

New Millside Pre-school

SCREEN TIME & SCREEN USE POLICY



New Millside will take a precautionary approach to using screens in setting by limiting screen use for children and only use it carefully and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims.

New Millside will follow screen time advice for children aged 0-5 issued by the DFE –

- Children under 2 years - avoid screen time altogether other than in exceptional circumstances such as a video call with parents and carers
- Children 2-5 years - screen time should be limited to 1 hour a day, less if possible

New Millside will not allow children to access or use screens alone or with other children without adult co-engagement and understands the importance of viewing screens with children to protect them from harmful content and to support their development.

New Millside will ensure all digital content is:

- checked to ensure it is suitable for early years children, prior to showing it to the children
- slow-paced, repetitive and predictable - avoiding fast-paced, over-stimulating content - this includes content which has a lot of cuts, movement and flashing on screen, complex audio with lots of fast-talking characters or overlapping music and dialogue, or complex plots
- advert-free, as young children cannot discern between advertisements and other content
- free of scrolling and autoplay features, to ensure children are not inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content or able to access content for longer than planned use - this includes algorithm-driven content, such as video platforms
- Any Apps used will be screened before children are given access

New Millside will teach children about our technologically diverse world by talking to them in an age-appropriate way about different types of technology and how to use them safely, and will consider how screen use fits into the children's day and routine, ensuring it does not displace important activities such as sleep, physical activity, time outdoors, story time, and engagement with other children and adults. Screen time/ use will be limited to 10 minutes per child when using the laptop for educational purposes under adult supervision, and 10 minutes as a group for wake up shake up time at the beginning of the session.

For safeguarding purposes, New Millside will keep the number of images or videos taken of children to a minimum, including for assessment purposes, and only share images or videos of children with their parents through technically secure methods. Staff will not carry their tablets around with them and will only use the tablet to take a particular valuable observation, ensuring use of digital devices in assessment and communicating with parents is proportionate, conducted in short stints and does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive administrative burden, to maintain focus on time to engage with and teach children.

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. 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.

Evidence suggests that too much screentime is associated with poorer cognitive and behavioural abilities in children, such as reduced verbal activity and reduced vocabulary, and can be associated with developmental delays, reduced attention and lower executive function.

The above time limits do not apply to screen-based assistive technologies for children with SEND. For some children these technologies have essential benefits for communication, well-being and quality of life.

Difference between screen use and screen time

Screen time refers to the amount of time a child spends looking at a screen. Screen use refers to how, why and in what context screens are used. It takes into account the quality and pace of content, purpose and level of engagement.