

# KAIS Elementary & Middle School

## Guidelines for the Safe Use of Smartphones

Teens must navigate a digital adolescence (often without any supervision), and in doing so make some missteps on their way to becoming responsible adults. This is to be expected, but it's still a major challenge for parents and schools, who are largely left in the dark about what exactly goes on in a child's digital world. The goal, ultimately, is not to understand everything they do online, but to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and maturity to use technology responsibly and appropriately. Although the school offers the students periodic seminars and workshops regarding online safety and the responsible use of devices, supporting students is a team effort and requires help at home as well. As such, the school recommends the following guidelines for parents considering purchasing a smartphone for their child.

- Students first get a smartphone on loan from their parents. Ideally, children should not be provided a smartphone until their first year of high school.
- They must successfully pass a 1-year trial period during which they must demonstrate the responsible use of the phone.
- Phones and laptops should be out of the bedroom by 9 p.m.
- After the 1-year trial period, the phone can become theirs. However, periodic parental checks may continue for 3 months before they get full access.
- If the child, at any point, suffers lower grades at school, or is involved in a cyber-bullying incident, the device should be removed as a consequence for a period of 1-3 months.
- Ideally, the home's personal computer should be located in the living room, or other supervised space.
- Legal age restrictions for apps and online services should be followed.
- Whenever possible, parental controls and passwords should be used to limit the child's access to the digital world, until they prove their responsibility and maturity.
- Screen time should be limited to 2 hours per day.
- The child must sign a contract stating the above terms (or other terms discussed and agreed upon by the family), with clear consequences that follow rule infractions.