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Milverton Community Primary and Pre-School

EYFS Screen Use Policy

Setting name	Milverton Community Primary & Pre-School
Policy owner / lead	Katy Smith – Early Years Lead
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For early years settings in England • Updated September 2026

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Milverton Community Primary & Pre-School manages the use of screens and digital devices with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Our approach is precautionary: screen use is limited, intentional and linked to a clear learning, communication or inclusion purpose.

The policy applies to screens used directly by children and to screen use led by adults with children, including tablets, laptops, desktop computers, televisions, interactive whiteboards, large touchscreens, e-readers, gaming devices, smart watches and other screen-based technology.

2. Current EYFS requirements and guidance

From 1 September 2026, the EYFS statutory frameworks require providers to have regard to the Department for Education's guidance on screen use in early years settings. The guidance advises a precautionary approach: screen use should be avoided for children under 2 except in exceptional circumstances, and for children aged 2 to 5 total screen time should be limited to up to one hour a day, and less where possible.

Settings should remember that children may already reach these limits at home. Screen-based assistive technology for children with SEND is treated differently where it is needed for communication, wellbeing, access or inclusion.

The setting will therefore consider not only how long a screen is used, but why it is being used, the quality and pace of the content, the level of adult co-engagement and what the screen activity may be replacing.

3. Our principles

- Real-world play, conversation, movement, outdoor experiences, books and responsive interaction with adults and other children take priority over screen-based activity.
- Screens are not used simply because they are available. Staff consider whether the intended learning can be achieved more effectively without a screen.
- Screen use is short, purposeful and planned around a clear learning, communication or inclusion aim.
- Children do not access screens independently without adult co-engagement and appropriate supervision.
- Screens do not replace high-quality adult-child interaction.
- Screen use is inclusive and reasonable adjustments are made where assistive technology supports a child with SEND or communication needs.

4. Screen time within our setting

Screen use will be kept to a minimum and considered as part of the child's whole day. Staff will avoid prolonged periods of screen use and will ensure screens do not displace physical activity, outdoor play, social interaction, stories, creative experiences or other important aspects of early development. Children do not have routine individual tablet time. The interactive whiteboard may be used briefly for a specific teaching purpose, photographs, music or to support a planned learning experience.

5. When screens may be used

Where a screen is used, staff will be able to explain the purpose of the activity and how it supports learning, development, communication or inclusion.

- Supporting a specific, planned teaching or learning objective.
- Looking closely at photographs, video or information that extends a real-world experience.
- Supporting communication or access through appropriate assistive technology.
- Making or reviewing children's own creative work where this has a clear purpose.
- Using carefully selected music, movement or other content where adults actively participate with children.

6. What screens will not be used for

- Occupying children during transitions, waiting times or routine periods.
- Managing behaviour or routinely calming/distracting a child.
- Passive viewing without adult interaction or a clear purpose.
- Background television, videos or other screen content.
- Replacing a story, song, rhyme, conversation or adult interaction where these can be offered directly.
- Routine use during meals or snacks.
- Use within an hour of a sleep period, where applicable.
- Unsupervised browsing, searching or access to online content.

7. Selecting safe and appropriate content

All digital content will be checked by an adult before it is shown or made available to children. An app, website or tool describing itself as "educational" will not be assumed to be appropriate without professional judgement.

- Content will be age appropriate, purposeful and suitable for early years children.
- Where possible, content will be slow-paced, repetitive and predictable rather than fast-paced or over-stimulating.
- Scrolling, autoplay and algorithm-driven content will be avoided.
- Staff will check links, search results, privacy settings and content before use.
- Children will not be given open access to video-sharing platforms, web searches or other services where unsuitable content could be reached.
- In line with current DfE screen-use guidance, children will not be encouraged to use AI tools or toys with in-built AI features while evidence about their impact in the early years remains limited.

8. Adult co-engagement and supervision

Children will not use screens alone or only alongside other children without adult co-engagement. Adults will remain involved, using talk and interaction to make the experience active rather than passive.

- Comment, narrate and describe what is happening.
- Ask open-ended questions and invite children to predict, notice, explain and respond.
- Link what children see on screen to real objects, experiences and play.
- Build in movement and interaction where appropriate.
- End the screen activity when its purpose has been met rather than allowing content to continue automatically.

9. Online safety and safeguarding

The setting's safeguarding procedures apply whenever technology is used. Children will be taught, in an age-appropriate way, that technology is part of the world around them and that adults help them to use it safely.

- Children accessing internet-enabled content will be appropriately supervised.
- Appropriate filtering, privacy and security controls will be used in accordance with the setting's wider safeguarding arrangements.
- Staff will report any unsuitable content, accidental access or online-safety concern in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Personal data, photographs and videos will be managed securely and in accordance with data protection requirements and the setting's policies.
- Personal devices will be used only in accordance with the setting's safeguarding policy and its rules for mobile phones, cameras and devices with imaging or sharing capabilities.

See our Online Safety Policy for further guidance.

10. Photographs, video and assessment

Digital devices may support assessment and communication with parents, but their use will be proportionate and will not create prolonged breaks from interaction with children. Pre-Reception assessment will be based on observation and professional judgement rather than asking a child to complete screen-based assessment activities.

For safeguarding purposes, the number of photographs and videos taken of children will be kept to the minimum needed for the intended purpose, and images will only be shared with parents/carers through methods approved by the setting. Permission will be gained from parents for videos and photographs to be taken and shared.

11. SEND, communication and assistive technology

Screen-based assistive technology can be important for some children with SEND, communication needs or other additional needs. The general screen-time limits do not apply in the same way where technology is needed to support communication, wellbeing, participation or quality of life.

Decisions will be made on an individual basis, using professional judgement and, where appropriate, in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals. Assistive technology will not be removed simply to meet a general screen-time target.

12. Children's own devices

Children will be discouraged from bringing personal screen-based devices into the setting unless there is an agreed individual reason. Any exception will be discussed with parents/carers and managed in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures. If for any reason personal devices are on site, these will be stored in the school office for the duration of the day, unless otherwise agreed.

13. Working with parents and carers

The setting will be open with families about if, when and why screens are used. Staff will share current screen-use messages sensitively and without judgement, recognising that family circumstances differ.

- Explain the setting's approach to screen use when appropriate.
- Share the current recommendation to avoid screen time for under-2s other than exceptional circumstances and limit screen time for 2 to 5-year-olds to up to one hour a day, less where possible.
- Encourage families to consider the quality, purpose and context of screen use as well as time.
- Promote alternatives including talk, play, books, outdoor activity, creative experiences and shared family interaction.

14. Staff responsibilities

- Understand and follow this policy and the setting's safeguarding/online-safety procedures.
- Use professional judgement before introducing any screen-based activity.
- Check content before children see or use it.
- Actively co-engage and supervise children whenever screens are used.
- Model safe, proportionate and purposeful use of technology.
- Raise concerns about inappropriate content, unsafe use or excessive reliance on screens with the designated safeguarding lead or appropriate leader.

15. Monitoring and review

The Online Safety Lead and Early Years Lead will monitor will monitor how and why screens are used across the setting, including whether practice reflects current EYFS requirements and DfE guidance. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following significant changes to statutory requirements, national guidance, setting practice or a relevant safeguarding incident.

References and further guidance

- **Department for Education: Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework – frameworks effective from 1 September 2026**
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2
- **Department for Education: Help for early years providers: Screen use – updated 7 September 2026**
  https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/screen-use
- **Department for Education: Help for early years providers: Internet safety – updated 13 July 2026**
  https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/internet-safety
- **UK Council for Internet Safety: Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations**
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations