Screen Time Policy

Purpose of the Policy

This policy ensures that screen use within Bradpole Preschool supports children's development, wellbeing and safety. It reflects current evidence on healthy screen habits for young children, including the importance of limiting screen time and prioritising responsive interactions, active play and social engagement.

Bradpole Preschool does not provide routine or unrestricted access to screens. Any use of screens will be carefully considered, purposeful, brief and supervised by an adult.

Guiding Principles

- Limit screen time wherever possible for all children under five.
- Ages 2–5: Screens may be used occasionally for short, purposeful activities and will be kept well under one hour per day.
- Screens must never replace sleep, physical activity, active play or warm, responsive interactions.
- Screen use should have a clear purpose and support children's learning, communication or participation.
- Children should be encouraged to engage with adults and other children rather than using screens independently.

Acceptable Use of Screens in Preschool

Screens may be used only when they clearly support learning or communication.
Acceptable uses include:

- Shared viewing of slow-paced, predictable educational content designed for young children.
- Assistive technology for children with SEND when it supports communication or participation.

Screens must always be used with an adult present, supporting discussion, language development and emotional understanding.
Screen use will be kept short and purposeful, with children encouraged to return to active play, social interaction or other learning experiences.

Prohibited Screen Use

The following are not permitted in preschool:

- Fast-paced, overstimulating or social-media-style videos.
- Any form of social media.
- AI-powered toys, chatbots, smart speakers or interactive robots.
- Unsupervised use of screens by children.
- Background TV or videos during play, meals or group time.
- Screens used as a means of keeping children occupied without a clear educational, communication or SEND-related purpose.
- Rest or nap times, to support relaxation and wellbeing.

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Staff Expectations

- Staff model healthy screen habits by keeping their personal devices out of sight and locked in their personal locker.
- In the event of an emergency, the staff phone may be placed on show in the kitchen area, in accordance with the Mobile Phone Policy.
- Staff remain fully present and attentive to children's needs, avoiding distraction from digital devices.
- Staff ensure all screen use is intentional, supervised and brief.
- Staff will not use personal devices for personal purposes while supervising children.
- Staff will ensure that children cannot access inappropriate content or use devices without supervision.

Partnership with Parents

Bradpole Preschool will:

- Share guidance on healthy screen habits at home, including limiting screen time and avoiding screens before bed.
- Encourage families to create screen-free mealtimes and bedrooms.
- Provide alternatives to screen use, such as simple games, reading, conversation, music, creative activities and physical play.
- Work with parents/carers where screen use forms part of an individual child's communication, developmental or SEND support.

SEND Considerations

For children with SEND:

- Screen-based assistive technology may be used when it supports communication or participation.
- Staff will ensure screen-free time is still protected for play, rest and interaction.
- Individual plans will be developed with families and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.
- Any technology used to support a child's SEND needs will be appropriate to the child's individual requirements and used under adult supervision.

Online Safety and Content Controls

When screens are used:

- Only pre-approved, age-appropriate content will be used.
- Devices will have appropriate parental controls and safe-search settings enabled where available.
- Children will never have access to unrestricted internet browsing.
- Staff will check content before it is shown to children.
- Children will not be permitted to access social media platforms.
- Staff will ensure that links, adverts, notifications or other inappropriate content cannot be accessed by children during planned screen activities.

Monitoring and Review

Staff will monitor children's responses to screen use and consider whether the activity is supporting their learning, communication or wellbeing.

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Where screen use appears to have a negative impact on a child's engagement, behaviour, interaction or wellbeing, staff will review the use of screens and consider alternative activities.

Legislation and Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers – effective from 1 September 2026
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Education Act 2011 – safeguarding and online safety considerations
- Screen Use by Children Aged Under 5 – Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care (2026)
- Help for Early Years Providers – Screen Use Guidance – Department for Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – where applicable to safeguarding and online safety practice.

The most directly relevant document is the 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework, which now specifically requires early years providers to have regard to screen-use guidance.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: The Committee of Bradpole Preschool

Held during the Autumn 2027.

Date to be reviewed: Summer 2027