



MANOR HOUSE SCHOOL EYFS Screen Time Policy

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Responsibility: Director of Nursery Education

References:

Statutory EYFS Framework

Overview

Technology is an important part of children's lives and children are growing up in a technologically diverse world. We aim to introduce children to technology in a safe, purposeful and age-appropriate way while prioritising real-life experiences, relationships, communication, physical activity, creativity and play.

Staff recognise that **screen time** and **screen use** are not the same.

- **Screen time** refers to the amount of time a child spends looking at a screen.
- **Screen use** refers to how, why and in what context screens are used, including the quality and pace of content, its purpose and the level of children's engagement.

Screen use within Manor House EYFS will therefore be limited, carefully planned and clearly linked to an intended learning or developmental purpose.

Screens will never replace high-quality interactions between children and adults or opportunities for active, creative and social learning.

Staff will use techniques such as:

- commenting;
- narrating;
- describing;
- modelling;
- open-ended questioning;
- encouraging prediction and discussion;
- linking what children see on screen to their real-world experiences.

We will prioritise **interactive, screen-free activities** wherever these can achieve the same or better learning outcome.

This policy aims to:

- promote healthy and appropriate screen use for children aged 2–5;
- ensure children's exposure to screens within the setting is limited and purposeful;
- ensure digital content is safe, age appropriate and suitable for the EYFS;
- protect children from inappropriate or harmful online content;
- promote adult co-engagement whenever children use screens;
- ensure screen use does not displace physical activity, outdoor play, sleep, stories, creative experiences or social interaction;
- support children to develop an age-appropriate understanding of technology and how to use it safely;
- recognise and accommodate the needs of children with SEND, including the use of screen-based assistive technology where this is necessary.

Screen Time Advice for Children Aged 2-5

Screen time should be limited to **1 hour per day, less if possible**.

These recommendations include consideration of screen use outside the setting. We recognise that children may already reach these limits at home and will therefore keep screen use within the setting to a minimum.

Children with SEND

The above screen-time limits **do not apply to screen-based assistive technologies used by children with SEND**.

Some children may require technology to support communication, accessibility, independence, wellbeing and quality of life. Such use will be considered on an individual basis and incorporated into the child's support arrangements where appropriate.

Staff Engagement

Children will not be permitted to access or use screens independently or with other children without adult supervision and co-engagement.

An adult will:

- select and control the content;
- remain present throughout the activity;
- actively communicate and interact with the children;
- monitor children's responses and engagement;
- ensure that inappropriate content cannot be accessed;
- stop the activity when its planned purpose has been achieved.

Screens will not be used simply as a passive form of entertainment or to keep children occupied.

Choosing Appropriate Digital Content

Before content is shown to children, staff must check that it is suitable for the EYFS and appropriate for the individual children using it.

Digital content should be:

- age appropriate;
- safe and suitable for young children;
- slow-paced;
- repetitive and predictable;
- free from unnecessary flashing, rapid movement and excessive visual stimulation;
- free from complex or inappropriate storylines;
- free from overlapping music and dialogue or excessively fast speech;
- advert-free wherever possible;
- free from scrolling and autoplay features;
- capable of being stopped or controlled by the supervising adult.

Staff must not assume that an app, programme, website, game or digital tool is safe or educational simply because it is marketed as being for children.

Staff will use their professional judgement to assess the suitability, quality and safety of any digital resource before using it.

Online Safety

Children's online safety is a safeguarding priority.

Children will not be given unrestricted access to the internet. Staff will ensure that:

- devices are appropriately configured and secured;
- children cannot freely browse online content;
- content is checked before it is shown;
- children are supervised whenever screens are used;
- inappropriate or unexpected content is dealt with immediately in accordance with the setting's safeguarding and online safety procedures;
- staff report and record safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Children will be introduced to technology and online safety concepts in ways that are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

In line with current early-years guidance, **children should not use AI technology within the setting until there is better evidence regarding the impact of AI use on young children.**

This includes toys and other devices with built-in AI features.

Staff may use professional judgement regarding technology used by adults for legitimate purposes, but children must not be exposed to AI-generated or AI-mediated experiences unless the setting has established that such use is safe, appropriate and consistent with current guidance.

Screen-Free Experiences and Areas

We recognise that children need substantial opportunities for:

- physical activity;
- outdoor play;
- imaginative and creative play;
- sensory experiences;
- stories and books;
- music and singing;
- conversation;
- social interaction;
- exploration and problem solving;
- sustained shared thinking;
- meaningful interactions with adults.

Where appropriate, Manor House EYFS will designate **screen-free areas** to protect opportunities for social interaction, communication and active play.

Screens will not be left switched on in the background, as this may distract children from play, conversation and interactions.

When Screens Will Not Be Used

Screens will not be used:

- as a substitute for adult interaction;
- simply to occupy children;
- as a reward or punishment;
- to manage children's behaviour;
- to routinely calm children;
- to distract children during transitions;
- as background entertainment;
- during mealtimes;
- within one hour of a child's sleep or rest period where this could affect sleep quality;
- for prolonged or passive viewing.

Supporting Children's Health and Wellbeing

We recognise that excessive or inappropriate screen use may be associated with poorer cognitive and behavioural outcomes, including reduced verbal interaction and vocabulary, developmental delays, reduced attention and lower executive function.

For this reason, screen use will always be considered alongside the child's wider daily experience.

Screens must not displace:

- physical activity;
- outdoor learning;
- sleep and rest;
- face-to-face communication;
- stories and shared reading;
- creative and sensory play;
- social interaction;
- hands-on exploration.

Children should not be expected to remain seated and passively watch a screen.

EYFS Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy.

Staff must:

- plan screen use carefully;
- identify the intended learning or developmental purpose;
- check content before use;
- remain with children throughout screen activities;
- actively engage and communicate with children;
- keep screen sessions short;
- monitor children's engagement and responses;
- consider children's individual needs;
- ensure devices are used safely;
- follow the setting's safeguarding and online safety procedures;
- report any inappropriate content or safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Individual Needs and SEND

Screen use will be considered in relation to each child's individual needs. Where technology provides essential support for a child with SEND, it may be used appropriately even where it exceeds the general screen-time recommendations.

The setting will work with parents, carers and relevant professionals where necessary to ensure that assistive technology is:

- appropriate;
- purposeful;
- accessible;
- safe;
- used consistently with the child's individual support arrangements.

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Reviewed and Updated: