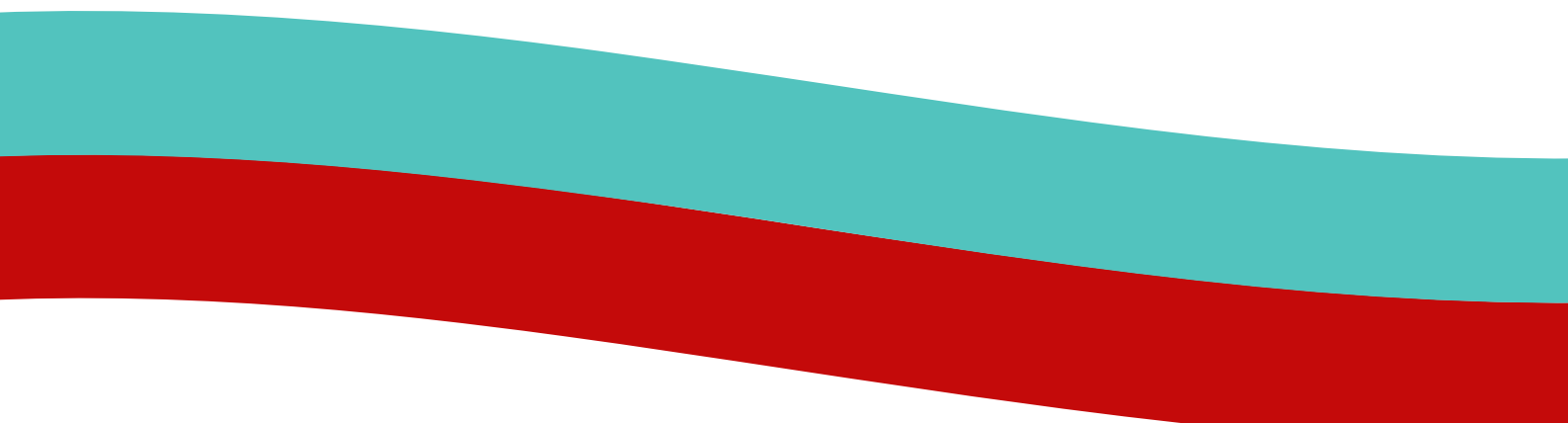


*Let's Talk  
About*

**PHONE  
FUNDAMENTALS**



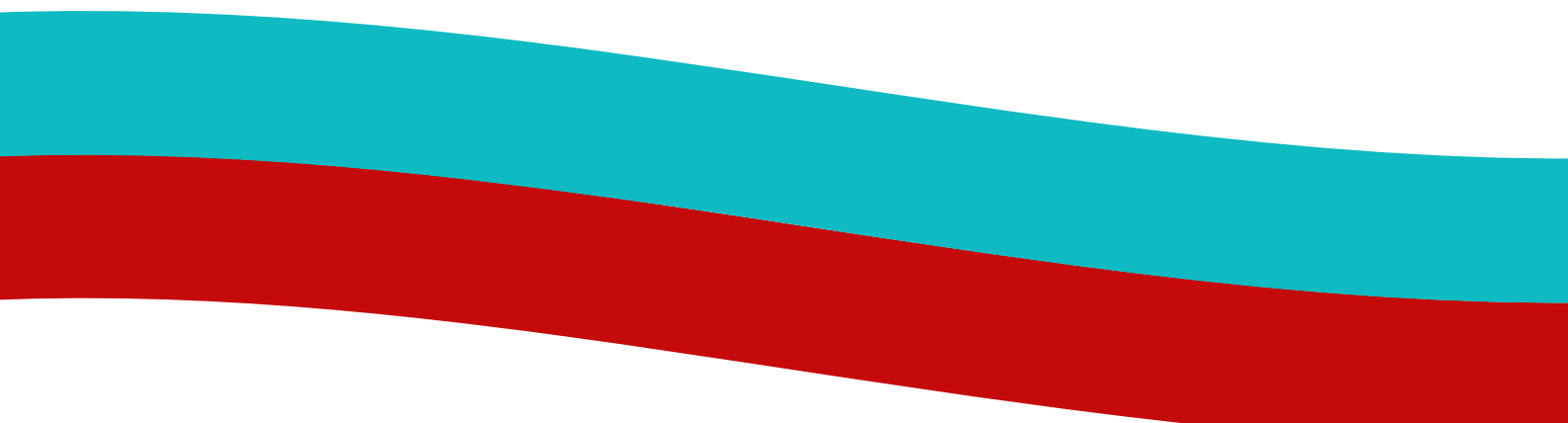
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Congratulations! You're about to enter the digital arena with access to a phone. While this may be exciting, it's also important to remember the responsibilities and challenges that come with this powerful device. I know our family can navigate it well as a team—if we remember our roles and some basic phone fundamentals.

**I—the parent—am the coach.**

No good coach throws their players on the field completely unprepared. I would be a terrible personal coach if I gave you this phone and just hoped for the best. As your coach, I will teach you how to use the phone safely and moderately. My role is to model healthy smartphone use, establish safe boundaries, prepare you for obstacles, monitor how you're doing, and help you correct your course when needed.

I love you too much to risk putting you in a situation in which you are not equipped. I want to arm you with knowledge and resources to tackle anything you encounter with this phone.



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We'll start with firm boundaries and release some of the restrictions as you demonstrate maturity. Our family's experience will be better and less stressful if we start with high expectations versus laying down the law once something has gone awry.

By making good choices with your phone, you will earn more freedom with it over time. When you make mistakes with your phone, we will have a serious conversation as a family and decide if we need to suspend certain phone privileges or take away the phone for a period of time.

The ultimate goal of our training is to prepare you to have full ownership of your phone by the time of high school graduation. This will require years of training, learning, establishing discipline, and demonstrating maturity.



**You're the player.**

A player to any new arena must learn the fundamentals, rules, and parameters of the game.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of two overlapping, wavy shapes. The top shape is teal and the bottom shape is red, both curving upwards from left to right.

# THE BIG TEN PARAMETERS

## ***Parameter 1: You don't own the phone.***

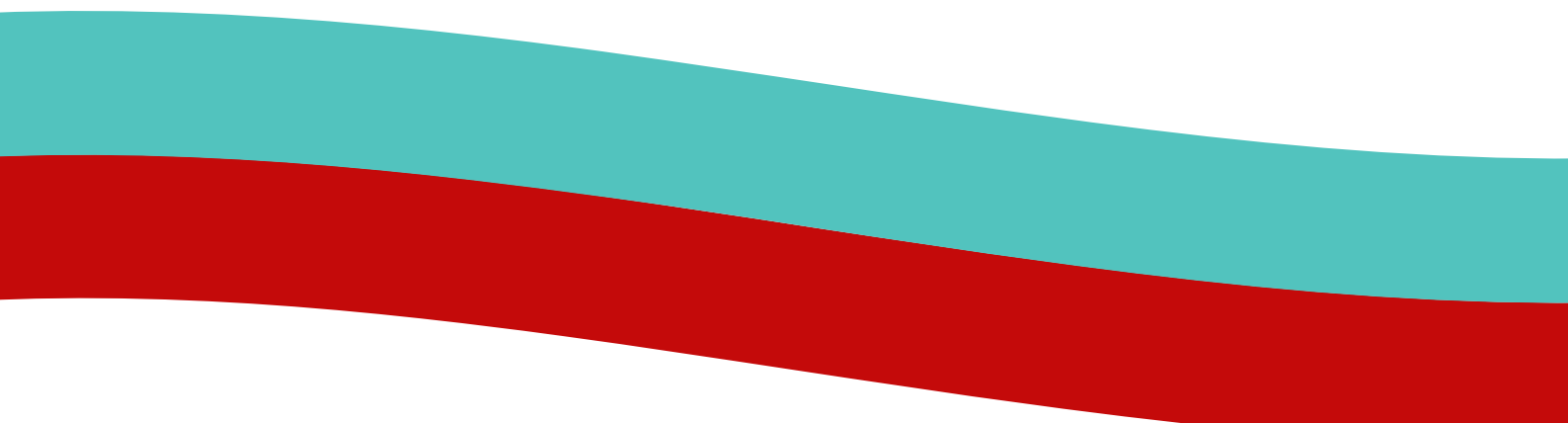
I own the phone. I am permitting you access to this device. If the phone is not responsibly used, access will be suspended.

## ***Parameter 2: Passwords are not secret.***

It is your responsibility to share with me your password for your phone, apps, and any online platforms requiring a password.

## ***Parameter 3: Nothing you do on your phone is private. Your phone will be monitored.***

Unfortunately, the internet does not afford us the luxury of privacy. Every text, "like," photo shared, and social media post contributes to your digital footprint, which follows you from childhood to adulthood. The Internet is forever. One foolish misstep could have serious consequences on your reputation, relationships, college applications, and future job prospects.

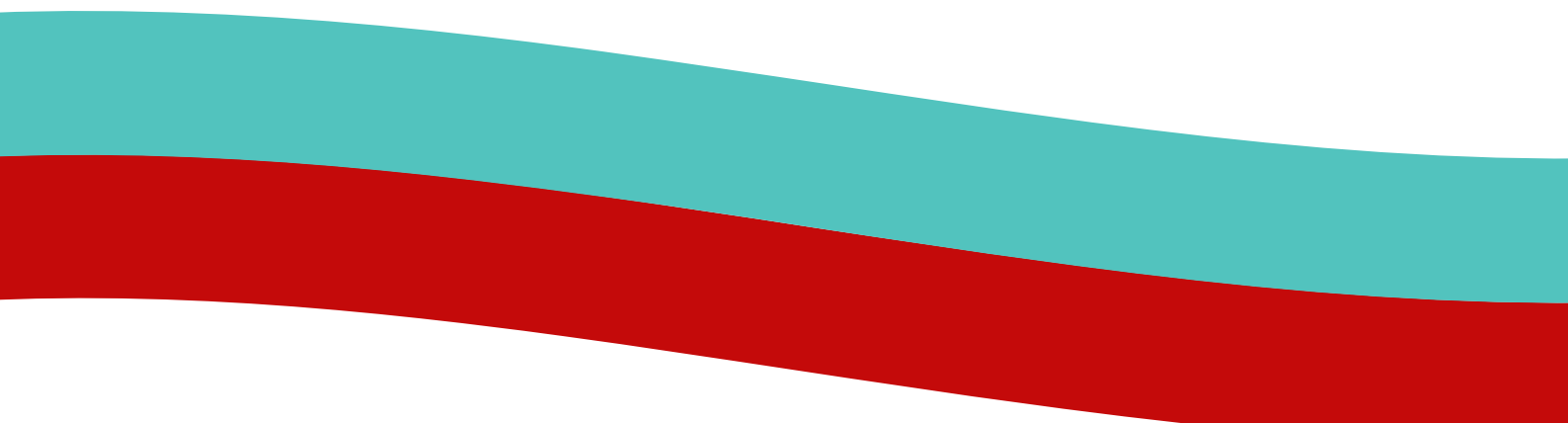


Training you effectively requires me knowing how you are playing. I need to observe how you are communicating through your phone. To help you protect your digital footprint and train you for online obstacles, I will have full access to your device. Your texts will be checked. When you are allowed access to the internet browser and social media, your online activity will be monitored. We also will have family huddles to see how you are managing your screen time either through Apple's Screen time feature, Google's Family Link, or a monitoring app we choose.

I encourage you to use my monitoring to your advantage. Anytime a group text goes south, someone asks for a nude photo, or you are uncomfortable with how an online exchange, I am your safety net. You can use me as an out and simply say, "I can't. My mom/dad relentlessly monitor what I do on my phone."

## ***Parameter 4: Only parents will install and delete apps***

There are more than 2 million apps. Many apps do amazing things. Other apps are problematic, inappropriate, and can lead to destructive behavior. Some of your friends may even have a vault app to hide texts and photos from their parents. My job as your coach is to research any app and determine if the app adds value to your digital life or not. If you are interested in an app, let me know. We can research it and talk about it. However, the ultimate decision is mine to make. Through the parental controls on your phone, I've removed your ability to install and delete apps on your own. If you figure out some workaround and install something without my permission, you will lose your phone.



## ***Parameter 5: The internet browser will be earned.***

The internet browser is a wonderful tool to have on your phone—eventually. It's easy access to constant entertainment (and plenty of inappropriate content) make it a privilege to be earned instead of a given feature your phone. When I think you are ready for this privilege, I will give you access to the internet browser through parental controls.

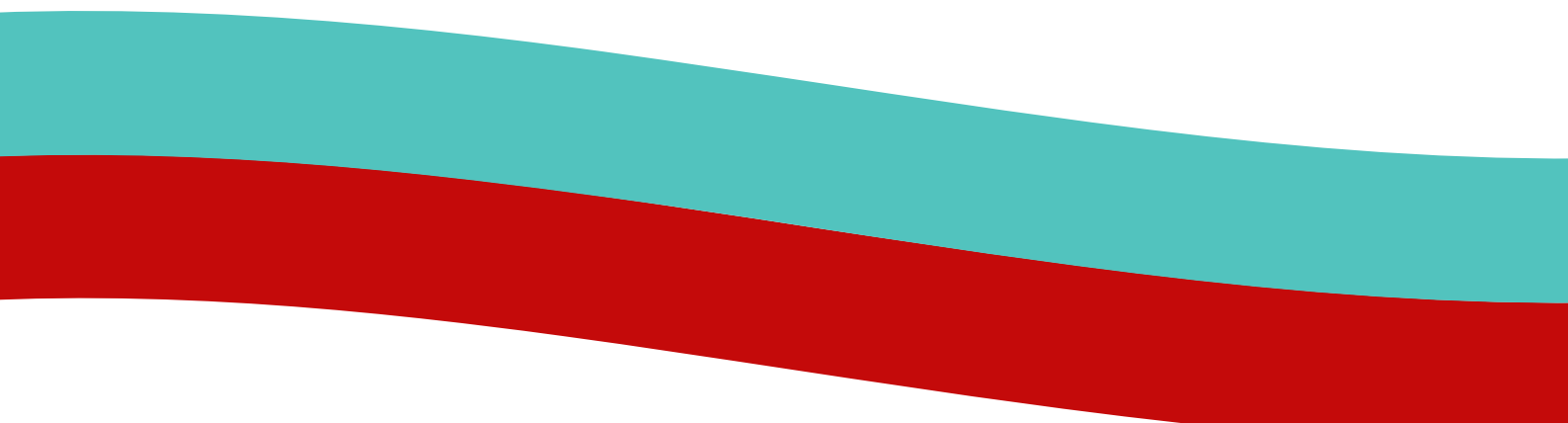
## ***Parameter 6: Parental controls are on your phone.***

Healthy boundaries help us flourish. By establishing solid parental controls, I am setting you up for success in the digital arena. When parents give their kids too much freedom and not enough guidance, they set them up for a path to failure.

Through the parental controls on your phone, I have given you an ideal training ground to learn how to use your phone safely and moderately. As we discussed earlier, at first, you will not have the ability to install apps, delete apps, or access the internet browser. When you are given these privileges, the content will be restricted with parental controls. I've also prevented you from accessing your phone during the school day to help support your academic success.

## ***Parameter 7: Be on guard with unknown people on your phone***

“Stanger danger” is an important guideline to keep in mind with your phone. Let me know right away if an unknown person calls, texts, or messages you via an app. Also, never share your password, account information, location, school or home address with an unknown person.



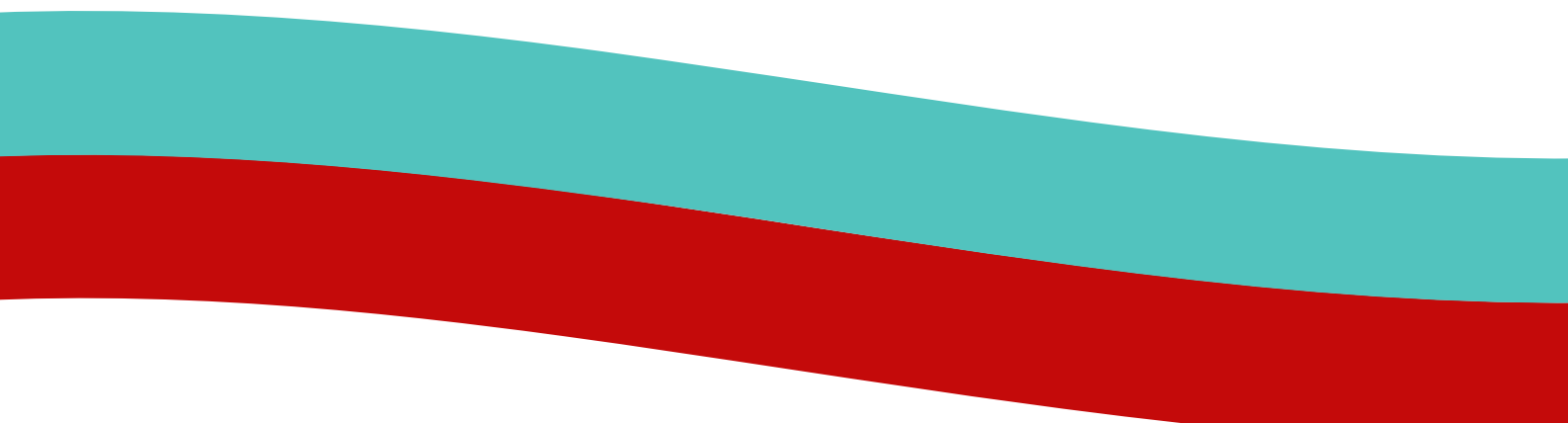
## ***Parameter 8: Promptly answer all calls and texts from your parents.***

A coach needs to be able to reach the player on and off the field. If you have missed a call or text from me, it is important you respond promptly. The primary purpose of the phone is to serve as a communication device. Failure to communicate with me is a red flag that signals you are not ready for this responsibility.

## ***Parameter 9: The phone only will be used during designated times and places.***

Shared spaces like the kitchen and family room provide accountability and safe spaces for you to use your phone. No-phone zones for our family include bedrooms, bathrooms, mealtimes, car time, school, church, homework time, family gatherings and events requiring your full presence.

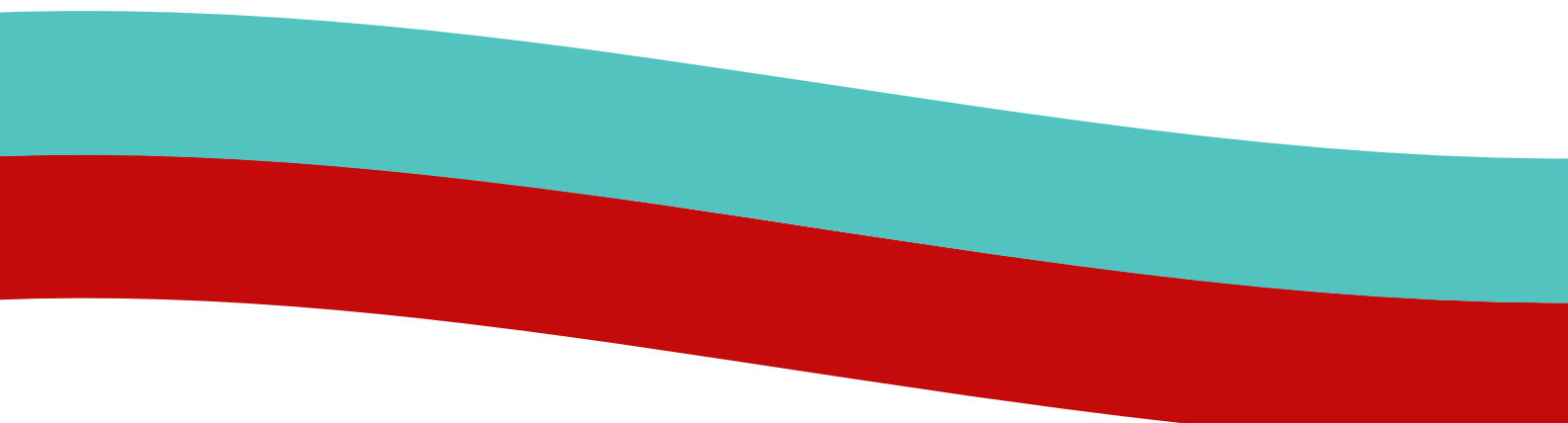
How we start and end our day matters. If the phone is the first thing you see in the morning and the last thing you do before bed, this creates bad habits leading to screen overuse and possible sleep deprivation. To help protect these hours, the phone will be checked in with me at 8:00 p.m. each night. You can access it again the following morning after 8:00 a.m. Be sure to let your friends know about your phone availability. This will free you from the pressure of being tethered to answer texts at all hours.



## ***Parameter 10: The penalty for breaking or losing the phone is [determine as a family].***

Having a phone is expensive. We pay for the device and a monthly service fee. As with any valuable possession, we want you to take care of it and be careful not to lose it. To avoid damage to the phone or loss, please:

- Don't use it while you are walking, running, scootering, or biking. You're more likely to drop it while you are moving. Plus, you look like a zombie when walking and using your phone at the same time. Most importantly, you could get hurt walking while distracted as well!
- Keep it away from the bathroom. Many phones get damaged through an accidental drop in the toilet or bathtub. Yikes!
- Check your clothes before they hit the washing machine. This will prevent the phone shoved in your pullover from getting drenched and damaged.
- If you can't keep up with your phone in the place where you are going, don't take it.





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## ***Penalty Box***

Your phone will be confiscated for a period of time—or even permanently—if:

- You disable any parental controls on your phone.
- You install or delete anything on your phone without my permission.
- You sneak your phone to use during your phone's curfew.
- You fail to return calls and texts from me.
- You seek out pornography on your phone.
- You text a nude picture or receive one and do not let me know promptly.
- You are involved in cyberbullying directly or fail to report an issue to me that is occurring in a group context.
- Your phone use interferes with your academics, after-school activities, or family responsibilities.

Having access to a phone is a big privilege. You have demonstrated to me you are ready for this responsibility. By following these parameters, you will succeed in using your phone safely, appropriately, and moderately. With my help, you can do this!

