

Screen Use and Digital Technology Policy

We recognise that digital technology is an increasingly important part of children's lives. We also recognise that the early years are a critical period for children's physical, social, emotional, communication and cognitive development.

Our approach is therefore to ensure that children's experiences in the setting prioritise real-world play, physical activity, communication, relationships, exploration, creativity and responsive high quality interactions with adults.

We will use digital technology only where it adds genuine value to children's learning, development, communication, inclusion or wellbeing. Screen use will never replace high-quality interactions, hands-on experiences, outdoor play, books, conversation, imaginative play or other developmentally appropriate experiences.

This policy has been developed with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework effective from 1 September 2026 and the Department for Education's guidance on screen use in early years settings.

As per paragraph 3.94 in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage Framework), providers are required to “have regard to” the DfE guidance on children’s screen use in early years settings.

The guidance says screen use should be avoided for children under 2, and for children aged 2–5 should be limited to up to one hour per day, less if possible, with screens used carefully and intentionally for specific learning and development purposes.

Please also refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of staff.

Screens will be used because they enhance a child's learning or experience, not simply because they are available.

Before introducing screen use, practitioners should consider:

- Why are we using a screen?
- What will the child gain from this experience?
- Could the same learning be achieved more effectively without a screen?
- Is the content appropriate for the child's age, stage of development and individual needs?
- Will an adult be actively involved?
- Is the experience interactive rather than passive?
- Will the screen replace valuable opportunities for talking, playing, moving or interacting with others?

If the answer to these questions does not demonstrate a clear benefit, the screen should not be used.

For children aged 2–5, the setting will follow the DfE guidance that screen time should be limited to up to one hour per day, and less if possible. Our setting will take a precautionary approach and will generally aim for significantly less than one hour of screen exposure during the child's time at the setting.

Screen use will be:

- purposeful;
- age appropriate;
- carefully selected;
- short and proportionate;
- actively supported by practitioners;
- balanced with substantial opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play, conversation, books, creative activities, imaginative play and hands-on learning.

The one-hour guidance will not be treated as a target or entitlement. Staff will not seek to fill an allocated amount of screen time. Screens may be used where they provide a clear benefit to children's learning, development, communication, inclusion or wellbeing.

Appropriate examples may include:

- taking photographs of children's work or experiences as part of assessment or documentation;
- looking at photographs to support children's recall and conversation;
- researching something that has arisen from children's interests;
- listening to or watching a carefully selected educational resource;
- using music or movement resources to support a planned experience;
- exploring digital creative tools alongside physical creative experiences;
- supporting a child with SEND through appropriate assistive technology;
- using digital technology to enhance, rather than replace, an existing practical learning experience.

Screens should generally be used with an adult present and actively engaged with the child/children. Practitioners should talk with children about what they are seeing, ask questions, introduce vocabulary and encourage children to make connections with their real-world experiences.

Staff will not use screens:

- simply to occupy or entertain children;
- as a reward or punishment;
- as a routine method of managing behaviour;
- as a substitute for adult attention;
- as a substitute for outdoor play or physical activity;
- as a default activity when practitioners are busy;
- for prolonged periods;
- for inappropriate, frightening, violent or developmentally unsuitable content;
- to expose children to social-media-style or rapidly changing content;
- where the content is not directly relevant to the child's learning or experience.

Children will not be permitted to independently browse the internet.

All digital content used with children must be:

- age appropriate;
- developmentally appropriate;
- from a trusted and suitable source;
- calm and appropriately paced;
- free from inappropriate advertising where reasonably possible;
- free from frightening, violent, discriminatory or otherwise unsuitable material;
- relevant to the intended learning or developmental purpose.

Staff should be particularly cautious about fast-paced, highly stimulating or social-media-style content. Practitioners must preview unfamiliar content before showing it to children. Where advertising, autoplay, comments, external links or other potentially unsuitable features are present, staff must take appropriate steps to prevent children's access to them. Children should not routinely use screens alone in the setting.

Practitioners will actively participate in screen-based experiences by:

- talking with children;
- asking questions;
- introducing and modelling vocabulary;
- encouraging children to predict, explain and make connections;
- relating digital experiences to real-world experiences;
- encouraging children to move from screen-based learning into practical activity wherever appropriate.

For example, if children watch a short video about growing plants, practitioners should seek to extend the experience through handling seeds, planting, observing plants, drawing, measuring, talking and exploring outdoors.

The screen is a tool to support learning, not the learning experience itself.

The setting will ensure that screen use does not displace opportunities for:

- physical activity;
- outdoor play;
- imaginative play;
- construction;
- creative expression;
- sensory exploration;
- books and storytelling;
- singing and music;
- communication and conversation;
- social interaction;
- fine and gross motor development;
- uninterrupted child-led play.

Where a screen-based activity is introduced, practitioners should consider what children will do before and after the screen experience.

Meal Times

Screens will not routinely be used during snack or meal times. Mealtimes will be used as opportunities for social interaction, conversation, independence and the development of healthy eating habits.

Transitions and settling

Screens will not routinely be used to manage transitions, waiting times, arrivals, departures or periods of unsettled behaviour.

Practitioners will instead use appropriate strategies such as:

- songs and rhymes;
- stories;
- conversations;
- visual prompts;
- physical movement;
- sensory activities;
- familiar routines;
- individualised support.

Where a child has an identified additional need and a particular digital resource is part of an agreed support strategy, this will be considered on an individual basis.

Children with SEND

We recognise that digital technology and screen-based assistive technology can provide significant benefits for some children with special educational needs and disabilities. The DfE screen-time limits do not apply to screen-based assistive technologies used by children with SEND where the technology provides essential benefits for communication, wellbeing or quality of life. The setting will therefore make reasonable adjustments and will consider each child's individual needs. Decisions will be made in partnership with parents/carers, the child's key person, the SENCO, relevant professionals where appropriate and the child, where developmentally appropriate.

Recording and monitoring screen use

The setting will maintain an appropriate overview of children's screen use.

Practitioners should record significant or planned screen-based experiences where appropriate, particularly where:

- an individual child requires additional screen-based support;
- concerns arise regarding a child's screen use;
- screen use is being used as part of an agreed SEND strategy.

The purpose of monitoring is not to create unnecessary bureaucracy, but to ensure that screen use remains purposeful, proportionate and consistent with this policy. The manager will periodically review the setting's use of screens and consider whether screen use is genuinely contributing to children's experiences.

Staff responsibilities

E-safety is recognised as an essential aspect of strategic leadership in Kingfisher and the Owner, with the support of the Manager, aims to embed safe practices into the culture of the setting. The Owner ensures that the policy is implemented and monitored. All staff are responsible for promoting and supporting safe behaviours in the setting and following e-safety procedures. As the children are young and unable to access the internet without the help of a member of staff, it is their responsibility to ensure the content is appropriate. Staff are made aware of unacceptable use of the internet. The rules for using the internet will be made clear to all staff and staff will be asked to sign this Policy to confirm they agree and accept the terms.

All staff are responsible for following this policy.

The manager/setting leader will:

- ensure staff are aware of the current DfE guidance;
- ensure appropriate digital safeguarding arrangements are in place;
- monitor the use of screens within the setting;
- ensure staff receive appropriate training and guidance;
- review this policy annually or sooner if national guidance changes.

Practitioners will:

- use professional judgement;
- follow this policy;
- ensure content is appropriate before showing it to children;
- actively engage with children during screen use;
- prioritise interaction and hands-on learning;
- report concerns to the manager;
- model healthy and purposeful use of technology.

Staff use of personal devices

Personal mobile phones and other personal devices must not be used in children's areas except in accordance with the setting's safeguarding and mobile-phone procedures. Staff must not use personal devices to photograph or record children. Any setting-owned device used to photograph, record or document children must be managed in accordance with the setting's safeguarding, data protection and privacy procedures.

The computers, electronic media and services provided by Kingfisher are primarily for educational use to assist staff in the performance of their job. Limited or incidental use of electronic media for personal purposes is acceptable, and all such use should be done in a manner that does not negatively affect the setting in any way. Staff are expected to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and not abuse this privilege. No personal devices should access the setting's wireless internet.

Kingfisher Kindergarten expects any staff using social media sites to ensure that their use is conducive to their professional status. They should not mention the setting by name or in passing, or discuss individuals or compromise the setting values. In addition, staff must ensure that any private blogs, bulletin boards, websites etc. which they create, or actively contribute to, do not compromise, and are not confused with, their professional role. Staff must ensure that any engagement in any online activities does not compromise their professional responsibilities.

Online safety

Children's access to digital technology will be appropriately safeguarded.

The setting will:

- use appropriate filtering and security measures;
- prevent children from accessing unsuitable websites or content;
- ensure children are supervised;
- keep passwords and security information confidential;
- use setting-approved devices and applications;
- ensure staff understand how to report inappropriate content or online safety concerns.

Online safety will be approached in an age-appropriate way and incorporated into children's wider learning about keeping themselves safe.

Internet Access / Safety

Through the internet, staff are able to find information on topics that may enhance learning for the children, worksheets that can be used and newsgroups of a particular interest to the setting. It also aids planning and collaboration between local settings. It provides an e-mail address to some members of staff to enable them to keep in contact with parents, other staff and local authorities. Parents can contact staff members via their Kingfisher email addresses.

The internet is an incredible resource for children to access, support for their homework, chatting to friends etc., but it can also be a very dangerous place for them. They can be exposed to inappropriate material, harassment and bullying, viruses and hackers and be conned into giving away financial information. They can also be vulnerable to on-line grooming by pedophiles.

As a setting we offer children the opportunity to use various electronic items that have access to the internet; however, we have introduced a range of procedures to ensure their safety.

We offer child friendly tablets, smart watches and cam-corders and cameras that do not connect to the internet.

We use a private facebook group for parents and staff of Kingfisher Kindergarten. Only pictures of children that parents have signed an agreement are allowed on this page. Only management are able to have administrative access to this page. Only pictures of Children that parents have signed and agreed will be used on our website or social media page.

We have an in house iPhone which is used to take pictures of the children for their learning and for our facebook page. Only practitioners and management have access to this phone. All pictures are deleted regularly and the iPhone is kept safe at the end of the day. It also has a passcode lock which are only known to staff.

We also have an Amazon Alexa screen within the setting which has access to the internet. Children use this device to play songs and further their learning with visual aids. The device has the explicit filter enabled so there is no risk of harmful content being exposed within the setting.

We also have a TV and remote TV screen which can stream content from the internet. Such streaming will always be supervised by staff and have age appropriate content.

Kingfisher Website

Kingfisher Kindergarten has a website and there are photographs which contain images of the children included in the content. Children in photographs are not be identifiable by name (ie. there will not be any captions containing the children's names alongside photographs). If a child's name is mentioned elsewhere (for example, because of some work that is displayed on the website), only the first name will be used and it will not be linked to any photograph of the child or any other personal details. The school does not publish personal email addresses of staff on the website.

Partnership with parents and carers

We recognise that children's screen experiences at home and in the setting are connected. We will work with parents and carers in a supportive and non-judgemental way. Parents/carers will be informed about our approach to screen use and encouraged to discuss their child's digital experiences with practitioners.

Where appropriate, we may share information about:

- the DfE guidance;
- healthy screen habits;
- age-appropriate content;
- the importance of co-viewing;
- the importance of sleep, physical activity, play and conversation;
- ways of creating screen-free routines at home.

The setting will not make assumptions or judgements about families based on children's screen use at home.

Parents and carers may opt to send us photographs of their child/families from home for their child to show at group time with their peers. These are stored on our devices until they are shown and then deleted. Such photographs are not kept on our records.

Confidentiality and data protection

Any photographs, videos or digital records involving children will be managed in accordance with the setting's data protection, privacy and safeguarding procedures.

Images and recordings will only be taken, stored and shared for legitimate purposes and in accordance with parental consent and the setting's policies.

Professional judgement and individual circumstances

This policy provides a clear framework but recognises that children have different developmental needs. Practitioners should use professional judgement and consider:

- the child's age and stage of development;
- individual needs;
- SEND;
- the purpose of the screen use;
- the duration;
- the nature and pace of the content;
- the level of adult interaction;
- the child's overall experience that day.

The setting will take a precautionary approach and will always consider whether a non-screen alternative would provide a better developmental experience.

Kingfisher's Acceptable Use Statement (For Staff)

The computer system is owned by Kingfisher and is made available to staff to enhance their professional activities, including teaching, research, administration and management. The Internet Safety Policy has been drawn up to protect all parties. Kingfisher reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its computer system or to monitor any Internet sites visited.

All staff (including temporary) requiring Internet access should sign a copy of this Acceptable Use Statement.

- I will only use the setting's email / Internet / Learning Platform and any related technologies for professional purposes or for uses deemed 'reasonable'.
- I will not disclose any passwords provided to me by the setting or other related authorities.
- I will ensure that all electronic communications with parents and staff are compatible with my professional role.
- I will not give out my own personal details, such as mobile phone number and personal email address, to parents unless authorised by the Owner/Manager.
- I will ensure that personal data (such as data held on SIMS) is kept secure and is used appropriately, whether in the setting, taken off the premises or accessed remotely. Personal data can only be taken out of the setting or accessed remotely when authorised by the Owner/Manager.
- I will not install any hardware or software without permission of the Owner/Manager.
- I will only open email attachments from sources I know to be safe.
- I will not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Images of children and/ or staff will only be taken, stored and used for professional purposes in line with setting policy and with written consent of the parent, carer or staff member. Images will not be distributed outside the setting network without the permission of the parent/ carer, member of staff or Owner.
- I understand that all my use of the Internet and other related technologies can be monitored, logged and made available, on request, to the Owner.
- I will support the setting approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset or offend any member of the setting community.
- I will respect copyright and intellectual property rights.
- I will ensure that my online activity, both in and outside the setting, will not bring my professional role into disrepute.
- I will not access the setting's wireless internet on personal mobile devices.

- Access to the internet should only be made via the authorised account and password, which should not be made available to any other person.
- It is the responsibility of staff members to make the Owner aware of occasions when passwords cease to become private.
- Staff should ensure that high levels of data-protection are adhered to at all times. This means locking computers whilst leaving the building.
- Issued netbooks/laptops are for staff use only.
- Permission should be granted from the Owner before bringing in electrical and ICT equipment from home.
- Users are responsible for all emails sent and for contacts made that may result in email being received.
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes, online shopping or advertising is strictly forbidden.
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden.
- As email can be forwarded or inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, the same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media.
- No reference should EVER be made to Kingfisher Kindergarten on any social networking site unless authorised by the Owner/Manager.
- Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden.

I understand this forms part of the terms and conditions set out in my contract of employment. I agree to follow this code of conduct and to support the safe use of ICT throughout the setting. Any breaches in the operation of the requirements laid out in this Acceptable Use Statement will result in the Disciplinary Policy being invoked.

<u>Staff Member Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Date</u>

This policy was reviewed by Kingfisher Kindergarten Ltd

Date to be reviewed

Annually

Signed on behalf of the provider

La-Ryne van der Westhuizen

Role of signatory

Owner