

# Screen Curfew Contract

A sign-together agreement between parent and child for screen-free evenings

This isn't a punishment — it's a family agreement. Research from the AASM and AAP consistently shows that screen use in the hour before bed delays sleep onset, reduces sleep quality, and shortens total sleep duration in school-age children. This contract makes the rule clear, fair, and shared.

## FAMILY SCREEN CURFEW CONTRACT

We, the undersigned, agree to the following screen-free evening rules. We make this agreement because sleep matters for our health, our mood, our ability to learn, and how we treat each other. These rules apply to everyone — kids AND parents.

### Article 1: The Curfew

- All screens are turned off by \_\_\_:\_\_\_ PM every night — Recommended: at least 60 minutes before bedtime. If bedtime is 8:00 PM, screens off at 7:00 PM.
- 'Screens' means: TV, tablets, phones, computers, handheld games, and smartwatches
- This applies every night: school nights, weekends, holidays, and summer — Weekend curfew can be 30 minutes later, but it must still exist.

### Article 2: Where Screens Live at Night

- All phones and tablets are charged in a common area — NOT in bedrooms — Designate a 'device dock' in the kitchen, living room, or hallway
- No TV in any child's bedroom
- Parent phones also go to the dock at curfew time (we lead by example) — If parents need their phone, it stays on silent, face-down, outside the bedroom

### Article 3: What We Do Instead

The hour between screen curfew and bedtime is for:

**Good Choices**

**Not These**

- ✓ Reading (books, comics, magazines)
- ✓ Drawing, coloring, or crafts
- ✓ Board games or card games
- ✓ Talking as a family
- ✓ Gentle stretching or yoga
- ✓ Audiobooks or podcasts
- ✓ Journaling or writing
- ✓ Playing music (not on a screen)

- ✗ YouTube 'just one more video'
- ✗ Video games 'just to save'
- ✗ TikTok / social media scrolling
- ✗ Texting friends
- ✗ Watching TV 'in the background'
- ✗ 'I need my phone for my alarm'
- ✗ 'I'm just checking one thing'
- ✗ 'But it's educational!'

## Article 4: Consequences

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If a family member breaks the curfew:

- 1 First time: Friendly reminder. Device goes to the dock immediately.
- 2 Second time (same week): Device goes to the dock 30 minutes earlier the next day.
- 3 Third time (same week): No screen time after school the following day.
- 4 If a PARENT breaks the curfew: Kids choose a bonus 15 minutes of bedtime reading or a fun breakfast the next morning. Parents are not exempt.

## Article 5: Exceptions

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- Homework that requires a computer is allowed until curfew time — but not past it — Plan ahead.  
If homework needs a screen, it gets done before curfew.
- Family movie night is an exception (max 1 per week, on weekends) — Even on movie night, personal devices are still docked.
- Emergency calls from parents are always permitted
- Kindle/e-reader in dark mode with no backlight is allowed for reading — E-ink screens without backlighting don't suppress melatonin the way tablets do

## Article 6: Review

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We will review this contract as a family every 3 months. Anyone can propose changes. Changes require agreement from at least one parent and one child.

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## Signatures

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By signing below, I agree to follow this contract and support everyone else in the family in following it too.

Parent 1: Name & Signature

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Parent 2: Name & Signature (if applicable)

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Child 1: Name & Signature

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Child 2: Name & Signature (if applicable)

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Child 3: Name & Signature (if applicable)

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DATE SIGNED

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NEXT REVIEW DATE

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Post this on the fridge. The physical visibility matters — it's not a rule, it's a commitment. Kids who helped create the rules follow them more willingly than kids who had rules imposed on them.

**IMPORTANT**

The 'but I need my phone for my alarm' excuse is the #1 loophole. Buy a \$10 alarm clock. Problem solved. A phone in the bedroom at night is a sleep destroyer for children and adults alike.