



by Cassandra Tse



Scene: A kitchen. EMMA and JAKE sit at the table, which has a small easel displaying a sign that reads Family Meeting. EMMA swings her legs impatiently.

EMMA. Where are they?

JAKE. Dunno. They should be here soon. I texted, emailed, and shouted up the hall. That usually works.

MUM and DAD enter in a rush. Both are holding phones.

MUM. Here I am, sweeties. What's up?

DAD. Came as soon as I could ...

EMMA. Finally!

DAD (to JAKE). You mentioned a new recipe for DIY magnetic slime. Sounds amazing!

MUM (confused). You told me you wanted a heart-to-heart ...

JAKE. Not quite. Sorry, guys, but I had to think of something that would get you both here.

DAD (losing interest). No slime?

JAKE. The slime was a lie. Actually, we wanted to call a family meeting.

He points dramatically to the sign on the table.

EMMA applauds. MUM and DAD groan, turn away, and start tapping their phones.

EMMA (exasperated). Oh, come on!

JAKE. Can you just give it a chance?

DAD (not looking up). Sure thing, kiddo. I've just got this one post to schedule ...

MUM. I just need to reply to this comment.

JAKE. This is exactly what we wanted to talk about.

Mum, how long have you been writing your blog?

MUM. *Mummy Musings?* Since I was pregnant with you, of course, honey!

EMMA. And, Dad? You've been making YouTube videos for years, right?

DAD (self-satisfied). That's right! This June, it'll be ten years exactly since I started *Kiwi Dad DIY*.

JAKE. Right. So we had a couple of thoughts ...

EMMA. Ideas ...

JAKE. A few suggestions ... for some new house rules.

MUM (alarmed). Rules? What kinds of rules?

EMMA and JAKE look at each other, then both stand.

JAKE points to the easel with a ruler.

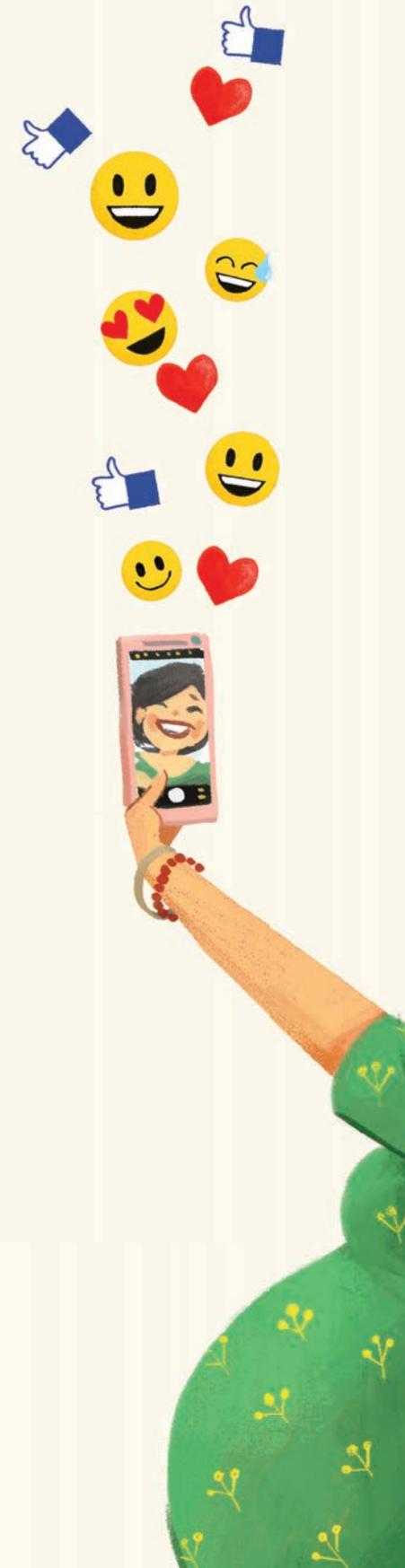
JAKE (coughing dramatically). Ahem. New rule number one!

EMMA reveals a new sign: No phones at the table.

MUM and DAD gasp in horror.

MUM. But, Jake –

DAD. My fans! How am I supposed to make a video of “Five vegetarian meals in ten minutes or less” without my phone? I have to film making each one.



MUM. How do I finish my blog post about whānau connectedness in the modern world without a photo of my charming family round the dinner table?

DAD. Think of the sponsored content, Jake!

MUM. Yes. The spon-con!

JAKE. That's another thing. You need to stop relying on the free food from advertisers.

EMMA. It wasn't so bad when we got that box of potato chips. Or that huge pile of instant noodles. But ten boxes of canned green beans ...

She looks haunted.

JAKE (nodding). Dark times.

MUM. Jakey ... sweetheart. You don't understand. Being online influencers is our job.

DAD. You've got to take the good with the beans.

MUM. And, really, what's so bad about a few photos at the dinner table every night?

EMMA. But it's not just at dinner! You're *always* taking photos.

As she talks, DAD is taking a selfie with the "No phones at the table" sign.

EMMA. See? Dad's doing it right now!

JAKE. Dinner time isn't photo time. It's time to eat – and talk! So no pictures, no posting, no hashtags at the table. Is that too much to ask?

MUM and DAD look at each other sheepishly.

DAD. Fine.

MUM. No phones at the table. We can do that.

DAD (doing the thumbs-up). Old school. I like it.

JAKE. OK. Then let's move on to rule number two ...

EMMA reveals a new sign: Be yourself! Stop trying to be cool.

DAD (offended). Hey, just 'cause I'm your dad doesn't mean I'm not hip.

EMMA. Dad, you're like thirty-six.

JAKE. Super old.

DAD. Would a couple of old fogies do this?

MUM and DAD dab in unison. EMMA and JAKE are unimpressed.

EMMA. That's the kind of stuff we're talking about.

JAKE. It's embarrassing.

EMMA. For everyone.

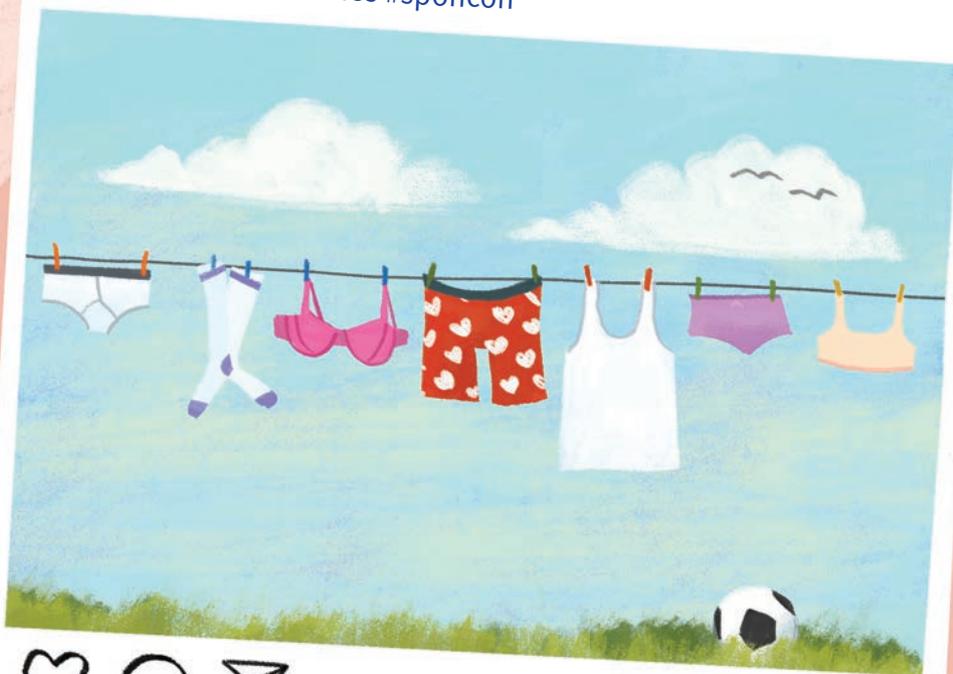
MUM. But –

JAKE (firmly). Moving on.



Liked by: **coolmomNZ** and others

Loving these green beans from @greenbeancannery
My kids can't get enough #beansforlife #loveagreenbean
#gifted #noboundaries #sponcon



Cleaner than clean! Thanks to @sparkles

EMMA reveals a new sign: *Respect our privacy!* **MUM** and **DAD** begin to protest, but **JAKE** holds up a finger for silence.

EMMA (taking out a notebook). We'd like to share some of the titles from your recent posts.

(reading) "Five pranks to pull on your kids."

DAD. You've gotta admit – those were funny.

EMMA. "My top toilet-training tips."

MUM (dismissively). Oh, you were only two when I wrote that.

JAKE (reading from his own notebook). "The dumbest questions my kids have ever asked ... part one!"

DAD. Well, perhaps I shouldn't have said "dumbest", but –

EMMA. "A daughter's first crush."

MUM. Harmless fun!

JAKE. "My son's biggest sporting fails."

EMMA. "How I cured my nine-year-old's fear of the dark."

JAKE. "My son just isn't that popular! Here's how that makes me feel."

EMMA. "My daughter's hilarious secrets!"

JAKE. "Changing bodies: An update."

EMMA. "Exclusive birth video!" (She looks at her parents.) Well? Anything to say for yourselves?

MUM and **DAD** are silent. They look ashamed. **JAKE** walks over to them.

JAKE. I know you guys just want to write about being parents, but we didn't ask for this.

You're stealing our lives, and it's not fair!

EMMA. I don't want the whole world knowing everything about me.

JAKE. Me neither – and especially not the private stuff. I thought that was between us.

EMMA. I just want to be a normal family. With boundaries. Some things shouldn't go online.

MUM (sadly). I'm so sorry. I didn't realise you felt that way. I never stopped to think.

DAD (embarrassed). I guess ... I guess we got a bit carried away. All those likes and comments and followers ... it gets kind of addictive.

JAKE. So you agree? New rule: Only post about us if we say it's OK.

MUM (smiling in agreement). I think that's more than fair. Come here.

She opens her arms for a hug. EMMA and JAKE accept it. DAD wraps all three of them in a big bear hug. From within the huddle, JAKE sticks up his hand.

JAKE. Oh! One more thing.

He breaks from the hug and reveals one last sign on the easel: No more Facebook.

DAD (aghast). Jakey! Be reasonable.

MUM (shaking her head at JAKE). Honey, we need to talk about this ...



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by Cassandra Tse

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Published 2020 by the Ministry of Education,
PO Box 1666, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
www.education.govt.nz

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Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

ISBN 978 1 77663 777 5 (online)
ISSN 2624 3636 (online)

Publishing Services: Lift Education E Tū
Editor: Susan Paris
Designer: Jodi Wicksteed
Literacy Consultant: Melanie Winthrop
Consulting Editors: Hōne Apanui and Emeli Sione



SCHOOL JOURNAL LEVEL 4 NOVEMBER 2020

Curriculum learning areas	English The Arts
Reading year level	Year 7
Keywords	blogs, boundaries, digital technology, family, humour, Instagram, privacy, role reversal, screen time, social media, technology, wellbeing, whānau