Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings

Screen Time Policy

The EYFS Statutory Framework, 2026, states that providers must have regard to the guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. The DfE advice, Screen Use- How to limit children's screen use in settings and ensure it supports children's learning and development is adhered to and promoted.

This guidance is aimed at nurseries, childminders, pre-school settings and providers of wraparound care for children aged 0-5. It may also be useful for reception year.

Evidence shows that screens can have a big impact on children and their development in the early years. Screen use should be avoided for under 2s and limited to up to an hour a day for children aged 2 to 5. You should take a precautionary approach to using screens in your setting by limiting screen use for children and only use it carefully and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims. This guidance covers managing screens, appropriate content for young children's brains and advice for working collaboratively with parents and carers on this topic.

Restricting time children spend on screens at home and in early years settings supports healthy child development, which requires sufficient sleep, play, real-world interaction and responsive adult engagement.

How we adhere to this guidance

The following guidance sets out how we use screens and digital devices safely, appropriately and purposefully at Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings. It reflects current DfE guidance for early years providers and recognises the importance of protecting young children's development, wellbeing and safety.

Our approach to screen use

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Recognise the difference between screen time (the amount of time spent looking at a screen) and screen use (how, why and in what context a screen is used).

- Ensure that screen use is limited, carefully planned and directly linked to an intended learning purpose.
- Prioritise real-life experiences, play, exploration and meaningful interactions with adults and other children.
- Recognise that young children learn best through active, hands-on experiences and high-quality interactions.
- Ensure screens never replace stories, songs, rhymes, conversations, physical activity or opportunities for social interaction.
- Use professional judgement to ensure that any use of technology supports, rather than detracts from, children's learning and development.

Recommended screen time limits

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Follow DfE guidance that **children under two should avoid screen time**, except in exceptional circumstances, such as video calls with parents or carers.
- Follow guidance that screen time for **children aged two to five should be limited to <u>one hour</u> per day, and less if possible.**
- Consider that children may already have accessed screens at home when deciding whether screen use is appropriate in our setting.
- Ensure that any screen use with children is for short periods and is purposeful.
- Recognise that these time limits do not apply to screen-based assistive technology used to support children with SEND.

Suitable content and adult supervision

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Check all digital content before it is shared with children to ensure it is safe, suitable and age appropriate.
- Select content that is slow-paced, repetitive and predictable.
- Avoid fast-moving, over-stimulating content, flashing images, excessive noise and rapid changes on screen.
- Ensure content is advert-free and does not include scrolling, autoplay or algorithm-driven recommendations.
- **Never allow children to access or use screens independently or with other children without adult co-engagement.**
- Ensure an adult is present, actively supervising and engaging with children throughout screen use.
- Use our professional judgement when selecting apps, software and digital resources, recognising that products marketed as educational are not automatically suitable.
- Avoid the use of AI with young children, including toys with built-in AI features, until further evidence is available about their impact.

Purposeful use of screens to support learning

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Use screens only when there is a clear learning purpose and they add value to children's experiences.
- Ensure screen use is interactive rather than passive.
- Encourage children to think, predict, respond, communicate and discuss what they see.
- Use strategies such as commenting, narrating, describing and open-ended questioning to develop children's language and thinking.
- Talk to children in an age-appropriate way about technology and how it is used safely in everyday life.
- Ensure digital experiences complement our curriculum and do not replace hands-on learning opportunities.

Protecting children's development and wellbeing

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Ensure screen use does not displace important experiences, including sleep, physical activity, outdoor play, stories, social interaction and active learning.
- Do not use screens passively in the background.
- Do not use screens during mealtimes or within an hour of children's sleep periods.
- Maintain screen-free areas where appropriate to encourage communication, relationships and active play.
- Do not use screens to calm children, occupy them, manage behaviour or support routine transitions.
- Support children to develop their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour through sensitive adult interaction and appropriate experiences.

Supporting children with SEND and communication needs

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Recognise that some children with SEND, communication difficulties or English as an additional language may benefit from carefully selected digital resources.
- Consider the use of screen-based assistive technology on an individual basis where it supports communication, participation, wellbeing and independence.
- Recognise that assistive technology may provide essential benefits for some children and that the recommended screen time limits do not apply to these technologies.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support.
- Ensure that technology promotes inclusion and enables children to access learning and everyday experiences.

Working in partnership with parents and carers

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Share our approach to screen use with parents and carers when children join the setting.
- Provide information and guidance about recommended screen time limits and safe, appropriate screen use.
- Encourage families to consider how screen use may affect children's sleep, communication, attention, physical activity and opportunities for play.
- Share ideas for screen-free activities and experiences that support children's development.
- Discuss concerns about children's screen use sensitively and without judgement.
- Recognise that families may face different challenges and aim to provide supportive, practical advice.

Use of digital devices by staff

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Use digital devices for professional purposes, including assessment, recording children's learning and communicating with parents and professionals.
- Ensure that digital device use is proportionate and does not take staff away from their responsibility to supervise, interact with and teach children.
- Ensure assessments are based on observation and professional judgement rather than asking children to complete activities on a screen.
- Keep the number of photographs and videos taken of children to a minimum.
- Only share photographs and videos with parents and carers through approved, secure methods.
- Ensure all digital devices used for school purposes comply with data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.
- Ensure staff follow the school's mobile phone, camera and electronic device procedures.
- Ensure personal devices are not used to photograph, film or share images of children, in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

Children's use of personal devices

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we:

- Discourage children from bringing personal digital devices into the setting.
- Discuss any individual circumstances with parents and carers to agree appropriate arrangements.
- Ensure any devices brought into the setting are managed in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Staff responsibilities

At Taywood Nursery School and Seedlings we expect all staff to:

- Understand and follow this policy and the school's procedures for safe digital device use.
- Exercise professional judgement when deciding whether screen use is appropriate.
- Ensure children are always supervised and supported when accessing digital content.
- Challenge and report any unsafe or inappropriate use of technology.
- Keep up to date with guidance relating to online safety and the use of digital technology in early years settings.

Advice for parents/carers is shared through the newsletter, on our website and by referral to the Family Hub. Our Safeguarding and Child Protection section of our website contains links to useful websites for parents.

Screen use development, monitoring and review

This policy has been developed by the Headteacher (DSL) and shared with staff, governors and parents. Monitoring takes place by the Headteacher and Manager through learning walks to ensure the correct use of screen time is adhered to.

Policy date: November 2026.

Review date: November 2029 or in response to statutory changes