

Low Road and Windmill Music Federation and Windmill Daycare



**Low Road and Windmill
Music Federation**

EYFS Screen Use Policy

September 2026

Introduction

Our setting recognises that digital technology is part of children's everyday lives and that, when used appropriately and purposefully, technology can support learning, communication and inclusion. However, we also recognise that young children learn most effectively through responsive relationships, conversation, physical activity, exploration, play and first-hand experiences.

From September 2026, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework requires providers to have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on children's screen use in early years settings.

This policy sets out how we will ensure that the use of screens within our EYFS provision is limited, purposeful, age-appropriate, safe and supportive of children's learning and development.

Within our EYFS provision, screens will be used intentionally rather than routinely. Technology should enhance children's experiences and must never replace the relationships, conversations, movement, play and first-hand experiences that are fundamental to children's development in the early years.

Aims

We aim to:

- take a precautionary approach to children's use of screens;
- ensure screens do not replace high-quality interactions between children and adults;
- prioritise play, physical activity, communication, exploration and real-world experiences;
- ensure any screen use has a clear and identified purpose;
- support children's developing understanding of healthy and safe digital habits;
- ensure digital content is safe, appropriate and suitable for the child's age and stage of development;
- work in partnership with parents/carers to promote healthy approaches to screen use at home and within the setting; and
- ensure technology remains accessible where it is required to support children with SEND or additional communication needs.

Screen Time Expectations

In line with current government guidance:

- For children under 2 years, screen use within the setting will normally be avoided. Exceptions may include specific circumstances where technology supports communication, interaction or an identified individual need.
- For children aged 2–5 years, screen use will be limited and kept to a minimum. Government guidance recommends no more than one hour of screen time across the whole day, and less where possible.
- Staff will recognise that children may already access screens at home. The one-hour recommendation is not an entitlement or target for screen use within the setting.
- Screens will not be routinely used simply to occupy, distract or manage groups of children.
- Wherever an appropriate real-life, practical or play-based alternative is available, this will generally be prioritised.

- Screen-based assistive technology required by children with SEND will be considered according to the child's individual needs and is not subject to the same recommended screen-time limits.

Purposeful Use of Screens

Where screens are used, practitioners must consider why the screen is needed and what it adds to the child's learning or experience.

Appropriate use may include:

- sharing a short video, image or piece of music directly related to children's learning;
- viewing photographs or videos connected to children's experiences;
- researching a child's question or interest alongside an adult;
- using technology to explore something that cannot easily be experienced first-hand;
- supporting communication with parents/carers, where appropriate;
- using age-appropriate technology to support specific learning intentions;
- using assistive technology to support a child with SEND or communication needs; and
- developing children's early understanding of how technology can be used safely and purposefully.

Screen use should, wherever possible, be interactive and supported by an adult. Practitioners should talk with children, ask questions, introduce vocabulary and encourage children to respond to and discuss what they are seeing.

Screens must not routinely replace:

- conversations and interactions with adults and peers;
- stories read by an adult;
- singing, rhymes and music-making;
- imaginative and creative play;
- mark-making and early writing opportunities;
- practical mathematical experiences;
- physical activity and outdoor play;
- sensory and exploratory experiences; or
- opportunities to investigate the natural and wider world.

Practitioners will ensure that screen use does not interrupt or reduce children's opportunities for sustained play, communication, movement and meaningful adult interaction.

Appropriate Content

Staff are responsible for ensuring that any digital content shown to children is:

- age and developmentally appropriate;
- relevant to an identified learning purpose;
- safe and suitable for the children viewing it;
- free from inappropriate advertising or links wherever possible;
- appropriately paced and not excessively stimulating;
- viewed using school-approved devices and platforms; and

- checked by a practitioner before being shared with children where practicable.

Children will not be permitted unsupervised access to the internet.

Staff must follow the school's safeguarding, online safety, data protection and acceptable-use procedures at all times.

Screens During Meals, Rest and Sleep

Screens will not be used during meals or snack times as a routine means of entertainment or distraction. Mealtimes should provide opportunities for social interaction, conversation, independence and developing positive relationships with food. Screens will not be used as part of children's sleep or settling routines within the setting. Screen use will be avoided immediately before planned sleep or rest periods.

Staff Use of Digital Devices

Practitioners have an important role in modelling healthy and appropriate technology use.

Staff will therefore:

- use setting devices purposefully and professionally;
- avoid unnecessary screen use when directly interacting with children;
- ensure administrative use of devices does not unnecessarily interrupt responsive interactions;
- remain attentive and available to children when using devices to make observations or access information;
- never use personal devices in areas or circumstances prohibited by the setting's safeguarding procedures; and
- model putting technology aside when conversation, play or interaction should take priority.

Technology used for assessment, observations and recording children's learning should support rather than detract from practitioners being present and engaged with children.

Children with SEND and Communication Needs

We recognise that digital and assistive technologies can provide significant benefits for some children with SEND. Where a screen or digital device forms part of a child's communication system, accessibility arrangements or individual support, its use will be determined according to the child's individual needs and professional recommendations, rather than applying general screen-time limits in a way that disadvantages the child. Practitioners will work with parents/carers, the SENCo and relevant professionals to ensure technology is used effectively and inclusively.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The setting will work positively and without judgement with parents/carers to support healthy screen habits.

We will share information about:

- current government recommendations for children under five;
- the importance of balancing screen use with sleep, physical activity, conversation and play;
- choosing high-quality, age-appropriate content;
- watching and interacting with children when screens are used;
- establishing consistent boundaries around screen use; and
- modelling healthy digital habits as adults.

Where practitioners have concerns that screen use may be affecting a child's sleep, communication, behaviour, attention, physical activity or wider development, these concerns will be discussed sensitively with parents/carers and appropriate support offered.

Staff Responsibilities

All EYFS practitioners are responsible for implementing this policy consistently.

Before introducing screen-based content, practitioners should consider:

- Why are we using the screen?
- What will the child gain from it?
- Could this experience be provided more effectively through play, conversation or a first-hand experience?

If there is no clear benefit to using a screen, practitioners should choose an alternative activity.

Monitoring and Review

EYFS leaders will monitor screen use across the provision to ensure that practice remains consistent with the EYFS statutory framework and current Department for Education guidance.

Leaders may monitor practice through observations, learning walks, staff discussions and supervision.

The policy will be reviewed following changes to statutory requirements or government guidance and as part of the setting's regular policy review cycle.

A .Swan – EYFS Leader

Review: September 2027