Screen Time and Screen Use Policy

Auckland House Nursery is committed to providing a high-quality early education and care environment which places children's wellbeing, development, relationships and learning at the centre of everything we do.

We recognise that the early years are a uniquely important period in children's development. During this time, children learn most effectively through responsive relationships, meaningful interactions, communication, physical activity, exploration and play. Young children need opportunities to engage with the real world around them, develop relationships with adults and peers, use their imagination, explore their environment and experience a wide range of practical and sensory learning opportunities.

In accordance with current government guidance regarding screen use for babies and young children, Auckland House Nursery has adopted a screen-free approach to children's daily nursery experiences.

There will be no planned or routine screen time in any nursery room. Children will not be provided with designated periods of television, tablet, computer or other screen-based entertainment as part of their daily nursery routine.

Our intention is to ensure that children's time at nursery is protected for the experiences that are most important during early childhood: talking, listening, playing, moving, exploring, creating, imagining and building positive relationships.

Policy Intent

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach to screen use throughout Auckland House Nursery.

We believe that a high-quality early years environment should be rich in language, relationships, movement, exploration and real-life experiences. For this reason, we have made a deliberate decision that screens will not form part of the daily provision offered to children within our nursery rooms.

This policy supports our wider commitment to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensuring that children receive high-quality experiences across all areas of learning and development.

Rather than relying on digital entertainment or screen-based activities, practitioners will create engaging environments where children are actively involved in their learning. Children will be encouraged to investigate, experiment, communicate, problem-solve, create and develop their own ideas through play.

Our approach is based on the principle that children's most valuable learning experiences happen through active participation and meaningful human interaction.

Our Screen-Free Nursery Environment

Auckland House Nursery is proud to provide a screen-free environment for children during their daily nursery experience.

There will be no routine use of televisions, tablets, computers, mobile phones or interactive screens for children's entertainment or planned learning activities.

Children will not be expected to sit and watch programmes, videos or online content as part of the nursery day. Screens will not be introduced into the environment as a form of continuous provision, nor will children have designated screen-time sessions.

The nursery recognises that technology is part of modern life and that children will encounter digital devices in their homes and communities. However, our role within the nursery environment is to provide children with experiences that cannot be replicated through a screen.

Children attending Auckland House Nursery will instead be provided with rich opportunities for:

- meaningful conversations with adults;
- imaginative and creative play;
- physical activity and movement;
- outdoor learning;
- books and storytelling;
- singing and music;
- sensory exploration;
- practical experiences;
- investigation and problem-solving;
- social interaction with other children; and
- exploration of the natural world.

These experiences will form the foundation of children's daily learning.

Government Guidance and Children's Development

Government guidance recognises the importance of ensuring that screen use does not replace activities which are essential for children's healthy development and wellbeing.

For young children, excessive or inappropriate screen use can reduce opportunities for physical activity, outdoor play, communication, social interaction, creative play and sleep.

At Auckland House Nursery, we believe that children's nursery day should be carefully designed to maximise opportunities for active and meaningful learning.

Children need responsive adults who talk to them, listen to them and respond to their interests. They need opportunities to experiment with real materials, interact with other children and experience the satisfaction of discovering something for themselves.

A screen cannot replace the interaction between a child and a responsive practitioner.

For this reason, practitioners at Auckland House Nursery will always prioritise relationships and direct interaction over digital content.

Supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage

Our screen-free approach supports the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that children have access to a broad, balanced and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

The Prime Areas of Learning are particularly dependent upon children's opportunities to develop through relationships and active experiences.

Communication and Language will be supported through meaningful conversations, storytelling, songs, rhymes, vocabulary-rich environments and high-quality interactions between children and adults. Practitioners will model language, extend children's thinking and engage in sustained shared thinking.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development will be supported through relationships, cooperative play, turn-taking, emotional coaching and sensitive adult support. Children will be supported to recognise and manage their feelings through real interactions rather than distraction through digital entertainment.

Physical Development will be promoted through regular movement, outdoor play, climbing, balancing, dancing, fine motor activities and opportunities for children to develop their physical confidence.

The Specific Areas of Learning will also be delivered through practical, engaging and meaningful experiences. Children will experience literacy through books, storytelling, mark-making and language-rich play. Mathematics will be explored through everyday experiences, construction, counting, sorting, measuring and problem-solving.

Understanding the World will be developed through exploration, investigation, nature-based learning and real-life experiences. Expressive Arts and Design will be supported through music, movement, role-play, painting, construction and open-ended creative opportunities.

Stories, Books and Music

At Auckland House Nursery, books and storytelling are highly valued.

Stories will primarily be shared through physical books and direct interaction with practitioners. Staff will use expression, props, puppets, repeated language and discussion to bring stories to life.

Children will be encouraged to participate in storytelling, predict what might happen next, retell familiar stories and develop a love of books.

Similarly, music will be experienced through singing, movement, instruments and shared musical experiences. Rather than routinely playing videos of nursery rhymes, practitioners will encourage children to sing, learn actions and participate actively.

We believe that children benefit most when stories and music are interactive experiences shared with other people.

Screens Will Not Be Used for Behaviour Management

Auckland House Nursery is committed to positive behaviour management and emotional coaching.

Screens will never be used to distract children from their feelings, stop challenging behaviour, or occupy children during difficult moments.

We recognise that young children need support from trusted adults to understand and regulate their emotions. When a child is distressed, frustrated or experiencing difficulty, our practitioners will respond through calm, consistent and nurturing interactions.

Staff will support children through emotional coaching, co-regulation and positive behaviour strategies. Children will be helped to identify their feelings, understand what has happened and develop appropriate strategies for managing difficult situations.

This approach supports children's long-term emotional development and independence.

Transitions and Daily Routines

Screens will not be used during transitions or routine parts of the nursery day.

Children will not be placed in front of a television or tablet while waiting for meals, preparing to go outside, moving between activities or waiting for parents.

Instead, staff will plan transitions carefully to ensure that children remain engaged through songs, conversations, stories, movement games and appropriate play experiences.

Daily routines will be viewed as valuable learning opportunities.

Mealtimes

Mealtimes at Auckland House Nursery are important social experiences.

Screens will not be used during breakfast, snack, lunch or tea.

Children will be encouraged to communicate with adults and their peers, develop independence and enjoy food in a calm and sociable environment.

Practitioners will use mealtimes as opportunities to promote language, social skills and healthy attitudes towards food.

Digital Literacy and Understanding Technology

Auckland House Nursery recognises that children are growing up in an increasingly technological world.

However, we believe that early understanding of technology does not require routine screen use.

Children can learn about technology through meaningful, real-world experiences. They may encounter and discuss everyday objects and technologies such as telephones, cameras, keyboards, calculators, household equipment and other devices used in daily life.

Technology may also be explored through role-play and discussion.

Our approach is to help children understand the world around them while ensuring that screens do not replace the practical, social and physical experiences that are fundamental to early childhood.

SEND and Assistive Technology

This policy recognises that some children may require specialist technology or screen-based assistive devices to support their communication, accessibility, independence or participation.

Where technology forms part of a child's identified support plan, the nursery will work closely with parents, carers and relevant professionals to ensure that the child's individual needs are met.

Assistive technology will not be considered routine recreational screen time.

Any use of specialist technology will be carefully planned and based on the individual needs of the child.

Staff Use of Digital Devices

Digital devices may be required by staff for legitimate professional purposes, including recording observations, completing assessments and accessing nursery systems.

However, staff must ensure that their use of technology does not negatively affect the quality of interaction or supervision provided to children.

Practitioners must always prioritise the children in their care.

Professional devices should not create a barrier between adults and children. Staff should ensure that observations and administrative tasks are completed appropriately and without compromising active supervision, safeguarding responsibilities or meaningful interactions.

All staff must follow the nursery's relevant safeguarding, data protection and electronic device procedures.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Auckland House Nursery recognises that screens and digital technology are part of family life.

We also recognise that every family has different circumstances, routines and challenges.

Our role is not to judge parents or make families feel criticised about their use of technology. Instead, we aim to provide supportive, practical and evidence-informed advice where this is requested or where information may be helpful.

We believe that a positive partnership between home and nursery is the most effective way to support children's wellbeing.

Parents will be informed that Auckland House Nursery provides a screen-free environment during the nursery day. They will be reassured that their children are spending their time engaging in meaningful activities, building relationships, developing language and learning through play.

Supporting Parents with Healthy Screen Use at Home

The nursery will support parents and carers by sharing information about healthy and balanced approaches to screen use.

Where appropriate, we will provide families with practical ideas for screen-free activities that can be easily incorporated into everyday family life.

These may include reading together, singing songs, cooking, playing outdoors, visiting parks, drawing, building, playing games and engaging in imaginative play.

Where families choose to use screens, we will encourage parents to consider the quality of the content their children access and the importance of adult involvement.

Shared viewing and conversation can help children understand and engage with content more meaningfully than passive or independent viewing.

Parents will also be encouraged to consider creating healthy routines around mealtimes and bedtime, ensuring that children have opportunities for family interaction, physical activity and good-quality sleep.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The implementation of this policy will form part of Auckland House Nursery's wider quality assurance processes.

Leaders will monitor the environment and staff practice to ensure that children continue to receive rich, engaging and developmentally appropriate experiences.

Monitoring may include learning walks, observations, staff discussions, supervision and feedback from parents and carers.

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure consistency and to support staff in maintaining the highest possible standards of early years practice.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to government guidance, EYFS requirements or national recommendations relating to children's screen use.

Our Commitment

At Auckland House Nursery, we believe that childhood should be filled with opportunities to experience the real world.

Our children will spend their nursery days talking, playing, moving, exploring, creating, imagining and developing meaningful relationships.

We are committed to protecting children's time for the experiences that matter most during the early years.

There will be no routine or planned screen time in any room at Auckland House Nursery.

Instead, we will provide a rich, stimulating and nurturing environment where children learn through play, relationships, communication and real-life experiences.

Talk. Play. Move. Explore. Create. Imagine. Connect.

Policy Written By: N Collins

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