Screen and Digital Device Use Policy

Should be read in conjunction with the Kidz Star Club E-Safety Policy

Policy statement

Kidz Star Club believes that technology can be a valuable part of children's learning when it is used purposefully, briefly, safely and interactively.

Our priority will always be children's wellbeing, development and relationships. Digital technology will support children's experiences where appropriate, but it will never replace the rich learning that comes from playing, talking, moving, exploring and interacting directly with responsive adults and other children.

Screens will not be used:

- during mealtimes;
- as background entertainment;
- to occupy children;
- as a routine method of managing transitions;
- to calm or distract children;
- as a reward or punishment;
- to manage children's behaviour.

We recognise that children need opportunities to develop their own self-regulation skills and will use supportive adult interaction and appropriate strategies rather than screens to help children manage emotions and behaviour.

The use of assistive technology will be considered on an individual basis using professional judgement. Staff will ensure that technology supports, rather than unnecessarily replaces, meaningful human interaction.

Our communication with parents and carers will always be supportive, non-judgemental and empathetic. We recognise that families have different circumstances and that managing screen use can be challenging.

Screens will enhance learning and experiences rather than replace high-quality adult-child interaction or screen-free activities.

Our approach

We will:

- Use screens only when there is a clear reason and educational rationale.
- Keep screen use short and appropriate to children's age, development and individual needs.
- Prioritise interactive, screen-free experiences.
- Ensure an educator/playworker is actively involved when children use a screen.
- Encourage children to think, predict, respond, communicate and discuss what they are seeing or doing.
- Use commenting, narrating, describing and open-ended questions to extend children's learning.
- Avoid passive viewing and activities where children simply watch or receive automatic responses.
- Consider how screen use fits within the whole daily routine.
- Ensure screen use does not displace sleep, physical activity, outdoor play, stories, creative experiences or interaction with adults and other children.

Appropriate use of screens

Screens and digital devices may be used for purposes such as:

- supporting planned learning experiences;
- exploring technology and developing children's understanding of the digital world;
- accessing appropriate educational content;
- supporting communication and inclusion;
- using assistive technology for children with SEND or communication needs;
- accessing digital resources that extend children's interests and learning;
- supporting appropriate professional and administrative activities.

Active adult involvement

Children will not be left to use screens independently or watch screens passively.

When a screen is being used with children, educators will actively engage with them by:

- talking about what they can see;
- introducing new vocabulary;
- asking open-ended questions;
- encouraging children to predict what might happen;
- encouraging children to make choices and respond;
- relating digital experiences to real-world experiences;
- encouraging movement and physical participation where appropriate;
- observing children's responses and adapting the experience accordingly.

Children with SEND and children learning English

We recognise that some children may benefit from a more individualised approach to digital technology.

For children with SEND, communication difficulties or English as an additional language, digital and assistive technologies may provide valuable support with:

- communication;
- participation;
- understanding routines;
- expressing needs and choices;
- accessing learning;
- developing independence;
- creating an inclusive learning environment.

Supporting parents and carers

We will work in partnership with parents and carers to promote healthy and appropriate screen use at home.

We will:

- explain how and why screens are used within our setting;
- make our screen-use policy available to families;
- discuss children's digital experiences where appropriate during conversations and handovers;
- share relevant information and practical advice;
- provide information about alternatives to screen use;
- signpost families to appropriate guidance on screen use for young children.

Digital devices used by staff

Digital devices may be used by staff for appropriate professional purposes, including:

- recording observations and assessments;
- communicating with parents and carers;
- accessing professional information;
- completing administrative tasks;
- communicating with external professionals where appropriate.

Assessment

Digital technology will not be used as a substitute for professional observation and judgement when assessing children's development.

Assessment will primarily be based on children's natural play, interactions, communication, behaviour and experiences, supported by professional knowledge and observation.

Photographs and videos

We recognise the safeguarding and data protection risks associated with photographing and recording children.

Staff will:

- keep photographs and videos of children to the minimum necessary;
- only take images or recordings for legitimate setting purposes;
- follow the setting's safeguarding, photography and data protection procedures;
- ensure appropriate permissions are in place;
- store images securely;
- only share images or videos with parents/carers using approved, secure methods;
- never use personal devices to photograph or record children.

Mobile Phones and Mobile technology (Extracted from Kidz Star Club E-safety Policy)

- All staff, students, volunteers and visitors are discouraged from bringing their phones/electronic devices to the club.

- Should a staff member, student, volunteer or visitor feel it is essential to bring their phone to the club, this must be locked away upon arrival in the designated lockable wall mounted tin. Staff do not access their phones throughout the duration of their shift.
- Staff may ask for their phone to be removed from the tin at the end of their shift by the play leader. This must then be put in their bag or pocket until the staff member is off of school grounds.
- The above also applies to any technology which has a camera facility built into the system for example iPads, smart watches/bracelets.
- Smart watches are permitted as long as they are set on the 'Silent', 'do not disturb' mode and not connected to the wifi. Anyone seen uses their smart watch for any other purpose, our disciplinary procedure will be followed.
- Kidz Star Club will have access to their designated electronic device. This device is only used for taking photos for promotional purpose such as Facebook. All children who are allowed on social media have had consent given from their parents/carers. This designated device remains on the premises at all times except for trips and does not have the facility to make phone calls or send messages. This device will be stored safety in the locked cupboard when the club is closed. All photos when they have been used for promotional purposes will be deleted from the device immediately.
- A separate mobile phone is used for trips and is only used to make calls in an emergency. This phone will be kept in the locked tin and only taken out when going on a trip or in the event of an emergency.
- Playleaders/playworkers, students and volunteers must inform their emergency contacts and anyone likely to contact them during working hours on Kidz Star Club landline telephone number 01363 777608, in an emergency staff can make an external call.
- Staff are aware of e-safety issues and receive regular up-to-date e-safety training.
- The use of the internet by employees of Kidz Star Club is permitted, where such use supports the goals and objectives of the business.
- Staff will incorporate e-safety into children's learning where necessary.
- Staff must:-
    - Comply with current legislation
    - Use the internet in an acceptable way inside and outside of work
    - Do not create unnecessary business risk to the company by their misuse of the internet including typed posts or photo images on social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook etc

Whilst we cannot govern employee's use of the internet outside of work, we strongly recommend staff comply with the above ensuring they safeguard themselves.

Devices covered by this policy

Personal mobile phones, cameras, smart watches and other devices with imaging or sharing capabilities are

This policy applies to all digital devices with screens, including:

- tablets;
- laptops;
- desktop computers;
- mobile phones;
- televisions;
- gaming devices;
- toys with screens;
- video platforms;
- interactive whiteboards;
- large touch tables;
- e-readers;
- smart watches;
- other digital devices introduced into the setting.

Safeguarding and online safety

Before using a digital device or online resource with children, staff must consider:

- whether the content is appropriate and has been checked;
- whether there are any safeguarding risks;
- whether the device is secure;
- whether children could access unsuitable content;
- whether personal information could be exposed;
- whether the use complies with the setting's data protection and online safety procedures.

Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy.

The setting will ensure that staff:

- understand the purpose of appropriate screen use;
- know the setting's procedures for digital devices;
- understand safeguarding and data protection requirements;
- feel confident supporting children to use technology safely;
- understand when screen-free alternatives are more appropriate;
- use professional judgement when supporting individual children.

Reflection and review

Before using a screen with children, we will consider:

- Is screen use necessary? Could the same learning experience be achieved more effectively without a screen?
- What is the educational purpose? What specific learning or development will the screen experience support?
- Does it enhance learning? Does it add something valuable without replacing the educator's role?
- Are children actively involved? Will children think, communicate, predict, respond or make choices?
- Is the content appropriate? Has it been checked and is it suitable for the children using it?
- Is the amount of screen time appropriate? Could the experience be shorter or replaced with a screen-free activity?
- Does it promote interaction and movement? How will we encourage children to communicate, move and engage with others?
- Are there safeguarding concerns? Has the device and content been checked for potential risks?

Digital device use must be proportionate and must not result in prolonged periods where educators are disengaged from children. Staff will prioritise their responsibility to supervise, interact with and support children.

Any concerns must be reported in accordance with the setting's safeguarding and online safety procedures.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pippins Pre-school and Nursery

Held on 30.9.26

Signed on behalf of the Management Trustee Directors

Role of signatory (e.g. chairman etc.) Chairman

Commenced 12.8.26 Reviewed 30.9.26