ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

EYFS Screen Time Policy

Policy No: **CUR01/13/10/26**	Version:	1
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	Committee:	Curriculum
	Minute No:	CUR01/13/10/26
	Date Issued:	September 2026
	Review Date:	September 2027

1. Purpose

Our setting recognises that young children learn best through play, real-life experiences, relationships, physical activity and interaction with responsive adults.

We use digital technology carefully and purposefully where it can support children's learning, development, communication or inclusion. Screen use will not replace high-quality play, physical activity, outdoor learning, books, creative experiences or adult-child interaction.

This policy reflects the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework** and the Department for Education guidance on screen use in early years settings from September 2026.

2. Our approach

We will:

- Keep screen use limited, purposeful and age appropriate.
- Consider whether a screen is necessary before introducing it.
- Prioritise active, interactive and adult-supported use rather than passive viewing.
- Avoid using screens simply to occupy, distract, settle or manage children's behaviour.
- Ensure screen use does not reduce opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play, communication, social interaction or hands-on learning.
- Choose content that is appropriate, safe, inclusive and suitable for the children's age and stage of development.
- Ensure staff supervise children's screen use.
- Review our use of screens regularly.

3. Children aged 2 to 5

For children aged 2 to 5, we will aim to keep screen use to **no more than one hour per day, and less where possible**, taking into account children's individual circumstances and screen use outside the setting.

Screen use within the setting will generally be provided in short periods and will have a clear purpose.

We recognise that the quality and purpose of screen use are important, not simply the amount of time spent looking at a screen.

5. Choosing suitable content

Staff must check content before showing it to children.

We will favour content that is:

- Age and developmentally appropriate.
- Calm, engaging and suitable for young children.
- Relevant to the children's learning or interests.
- Free from inappropriate advertising.
- Free from unsuitable or distressing material.
- Not designed to encourage excessive viewing or scrolling.
- Used without unnecessary auto-play or algorithm-driven recommendations.

Children will not be given unrestricted access to online video platforms.

6. Adult involvement

Where screens are used, adults should remain actively involved wherever appropriate.

Staff may:

- Talk with children about what they are seeing.
- Ask questions and encourage children to respond.
- Connect digital experiences with real-world activities.
- Encourage children to apply what they have seen through play, movement, discussion or practical experiences.
- Stop the activity if children become disengaged, overstimulated or distressed.

Screens should support relationships and learning rather than replace interaction with adults or other children.

7. Background screens

Televisions, videos and other screens will **not be left running routinely in the background**.

Any screen displayed in the environment should have a clear purpose and be appropriate for the children present.

8. Physical activity and outdoor play

Screen use must not replace children's opportunities for:

- Physical activity.
- Outdoor play.
- Gross motor development.
- Fine motor experiences.
- Imaginative play.
- Social interaction.
- Creative activities.
- Exploring and investigating the real world.

Staff will consider the balance of the child's whole day when planning screen-based experiences.

9. SEND and individual needs

We recognise that technology can be valuable in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Screen-based technology may be used where it:

- Supports communication.
- Provides an appropriate accessibility aid.
- Helps a child participate in an activity.
- Supports an identified individual need.

Such use will be considered on an individual basis and will not be restricted solely because of general screen-time limits where the technology is functioning as an appropriate assistive tool.

11. Safeguarding and online safety

All staff are responsible for maintaining children's online safety.

Staff must:

- Use setting-approved devices and accounts.
- Follow the setting's safeguarding and online-safety procedures.
- Check websites, videos and apps before use.
- Never access inappropriate or unauthorised content in children's presence.
- Never share children's personal information online.
- Follow the setting's photography, video and mobile-phone procedures.
- Report any safeguarding concern in accordance with the setting's safeguarding policy.

Children should not be exposed to unsuitable advertising, pop-ups, comments, messages or user-generated content.

12. Artificial intelligence

Children will not have access to generative AI tools.

13. Working with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to promote healthy and appropriate screen habits.

We may share information with families about:

- How screens are used within the setting.
- The purpose of screen-based activities.
- The importance of balancing screen use with sleep, physical activity, outdoor play, interaction and other experiences.
- The setting's expectations regarding children's use of personal devices.

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss their child's screen use with staff where they have concerns.