Pippins Pre-School and Nursery

Screen and Digital Device Use Policy

This policy coincides with the E-Safety Policy

Policy statement

Pippins Pre-School and Nursery 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;
- within one hour of a child's planned sleep period;
- 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. Early Years Educators 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.

Families can access the government's guidance on screen use for babies and young children through Baby and toddler screen time guidance – Best Start in Life.

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 Early Years Educator 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, Early Years 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 Pippins Pre-School and Nursery;
- 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 Pippins and Pre-School Nursery 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.

Personal devices

Mobile Phones and Mobile technology (Extracted from Pippins Pre-School and Nursery E-safety Policy)

- All staff, students, volunteers and visitors are discouraged from bringing their mobiles phones or electronic devices into the setting. If the staff member, student, volunteer or visitor feels it is essential to bring their phone/electronic device to the setting it will be switched off and handed into the office upon arrival, passing it through one of the allocated slots in the glassed window. Their mobile phone will then be locked away securely, with only management and the clerical assistant having access.
- Staff, students, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to use their mobile phone away from Pippins premises, however are able to check/use their phone in the office in the presence a member of the management team. If they wish to access their phone during their designated break or at the end of their shift, they can receive it back through the glass window in the front foyer and then exit the building through the front door. The staff members, students, volunteers and visitors can then use their phone once outside and away from the building.
- All of the above also applies to any technology which has an imagining facility built into the system.
- Management and the clerical assistant are only permitted to have access to their phone in the office for work purposes such as organising staffing.
- Smart watches are permitted but must be on 'silent' and 'do not disturb' mode as well as not connected to the Pippins wifi. Should staff be seen to be using these for purposes other than a watch, our disciplinary procedure will be followed.
- Should a professional arrive needing access to their laptop to write notes or discuss a document stored on the device, this will be permitted and our safeguarding, and visitors policy will be followed (not leaving the visitor alone in the setting).
- Early years educators, students, volunteers and visitors must inform their emergency contacts and anyone likely to contact them during working hours of Pippins land line telephone number 01363 772474, and when necessary, can make an external call.
- We have two designated mobile phones that are taken on trips and only used in the event of an emergency. These phones are kept locked in the office and only are put in our 'trips bag' when leaving the setting, where they are kept for the duration of the trip unless needed. When arriving back to the setting the phones are given back into the office,
- Staff are aware of e-safety issues and receive regular up-to-date e-safety training.

- The use of the internet by employees of Pippins Pre-School and Nursery is permitted where such use supports the goals and objectives of the business.
- Staff will incorporate e-safety in to the planning curriculum.

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 Early Years 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 will be proportionate and will not result in prolonged periods where Early Years 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 Wednesday 30th September 2026

Signed on behalf of the Management Trustee Directors

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

Commenced 12.8.26 Reviewed