



Limes Farm Infants School & Nursery
**EYFS SCREEN USE AND DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Ratified by Governors: October 2026
To be reviewed: *October 2027*



Early Years Screen Use and Digital Technology Policy

1. Principle and Rationale

At Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery, we recognise that digital technology forms an integral part of the modern world. However, in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Department for Education (DfE) recommendations, our primary commitment is to support children's development through play, active exploration, physical movement, face-to-face communication, and real-world experiences.

We adopt a balanced and purposeful approach: screen use within our setting is strictly limited, age-appropriate, and intentionally planned. Screens will never replace high-quality, adult-led interactions, nor will they supplant the rich, hands-on, play-based experiences that are fundamental to early childhood development.

This policy complies with statutory frameworks and guidance, including:

- **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**
- **The Equality Act 2010 (ensuring accessibility and reasonable adjustments for children with SEND)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance on early years digital well-being**

2. Key Principles

- ❖ **Play as the Core Vehicle for Learning:** Digital screens are never used as a replacement for physical, exploratory, or outdoor play.

- ❖ **Demonstrable Educational Value:** Technology is introduced only when practitioners determine that it directly enhances specific learning outcomes.
- ❖ **Active Adult Co-Engagement:** Screen use is always supervised, adult-guided, and interactive. Practitioners actively engage alongside children—asking open-ended questions, facilitating dialogue, and extending learning.
- ❖ **Holistic Child Development:** Technology must support—and never compromise—Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Physical Development, and healthy sleep/rest routines.

3. Operational Screen Time Guidelines

National guidance recommends limiting total daily screen time to approximately 1 hour per day for children under five across their home and setting combined. Limes Farm Infant School and Nursery does not treat this as a target or entitlement; screen time within our setting is significantly more restricted and strictly purpose-driven.

Provision / Age Group	Maximum Daily Guideline	Approved Curricular Contexts
Nursery <i>(Aged 3–4)</i>	Up to 15 minutes per day	Short mathematical concept clips (e.g. <i>Master the Curriculum</i>), PSED activities (<i>My Happy Mind</i>), listening to digital stories, nursery rhymes, and music.
Reception	Up to 30–60 minutes per day <i>(where appropriate)</i>	<i>Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS)</i> phonics, <i>Master the Curriculum</i> and <i>Mastery of Number</i> maths, <i>My Happy Mind</i> PSHE, <i>Dough Disco</i> ,

(Aged 4–5)		and physical movement/gross motor sessions.
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- ❖ **SEND Adjustments and Assistive Technology:** For children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), assistive devices—including augmentative communication tools, visual timetables, interactive choice boards, and sensory regulation apps—take precedence over standard screen limits, as detailed in individual support plans.
- ❖ **Rare Whole-Class Exceptions:** On occasion, group screen limits may be extended (e.g. watching a short educational film or documentary clip linked to a specific topic). These instances are rare and must adhere strictly to approved learning objectives.

4. Pre-Screen Reflection and Categorisation

Practitioner Reflective Framework

Before introducing any screen-based activity, practitioners must evaluate the experience using six core questions:

- ❖ **Why are we using a screen for this activity?**
- ❖ **What distinct educational value does it add to the children's learning experience?**
- ❖ **Could this objective be achieved as effectively through hands-on or real-life exploration?**
- ❖ **Is the content age-appropriate and aligned with developmental needs?**
- ❖ **Can an adult actively share, discuss, and co-engage in the experience with the children?**
- ❖ **Are children still receiving sufficient opportunities for physical movement, conversation, and outdoor play?**

Where there is no clear developmental benefit, a hands-on alternative must be selected

- ❖ Communication & Language: Audiobooks, digital rhymes, listening to stories, and using digital images as prompts for sustained shared thinking.
- ❖ Physical Development: Guided movement and physical development sessions, including Yoga and Dough Disco.
- ❖ PSED & Well-being: Structured emotional literacy programmes (My Happy Mind), mindfulness exercises, and calming movement breaks.
- ❖ Literacy & Mathematics: Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) phonics, Master the Curriculum, Mastery of Number, and targeted educational games.
- ❖ Understanding the World: Exploring phenomena children cannot directly observe (e.g. volcanic eruptions, lifecycle clips, space exploration), nature documentaries, digital microscopes, and maps.
- ❖ Expressive Arts & Design: Digital drawing, child-led photography, and music recording.

Prohibited Uses of Screens

To safeguard active learning and social development, screens must never be used:

- ❖ As a substitute for active adult interaction, supervision, or teaching.
- ❖ For passive viewing of commercial television, cartoons, or long online videos to occupy children.
- ❖ As a routine distraction, pacifier, or behaviour management strategy.
- ❖ As background noise or entertainment during continuous provision and free play.
- ❖ As a reward or punishment mechanism.
- ❖ To keep children occupied while practitioners complete administrative tasks or electronic observations.
- ❖ As a replacement for outdoor play, physical activity, or first-hand discovery.

5. Health, Well-being, and Daily Routines

- ❖ **Mealtimes and Snacks:** Screens are strictly prohibited during meals and snack times. Mealtimes are protected social opportunities for conversation, developing communication skills, and recognizing hunger/fullness cues.
- ❖ **Physical Activity:** Screen-based activities must not increase sedentary time. Any seated digital activity is kept brief and balanced with frequent opportunities for energetic indoor and outdoor physical play.
- ❖ **Rest and Sleep Periods:** Screen-free, calming routines are strictly maintained immediately prior to rest or sleep periods to protect healthy sleep hygiene.

6. Safeguarding, Professional Standards, and Parent Partnership

- ❖ **Online Safety & Filtering:** All internet-enabled devices operate on robust, filtered, and monitored connections. Content is pre-screened to exclude pop-ups, commercial advertising, or links to unsuitable material.
- ❖ In exceptional circumstances where prior formal consent is granted by the Headteacher, CEO, or CFO to use a personal device for media capture, I will upload the content directly to the school Google Drive and immediately, permanently delete it from my personal device. See Devices Policies for further information.
- ❖ **Staff Professionalism:** Practitioners model healthy digital habits. Tablets or laptops used for registers, assessments, and learning journals must be used efficiently so that face-to-face interaction with children remains the primary focus.
- ❖ **Parent Partnership:** The school regularly provides guidance to families regarding healthy home screen habits, promoting screen-free mealtimes, screen-free bedtimes, and active co-viewing.

7. Links to Other School Policies

This policy links to and should be read alongside the following school policies:

- ➔ *Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- ➔ *Online Safety Policy*
- ➔ *Acceptable Use of Technology Policy*

- *Safer Sleep Policy*
- *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy*
- *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy*

