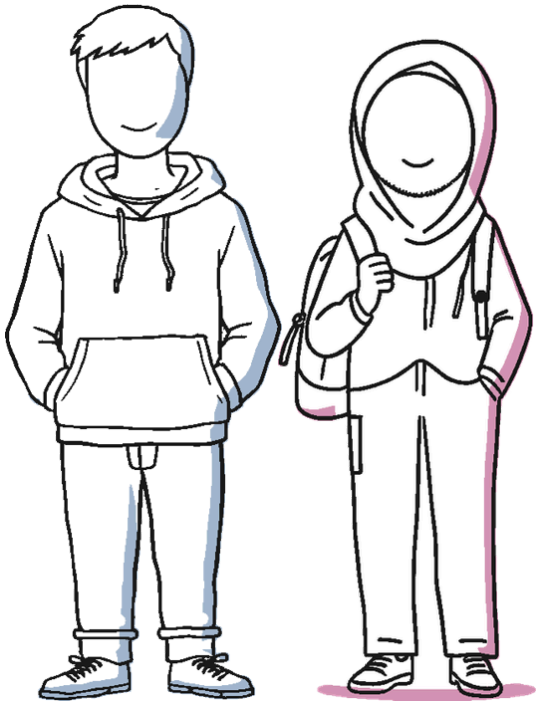
But EVERYONE has ONE



The Muslim parents' guide, before you give your teenager a phone



By **Imran Ali**
author of *Remember Me*

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How to use this guide

1. Parents read it first, then hand it to their teenager, a few months before the phone.
2. Parent and teenager go through pages 6 to 8 together, in one go.
3. On the day the phone arrives, print the last four pages, switch on the settings, and fill in the charter together.

Already got a phone? Go through it all the same. It's a good chance to reset the conversation, and page 9 has more.

About the author. Imran Ali is an Islamic family coach, a father of six, and the author of *Remember Me*, a #1 Amazon UK bestseller. More at **akhimranali.com**.

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How it was checked. Every hadith was checked on sunnah.com, and every verse on quran.com. The pages were reviewed for theology and tested with parents and teenagers. Where the guide gives advice, it's a parent's advice, not a religious ruling.

Our agreement. This guide is free. Print it as often as your family needs, and share the link below.

Share this with another family.

akhimranali.com/phone-guide

GIVE IT, OR WAIT?



In the UK, phone ownership jumps from **56%** at age 10 to **83%** at 11 (Ofcom, 2026). In the US, more than half of children have their own smartphone by 11 (Common Sense Media, 2026). Most of those phones are handed over because everyone else has one. This guide asks families to do something harder: **WAIT.**

This guide recommends no phone of your own until 16. Before then, if you travel on your own, a basic phone that only makes calls and sends texts is enough. After that, a smartphone as late as possible, set up by your parents before it's handed over. The settings stay on for as long as you live at home.

WHAT A SMARTPHONE REALLY IS

A smartphone isn't a phone with extras. It's every shop, every stranger, every film and every opinion in the world, in your pocket, in your bedroom, at midnight. The apps on it are built to keep you on it. Do we really want a 12-year-old to manage something most adults can't?

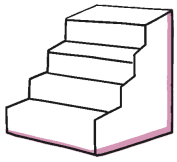
- Most young people first see pornography by accident. In England, the average age is 13 (Children's Commissioner, 2025), and **62%** of US teens say they've come across it by accident (Common Sense Media, 2026).
- In the UK, in one week, **34%** of 13 to 17-year-olds saw high-risk content about suicide, self-harm or eating disorders (Molly Rose Foundation, 2026).

WHY IT'S SERIOUS

In England, about **1 in 5** young people now have a probable mental health disorder, up from **1 in 8** in 2017 (NHS England, 2023). In the US, a third of high school students feel persistently sad or hopeless (CDC, 2025). Studies across the West point the same way. Phones aren't the only cause, and scientists still argue about how big a part they play. We don't need the final answer to know what a phone in the bedroom does to sleep, to Fajr and to the dinner table.

> "All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards... A man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them." Bukhari 893

THE THREE STEPS TO A PHONE



Everyone asks, "What age should I get a phone?" A better question is: which step am I on, and what has to happen before the next one?

Step	What you have	When
1 · No phone of your own	The family computer, in a room where everyone is. To call a friend, use Mum's or Dad's phone	Until 16
2 · A basic phone	Calls and texts. No internet, no apps	At 16. Earlier only if you travel on your own
3 · A smartphone, with the family settings on	Filters on, no social media to start. The phone stays out of the bedroom at night	As late as possible. The settings stay on while you live at home

Tablets and games consoles go online too, so the same rules apply to them.

A PHONE IS AN AMANAH

An amanah is a trust. A phone is one: the money it costs, the phone itself, and what you put on it and look at. It belongs to the home and is lent to you, so you don't buy one yourself, even with your own money, and a phone given as a present comes with the charter too. We all answer to Allah for how it's used.

> "The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah)." **Qur'an 17:36**

WHAT EARNS THE SMARTPHONE

The family screen time agreement already covers every other screen at home: tablets, laptops and consoles. Keeping to it on those, keeping to the rules on the basic phone, and telling the truth when something goes wrong: that's what earns the smartphone.

Ibn 'Umar offered himself for the battle of Uhud at 14, and the Prophet ﷺ didn't accept him. At the Trench, at 15, he did. "Not yet" isn't "never". Bukhari 2664

"BUT EVERYONE HAS ONE"



"Everyone in my class has one."

Probably true, and being the odd one out is rubbish. If we can, we'll find another family who's waiting too, so you're not the only one.

"I need it for homework."

Homework works on the family computer. If school needs something on a phone, show us and we'll sort it.

"How will you get hold of me?"

A basic phone does that.

"I need it for Qur'an and prayer times."

Good reason. A mushaf, and the masjid's prayer times. We'll make sure you've got both.

"The madrasa group is on WhatsApp."

Put one of our numbers in, and we'll show you what's meant for you, every evening.

"College needs apps."

If college really needs you to have them, that's when you'll get a smartphone. We'll set it up together before you start using it.

UNTIL THEN

Waiting until 16 works when your days are full. So let's fill them with things worth doing:

- **Play:** family board games, chess, puzzles
- **Learn:** a documentary watched together, then talked about over dinner
- **Read:** a family book club, one book a month, discussed together
- **Grow:** Qur'an together, a new skill or language, the masjid
- **Make and explore:** cooking, building, a club or sport, museums, walks

ALWAYS ASK YOURSELF

Phone filters only work on the phone. The one that goes everywhere with you is knowing that Allah sees you: "Does he not know that Allah sees (all)?" Qur'an 96:14 So every time you pick up the phone, or do anything on a screen, ask yourself these three questions.



A personal, one-to-one chat.

Helps your deen: the Qur'an and what it means, a talk that teaches you something, anything that makes you want to pray, give or be kinder. Keep a Qur'an app on your home screen.

Hurts it: inappropriate websites and videos. They're haram, they're everywhere, and they're built to hook you. Lower your gaze, online too: if it comes up, close it. If you went looking and you feel ashamed, seek Allah's forgiveness.

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze… And tell the believing women to lower their gaze." Qur'an 24:30–31 · "Haya' is a part of faith." Bukhari 24



Anyone you watch or follow becomes a kind of friend, and friends shape you. Our guide *Social Media, Influencers and Your Teenager* goes further.

A good influence gives you good ideas and good words. It reminds you of Allah, and makes you want to pray, be kind to your parents and keep good friends.

A bad influence puts ideas in your head that displease Allah, teaches you bad language and answering back, makes haram look normal, and sells you a life that isn't real.

"The example of a good pious companion and an evil one is that of a person carrying musk and another blowing a pair of bellows. The one who is carrying musk will either give you some perfume as a present, or you will buy some from him, or you will get a good smell from him, but the one who is blowing a pair of bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him." Bukhari 5534



None of us knows which day is our last. If we did, we wouldn't spend it scrolling.

Worth your time: making something (a video, a design, a website, a story), learning a new skill or a language, some Qur'an, homework, a call to your grandparents. You come away with something.

"Health and free time: two blessings many people lose." Bukhari 6412

Wasting it: endless reels, clips and shorts. They're built to keep you hooked, and being hooked is like an illness. The habit spreads: you put off the hard things elsewhere too, and that shapes your future. Loot boxes and paid spins work like gambling: you pay, chance decides what you get. That has no place in a Muslim home.

TIME AND PLACE





Let's agree the screen-off times now, for school nights and weekends. Then nobody argues later, and nobody makes up rules on the spot.

School nights: _____ **Weekends:** _____

"Allah's Messenger ﷺ disliked to sleep before the 'Isha' prayer and to talk after it."

Bukhari 568



At meals, every phone goes in one place. If someone walks into the room while you're on your phone, put it down and give them all your attention. People come first: that's respect.



Salah on time, homework done, and enough sleep, before any games or videos. At salah and in the masjid, it's off.



At night it charges outside your room. No exceptions. Make it easy for yourself: if the phone isn't beside you, you won't keep checking it, you won't get pulled in, and you'll sleep on time. You're setting yourself up to win.



Tablets, laptops and consoles get used where everyone is, not behind a closed door. If someone walks in and there's no screen to close and nothing to be embarrassed about, you're on the right path. Build that habit now, and you'll keep it when you're on your own.

THE PEOPLE, AND WHEN IT GOES WRONG



Online, anyone can pretend: a grown man can pass for a 15-year-old girl. So you only message people you've met in real life. In games, chat stays about the game. If anyone online asks you to keep a chat secret, or to move to another app, that's a warning sign: tell us. With the opposite sex, outside family, keep it to groups, or to what's needed, like homework. No private one-to-one chats.



In group chats, don't mock anyone, and don't backbite. If someone sends round a picture of someone from school, don't forward it: tell us. And if you see one of us watching something wrong, we talk about it at the table without names: what, not who. Abu Dawud 4788

"Not a word does a person utter without having a (vigilant) observer ready (to write it down)." **Qur'an 50:18**



The phone belongs to the home and is lent to you, so your parents know your passcodes. If we ever need to check, it's with you there, never behind your back. Location sharing stays on, and so do the settings, while you live at home. Protecting our family is our job. Qur'an 66:6



If something goes wrong on this phone, the sooner you tell us, the better, and we won't shout.

When a Bedouin urinated in the masjid and the Companions shouted at him, the Prophet ﷺ told them to leave him alone, had it cleaned up, then explained to him what the masjid is for. Muslim 285

If someone tricked you, threatened you or hurt you, that's on them, and nothing happens to you, even if they got you to break a rule. If you broke a rule yourself, we talk it through at the table, and there's nothing extra for telling us. That's the deal.

- **Inappropriate pictures of yourself.** Never send one, to anyone, even someone you like. Your body is a trust from Allah, and nobody has a right to pictures of it. If anything like that happens, tell us. There'll be no judgement, and we'll help put it right.
- **If someone threatens you with a picture:** it's not your fault, even if you sent it. They're the one committing a crime. Don't reply and don't pay. Don't delete anything: screenshot the messages and the profile. Then block, report, and tell us straight away.
- **Self-harm, suicide or starving yourself.** Some posts push these. All of them are forbidden in Islam. Close it straight away and don't look into it. And if you ever feel low, come to us. Nothing is too big to tell us.

THE DAY THE PHONE ARRIVES

ON THE DAY

1. **Your account goes into the family group, whatever your age.** Do this now, even if the phone is years away. Under 13, your parents set it up. From 13, a child in the UK, US, Canada or Australia can set up their own Google or Apple account with no controls at all, so if you're 13 or older, join the family group and accept the settings. Once it's inside, it keeps its settings until 18: Google needs a parent's approval to stop supervision, and Apple needs the Screen Time passcode. Google and Apple help pages, November 2026
2. **Set it up together, before it's yours,** using the parental controls checklist on page 10. The settings help, but they don't replace the charter.
3. **Fill in the phone charter together** (page 12), and both sign. Start with Bismillah.
4. **After a month, then every few months, sit down together:** Mum, Dad and you. Check that everything's going well and the charter is being kept, and agree anything that needs to change.

ALREADY GOT A PHONE?

It isn't too late. Nothing gets taken away in anger. We gave you a phone without a plan, and here's the plan now. We start with the deal on page 8, so you know you can tell us anything. Then we fill in the charter together this week, with a date to look again.

We'll be gentle, the way the Prophet ﷺ was with Anas: in ten years of serving him, Anas never once heard him say "Uf", or "Why did you do so?" Bukhari 6038

Gentle isn't the same as no rules. It means no anger and no contempt.

And we keep making du'a for you: the Prophet ﷺ named "the supplication of a father for his child" among the three that are answered. Ibn Majah 3862

> "Do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah." **Qur'an 12:87**

If a rule keeps slipping, we talk about it at our weekly family meeting.
The free guide to the meeting is at akhimranali.com/thursday.

Our Parental Controls Checklist ✓

Set it up once, with your child beside you.

1 Every phone, tablet, laptop and console must have a family account from the company that made it.

You run it; each child has their own login. If they use yours, none of this reaches them.

2 In each one your home has, tick these off.

Tick each one when it's on	**Apple** iPhone · iPad · Mac	**Google** Android · Chromebook	**Microsoft** Windows · Xbox	**PlayStation** PS5 · PS4	**Nintendo** Switch · Switch 2
Family group	☐ Family Sharing	☐ Family Link	☐ Family Safety	☐ Family Management	☐ Family group
Spending locked	☐ Ask to Buy	☐ Purchase approval	☐ Require approval	☐ Monthly spending limit: 0	☐ Spending restrictions
Filters on	☐ Limit Adult Websites	☐ Block explicit sites	☐ Filter inappropriate websites	☐ Age level	☐ Restricted features
A passcode only parents know	☐ Screen Time passcode	☐ Parent access code	☐ Xbox Family Settings	☐ Console passcode	☐ Parental Controls PIN
A night cut-off	☐ Screen Time Schedule	☐ Downtime	☐ Screen time	☐ Playtime settings	☐ Bedtime
Chat only with people they know	☐ Allowed Contacts	☐ Only contacts I add	☐ Xbox Family Settings	☐ Restrict communication	☐ Restrict free communication
Stuck?	Search: Apple Screen Time	Search: Google Family Link	Search: Microsoft Family Safety	Search: PlayStation parental controls	Search: Nintendo parental controls

3 Then the apps and games: check the age, then sit with them and see how they use it.

APPS ☐ WhatsApp 13+ ☐ Snapchat 13+ ☐ TikTok 13+ ☐ Instagram 13+ ☐ YouTube 13+ ☐ Discord 13+

GAMES ☐ Roblox ☐ Fortnite ☐ Minecraft ☐ Call of Duty ☐ EA Sports FC ☐ GTA

Games: the age rating is on the store page (PEGI in the UK, ESRB in North America).

Look out for: bad language · inappropriate content · violence · gambling-style buying (loot boxes) · chat with strangers. Each has its own settings: search its name and "parental controls".

Protecting our family is our job. Qur'an 66:6

This phone is for: Maryam

A SAMPLE PHONE CHARTER

Date: Fri 20 Nov

Maryam, 17, getting her first smartphone. Every family's will look different.

Always ask yourself:







RULES THAT NEVER CHANGE

- ☑ We know your passcodes. If we need to look, we look together, never behind your back.
- ☑ You only message people you've met in real life. Game chat stays about the game.
- ☑ Never send, ask for or keep an inappropriate picture of anyone. If someone sends or asks for one, tell us: that's on them, not you.
- ☑ No disappearing messages, hidden apps, or accounts we don't know about. Don't share where you are with anyone online, and don't film or post anyone without asking them.
- ☑ Prayer, homework, sleep first. At night the phone charges outside your bedroom. Spending anything, even your own money: ask first.
- ☑ At meals and when talking, the person in front of you comes first.
- ☑ In group chats, no mocking or backbiting, and never forward a picture of someone else.
- ☑ Someone online upsets you, threatens you or asks for something? Tell us straight away. Nobody loses a screen for telling us, even if they got you to break a rule.

OUR SETTINGS

Who pays	Monthly plan: Dad Lost or broken: ☐ we pay ☐ you pay ☑ half each
Screens off at	School nights: 9:30pm Weekends and holidays: 10:30pm
At night it charges in	the kitchen (never in your bedroom)
You can message and call	☑ family ☑ people you've met in real life ☑ class and madrasa groups Anyone else we agree:
Apps and internet	FILTERS ON. ☑ You ask before every new app. Apps we've agreed: Qur'an app, maps
Social media	☑ None yet ☐ Only: (we talk about it at each check)
Location sharing	On, while you live at home

We'll check how it's going on: Sun 20 Dec

If rules aren't being kept, we bring it to the table and talk about it honestly.

You: I promise I won't let this phone become a reason for arguments at home.

Signed:
Maryam

Mum or Dad: If you tell us something went wrong, we'll listen first and won't shout.

Signed:
Dad

This phone is for: _____

OUR PHONE CHARTER

Date: _____

Between you and Mum or Dad, for your smartphone.

Always ask yourself:







RULES THAT NEVER CHANGE

- ☐ We know your passcodes. If we need to look, we look together, never behind your back.
- ☐ You only message people you've met in real life. Game chat stays about the game.
- ☐ Never send, ask for or keep an inappropriate picture of anyone. If someone sends or asks for one, tell us: that's on them, not you.
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Who pays	Monthly plan: _____ Lost or broken: ☐ we pay ☐ you pay ☐ half each
Screens off at	School nights: _____ Weekends and holidays: _____
At night it charges in	_____ (never in your bedroom)
You can message and call	☐ family ☐ people you've met in real life ☐ class and madrasa groups Anyone else we agree: _____
Apps and internet	FILTERS ON. ☐ You ask before every new app. Apps we've agreed: _____
Social media	☐ None yet ☐ Only: _____ (we talk about it at each check)
Location sharing	On, while you live at home

We'll check how it's going on: ___ / ___ / ___

If rules aren't being kept, we bring it to the table and talk about it honestly.

You: I promise I won't let this phone become a reason for arguments at home.

Signed:

Mum or Dad: If you tell us something went wrong, we'll listen first and won't shout.

Signed:

OUR SCREEN TIME AGREEMENT

Always ask:







"...The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those one will be questioned (by Allâh)." **Qur'an 17:36**

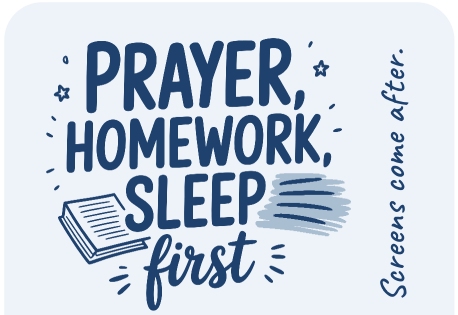
What we agree:



Our bodies have a right on us. Bukhari 1975



At meals and when talking, the person in front of you comes first.



Health and free time: two blessings many people lose. Bukhari 6412



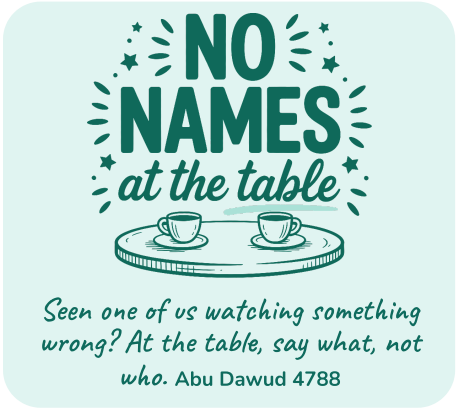
Out of the bedrooms every night: rest comes easier.



Laptops, tablets and consoles stay where we all are.



We only message people we know. Game chat stays about the game.



Seen one of us watching something wrong? At the table, say what, not who. Abu Dawud 4788



Mum and Dad know the passcodes, and only check with you. Protecting our family is our job. Qur'an 66:6



Someone online upsets you or asks for something? Nobody loses a screen for telling us.

All family signatures:

The Thursday Family Meeting

Once the phone is set up, keep it going.

A phone agreement made once won't keep up with a growing teenager. You need a weekly family meeting, when the family sits down together, so phone rules get sorted at the table, not argued about at bedtime.

WHERE MOST OF US ARE

Nobody taught us parenting, but we do our best.

We remind the kids in the car, at the door, on the way to school. But by bedtime, most of it is forgotten.

WHAT WE HOPE FOR

A home with *sakinah*: calm and contentment.

Children who feel heard, parents who keep growing, a family helping each other succeed, in this life and the hereafter.

WHAT WE GET

Everyone is busy with their own week, and there's never a moment to stop and see how the family is getting on.

So the week decides for us, and small things grow: the same argument every week, or a child who stops telling us things.

TWENTY MINUTES A WEEK

Reminders turn into habits when they have their own time.
The Thursday Family Meeting gives them one: once a week, together.

20 min



1. **Last week.** How everyone's week went, and a check on what was decided.
2. **The week ahead.** Everyone has their say, then Mum and Dad decide.
3. **To finish.** Anything else, then you're done.

Thursday evening works well: the week is nearly done, and the blessed night of Jumu'ah begins at Maghrib.

Ibn Mas'ud, the Companion, taught the people every Thursday. When a man asked for it daily, he said: *"...I hate to bore you, and no doubt I take care of you in preaching by selecting a suitable time just as the Prophet ﷺ used to do with us..."* **(al-Bukhari 70)**

Whoever is home is enough. One parent and one child is a meeting.

Your first family meeting could be

this Thursday

Download your free guide

- What to say to your family to start it
- A script for whoever leads it, so anyone can run it
- A simple one-page template for each week

akhimranali.com/thursday