

The Royal Naval Preschool Learning Organisation

Digital Media Policy

September 2026

The Royal Naval Preschool Learning Organisation childcare settings have iPads within the settings.

These are used with strict staff supervision and are protected and made safe with what can be accessed on them.

For children aged 2 to 5 years any use would be with an adult present.

Set guidance times for use

- **Under 2 years old: Avoid screen time altogether.** The only exception is interactive, shared activities that encourage bonding and conversation, such as a **video call with family**.
- **2 to 5 years old:** Limit screen time to a **maximum of 1 hour per day**, though less is preferred. Early years settings should remember that children likely already use screens at home and should restrict setting usage accordingly.

What to watch

- **Choose slow-paced content:** Content should be **slow-paced, repetitive, and predictable**. Avoid fast-paced, over-stimulating clips with frequent cuts, flashing, or overlapping loud music and dialogue.
- **Avoid algorithms and social media:** Do not use social media-style videos or platforms that utilize **autoplay and infinite scrolling**. Stick to regulated, intentional platforms on bigger screens.
- **Block adverts:** Ensure all digital content is completely **advert-free**, as young children cannot differentiate between ads and programs.
- **No AI toys:** Avoid letting young children interact with **AI tools, chatbots, or smart speakers** until more long-term developmental evidence is available.

Practical Best Practices for Providers and Parents

- **Co-viewing is essential:** Children should not use screens alone. Adults should actively **co-engage** by talking, narrating, and asking open-ended questions to support cognitive development.
- **Protect routines:** Screens must be kept completely away from **mealtimes** and should be turned off at least **one hour before bed** to protect sleep quality.

- **No background screens:** Do not leave TVs or monitors on in the background, as they heavily distract from active play and real-world social interaction.
- **Avoid emotional regulation use:** Never use screens as a tool to **occupy, calm, or manage a child's behaviour**, as this impairs their natural ability to learn self-regulation.
- **Designate screen-free zones:** Establish permanent physical spaces in the home or nursery setting where screens are never allowed.