SCREEN USE POLICY

Our key principle

Screens are a tool to support learning – they are not a replacement for play, relationships or real-life experiences.

Our approach
At St Michael's Pre-School, we recognise that technology can support children's learning and development when used appropriately. However, young children learn best through **play, conversation, relationships, physical activity and real-life experiences**.

In line with the September 2026 EYFS requirements and DfE guidance, screen use will be **very occasional, purposeful and age appropriate**. The DfE guidance recommends that children aged 2–5 have **no more than one hour of screen use per day, and less if possible**. This is not a target for our setting.

When screens may be used
Screens may be used for a clear learning or developmental purpose, for example:

- watching a short video linked to children's learning or interests;
- listening to songs and rhymes;
- looking at photographs or experiences;
- investigating the natural world;
- using a digital camera or microscope;
- supporting communication and language;
- supporting an individual child's SEND or communication needs.

Staff will always consider whether a **hands-on, screen-free experience** would be more beneficial.

Adult supervision
Children will not independently access screens. An adult will always be present and actively involved by:

- talking with children about what they see;
- asking questions and encouraging discussion;

- keeping sessions short;
- ensuring content is suitable for children aged 2–4; and
- stopping the activity when it is no longer beneficial.

Screens will not be left on as background entertainment.

Screens will not be used to:

- to occupy children while staff are busy;
- as a reward or bribe;
- to manage behaviour or calm children routinely;
- as a replacement for adult interaction;
- during meals or rest times; or
- simply because a digital resource is available.

Physical activity and play

Screen use must never replace children's opportunities for:

- outdoor play and physical activity;
- imaginative and creative play;
- books and stories;
- social interaction;
- conversation;
- sensory and practical experiences; and
- exploration and investigation.

Where possible, a screen experience will lead to further **hands-on play, discussion or investigation**.

SEND and individual needs

We recognise that technology can be particularly valuable for some children with SEND or communication needs.

Appropriate assistive technology may be used where it supports a child's:

- communication;
- independence;
- participation;
- accessibility; or
- learning.

Individual use will be discussed with parents/carers and relevant professionals where appropriate.

Safeguarding and staff responsibilities
Staff must:

- check digital content before showing it to children;
- follow the setting's safeguarding and online-safety procedures;
- use setting-approved devices;
- follow data protection requirements when taking photographs or videos; and
- ensure their own device use does not interfere with supervision or interactions with children.

Children will not independently browse the internet or access online video platforms.

Working with parents
We will share information with parents about our approach to screen use and encourage families to balance screen use with:

play · physical activity · sleep · conversation · books · family time

We will provide support and information without judging individual family circumstances.

Review
The Manager will monitor screen use to ensure that it remains purposeful, limited and appropriate and that it does not replace high-quality interactions, play or physical activity.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if EYFS or DfE guidance changes.

SEPTEMBER 2026


ST.MICHAEL'S
PRE-SCHOOL