

Dear students and parents,

With an understanding of the significant challenges that modern technology presents to us, Horev institutions continue to educate our students in the path of Torah with *derech eretz*. We believe in the possibility of being totally and unequivocally loyal to Torah and *mitzvot* despite the tests of our faith in today's progressive and permissive society. The advancement of various media in recent years has simultaneously brought benefits and complex trials to our educational system. Widespread use of smartphones, in particular, is a primary concern.

Results of numerous studies conducted in Israel and around the world expound on the damaging consequences of uncontrolled use of smartphones for people of all ages; however, children and adolescents are especially susceptible to great risks that include exposure to inappropriate content, addictions, ADHD, interpersonal communication problems, depression, social and sexual vulnerability, at-risk behavior, and more. Therefore, discerning and very cautious use of smartphones is an absolute necessity.

Unfortunately, studies indicate that a large percentage of even very young children, as well as religious teenagers – boys and girls from excellent homes who attend prominent institutions of learning – are not immune to the problem of continual exposure to problematic content.

In many countries around the world, as well as in Israel, educational institutions have understood the danger and potentially deleterious consequences of unchecked use of smartphones and have therefore entirely banned their use in the schools' environs.

The Board of Directors of the Horev institutions, together with the principals and educational staff, have come to several conclusions regarding the use of smartphones.

In general, it is recommended to postpone the use of smartphones as much as possible. After providing a child with a smartphone, parents must be vigilant regarding their children's conduct on the phone.

The following rules apply to all students in the Yeshiva and the Ulpana:

- ❖ Students in 7th and 8th grades will not bring smartphones to school.
- ❖ All students in the Yeshiva and the Ulpana (grades 9-12) who have a smartphone must ensure that the phone is filtered by Rimon, Netspark or any company that provides protection in a manner that cannot be removed from the device.
- ❖ The required filter is the basic level. Of course, the filter level can be raised upon parental discretion.
- ❖ In order to enable a learning environment that is conducive to the educational principles in the Yeshiva and the Ulpana, phones of any type will not be used or even seen until 2:00pm; this rule includes all the breaks.

In addition to the educational considerations emphasized above, the Director General of the Ministry of Education cautions against the prolonged use of cellphones, especially for young people, due to the emission of detrimental radiation as described in recent research.

We believe these rules will help us preserve our children's purity and foster a meaningful learning environment. Your cooperation is essential to achieve this aim.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Horev Institutions and the school principals