

Screen Use Policy

Effective from September 2026

Setting	Hemingbrough Pre-School
Manager	Summer Andrews
Deputy Manager	Jane Dodsworth
Chairperson	Gemma Howard
Review date	September 2027

1 Purpose and statutory basis

Hemingbrough Pre-School takes a screen-light approach. Children learn best through play, movement, conversation, books, creativity, outdoor experiences and responsive interaction with adults and other children. Screens are therefore used rarely and only where there is a clear, appropriate purpose.

This policy reflects paragraph 3.94 of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026, and the Department for Education guidance on screen use in early years settings.

2 Our usual practice

Children do not routinely use tablets, phones, computers or other screened devices at the setting. Staff may occasionally show children a short story, nursery rhyme or song where this adds to current learning or shared enjoyment. At Christmas, the setting may hold an occasional movie activity using one short, age-appropriate programme of around 20 minutes, such as Stick Man.

These occasions remain exceptional. A screen is not used simply because it is available and does not replace a book, live storytelling, singing, imaginative play or adult interaction.

3 Principles for children's screen use

- Screen use must be limited, intentional and linked to a clear learning, cultural or shared-experience purpose.
- Screen use will be brief and will not displace outdoor play, physical activity, sleep or rest, conversation, books, creative activity or social interaction.
- Screens will not be used during meals, as background noise, to manage behaviour, to calm distress, to occupy children during transitions or as a routine reward.
- A suitable screen-free alternative will be available where a child does not wish to participate or where screen use is not appropriate for that child.

4 Content and adult involvement

Before anything is shown to children, a practitioner will check that it is:

- safe, age appropriate and suitable for the children present
- slow paced, predictable and not over-stimulating
- free from advertisements, unsuitable links, scrolling feeds and autoplay
- unlikely to expose children to unexpected or algorithm-selected content

A practitioner will remain with the children and actively share the experience. Staff will talk with children, invite comments and predictions, explain unfamiliar ideas and, where appropriate, add singing, actions or movement. Children will not access screens alone or control video platforms independently.

5 Short films and special occasions

An occasional short film or programme may be included as part of a planned celebration such as Christmas movie day. The content will be checked in advance, be appropriate for the youngest child present and normally last around 20 minutes. It will form one small part of a wider day that continues to include active play, conversation and other screen-free experiences.

6 Staff use of screens and Tapestry

Staff use approved devices and the setting's secure Tapestry account for necessary professional purposes, including observations, photographs, attendance records and communication or administration. This staff use is separate from children's screen use. Children will not be encouraged to watch staff completing Tapestry tasks or given access to staff accounts or records.

Staff will complete digital tasks in short, proportionate periods so that devices do not interrupt supervision, teaching or responsive interaction. Only necessary images or videos will be taken. They will be handled and shared securely in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection and Record Keeping Policy, and Mobile Phones, Cameras and Electronic Devices Policy.

7 SEND and assistive technology

Screen-based assistive technology may be used where it supports an individual child's communication, access, wellbeing or inclusion. Decisions will be made according to the child's needs, in partnership with parents or carers and relevant professionals where appropriate. General screen-time limits do not apply in the same way to essential assistive technology.

8 Online safety and personal devices

Any device or online content used in the setting must be appropriately secured and supervised. Personal devices are managed under the setting's Mobile Phones, Cameras and Electronic Devices Policy. Children are discouraged from bringing their own screened devices; any individual need will be discussed with the parent or carer and managed safely. AI-enabled toys or applications will not be used with children unless future evidence and guidance establish that their use is safe and appropriate.

9 Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers will be able to access this policy and may be told in advance about planned special screen activities. Staff will explain the setting's limited approach without judging families' choices at home and may share current government guidance when advice is requested.

10 Responsibilities and review

All staff are responsible for following this policy and considering whether a screen is necessary before it is used. The Manager oversees practice, ensures staff understand the guidance and reviews any concern or inappropriate use. The committee monitors implementation. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if statutory guidance, technology or setting practice changes.

Manager	Summer Andrews
Chairperson	Gemma Howard
Adopted at committee meeting	
Review date	September 2027