Hayes Meadow Primary School EYFS Screen use policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the use of digital technology and screens within Hayes Meadow Nursery, Preschool and Reception is purposeful, appropriate and fully supports our commitment to providing every child with the highest quality care, education and experiences. Screen use will be carefully considered and used only where it enhances children's learning, development, communication and understanding, while promoting their physical health, wellbeing, independence and confidence.

At Hayes Meadow we recognise the importance of providing children with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences within a safe and happy environment. Where digital technology is used, it will complement, rather than replace, the rich interactions, play, exploration, physical activity and real-life experiences that are fundamental to children's development in the early years.

Our approach will ensure that all children are supported to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally, with adults actively engaging alongside them to promote meaningful conversation, language development and curiosity. We will work in partnership with parents, families and other professionals to ensure that screen use reflects each child's individual needs and supports them to achieve their full potential, while maintaining the highest standards of safety, health and wellbeing.

Purpose

This policy outlines the statutory requirements and pedagogical principles governing screen use within our early years foundation stage (EYFS) classrooms. Based on the DfE's updated statutory framework, this policy ensures that any digital interaction strictly enhances child development, speech, language, and physical health, while entirely avoiding sedentary, passive screen time.

Time Allocations

Nursery (Ages 2–3): Total screen exposure within the setting will not exceed **15 minutes per day** (maximum 60 minutes per week). Less is always preferred.

Preschool (Ages 3–4): Total screen exposure within the setting will not exceed **15 minutes per day** (maximum 75 minutes per week). Less is always preferred.

Reception (Ages 4–5): Total screen exposure within the setting will not exceed **20 minutes per day** (maximum 100 minutes per week). Less is always preferred.

Exemptions: These time restrictions do not apply to screen-based **assistive technologies** or specialised digital tools vital for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or communication difficulties.

Pedagogical Principles

Intentionality: Screens are never used for filler, background noise, or behaviour management. Every screen session must serve a planned EYFS learning outcome (e.g., interactive phonics, maths – mastery in number/ number blocks, active movement, UTW clips or music).

Co-Engagement: Staff must sit with the children and actively co-view and co-engage with children while using screens. Staff will talk through content, ask open-ended questions, and turn screen use into a reciprocal linguistic exchange.

Physical Movement: Screen use should favour platforms that invite active participation, such as Mastery in Number, Cosmic Kids Yoga, Dough Disco or physical dance-along, to avoid sedentary habits.

Banned Content & Environmental Controls

Platform Restrictions: Commercial platforms relying on algorithmic feeds, infinite scroll, or auto play (e.g. public YouTube) are strictly prohibited. Only curated, educational apps (such as the CBeebies Little Learners app) or school-vetted software may be used.

Content Quality: Permitted videos must be calm, slow-paced, repetitive, and entirely free from adverts or fast-cutting graphics.

Screen-Free Boundaries: Screens will remain turned off and visual anchors removed during all mealtimes, snack times, transition times and during the hour before any nap, quiet time or home time.

Digital Safeguarding & Device Integrity

Hardware Compliance: Children may only interact with school-owned, managed hardware. Personal staff mobiles or tablets are completely banned in our classrooms and early years environments (see staff mobile use policy).

Security Settings: All setting tablets must operate with restricted profiles, strictly disabling internet browsers and App Store access.

Auditing: The EYFS Lead, Headteacher and ICT lead will audit the use the screens and technology within Early Years.

Partnerships with parents

- We feel that it is important that we have strong and respectful partnerships with our parents/carers. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.
- We ensure that all our EYFS staff listen regularly to parents/carers and give parents/carers clear information about their children's progress.
- We offer family support through our SENDCo Mrs Morgan and Head teacher Mrs Sivieri.
- We actively encourage all parents/carers to chat, play and read with their children through planned activities, our rainbow reader scheme and themed events.



Best Start in Life UK Government website

Department for Education Screen use

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the phase leader/Assistant Head teacher, governing body and the Head teacher. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction and ongoing CPD.

Information and records

Information is stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

Policy last updated September 2026
Review date September 2027