

Parkside Playgroup

11. E-Safety (including mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities) & Children's Screen Use

Online Safety

It is important that children and young people receive consistent messages about the safe use of technology and can recognise and manage the risks posed in both the real and the virtual world.

Terms such as 'e-safety', 'online', 'communication technologies' and 'digital technologies' refer to fixed and mobile technologies that adults and children may encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks; the issues are:

Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material

Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users

Conduct – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm

Emerging Technologies and Digital Risks

The setting recognises that online safeguarding risks continue to evolve and may include:

- AI-generated content.
- Artificial intelligence chatbots and virtual assistants.
- Smart devices connected to the internet.
- Wearable technology including smart watches.
- Livestreaming platforms.
- Messaging applications and communication platforms.
- Social media platforms.
- Image editing and synthetic media technologies.

Staff remain vigilant to possible safeguarding concerns arising from the use of emerging technologies and will report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The setting will ensure that:

- Staff receive regular online safety updates.
- Children are supported to develop safe digital behaviours appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- Parents are signposted to appropriate guidance where digital safety concerns arise.
- Risk assessments are reviewed to reflect changes in technology.

I.C.T Equipment

- The setting manager ensures that all computers have up-to-date virus protection installed.
- Tablets are only used by educators for the purposes of observation, assessment, and planning and to take photographs for individual children's learning journeys.
- Tablets remain on the premises and are always stored securely when not in use.
- Staff follow the additional guidance provided with the system

Internet access

- Children never have unsupervised access to the internet.
- The setting manager ensures that risk assessments in relation to e-safety are completed.
- Only reputable sites with a focus on early learning are used (e.g. CBeebies).
- Video sharing sites such as YouTube are not accessed due to the risk of inappropriate content.

- Children are taught the following stay safe principles in an age-appropriate way:
 - only go online with a grown up
 - be kind online and keep information about me safely
 - only press buttons on the internet to things I understand
 - tell a grown up if something makes me unhappy on the internet
- Staff support children's resilience in relation to issues they may face online, and address issues such as staying safe, appropriate friendships, asking for help if unsure, not keeping secrets as part of social and emotional development in age-appropriate ways.
- All computers for use by children are sited in an area clearly visible to staff.
- Staff report any suspicious or offensive material, including material which may incite racism, bullying or discrimination to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org.uk.

The setting manager ensures staff have access to age-appropriate resources to enable them to assist children to use the internet safely.

Strategies to minimise risk include:

- Check apps, websites and search results before using them with children.
 - Children in Early Years should always be supervised when accessing the internet.
 - Ensure safety modes and filters are applied - default settings tend not to ensure a high level of privacy or security. But remember you still need to supervise children closely.
 - Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness. Talk to children about safe use, for example ask permission before taking a child's picture even if parental consent has been given.
 - Make use of home visits to inform your understanding of how technology is used within the home and the context of the child with regards to technology.
 - Check privacy settings to make sure personal data is not being shared inadvertently or inappropriately.
- (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-guidance-for-practitioners>)

Personal mobile phones – staff and visitors (includes internet enabled devices)

- Personal mobile phones and internet enabled devices are not used by staff during working hours. This does not include breaks where personal mobiles may be used off the premises or in a safe place e.g., staff room. The setting manager completes a risk assessment for where they can be used safely.
- Personal mobile phones are switched off and stored in lockers or a locked office drawer.
- In an emergency, personal mobile phones may be used in the privacy of the office with permission.
- Staff ensure that contact details of the setting are known to family and people who may need to contact them in an emergency.
- Staff do not take their mobile phones on outings.
- Members of staff do not use personal equipment to take photographs of children.
- Parents/carers and visitors do not use their mobile phones on the premises. There is an exception if a visitor's company/organisation operates a policy that requires contact with their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors are advised of a private space where they can use their mobile.

Cameras and videos

- Members of staff do not bring their own cameras or video recorders to the setting.

- Photographs/recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons, e.g. to record learning and development, or for displays, and are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting. Children are given the opportunity to consent to their photograph being taken, even if parent/carers permissions are in place.
- Camera and video use is monitored by the setting manager.
- Where parents/carers request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, general permission is first gained from all parents/carers for their children to be included. Parents are told they do not have a right to photograph or upload photos of anyone else's children.
- Photographs/recordings of children are only made if relevant permissions are in place.
- If photographs are used for publicity, parental consent is gained and safeguarding risks minimised, e.g. children may be identified if photographed in a sweatshirt with the name of their setting on it.

Cyber Bullying

If staff become aware that a child is the victim of cyber-bullying at home or elsewhere, they discuss this with the parents and refer them to help, such as: NSPCC Tel: 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk or ChildLine Tel: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

Use of social media

Staff are expected to:

- understand how to manage their security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with
- ensure the organisation is not negatively affected by their actions and do not name the setting
- are aware that comments or photographs online may be accessible to anyone and should use their judgement before posting
- are aware that images, such as those on Snapshot may still be accessed by others and a permanent record of them made, for example, by taking a screen shot of the image with a mobile phone
- observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
- not share information they would not want children, parents or colleagues to view
- set privacy settings to personal social networking and restrict those who are able to access
- not accept service users/children/parents as friends, as it is a breach of professional conduct
- report any concerns or breaches to the designated safeguarding lead in their setting
- not engage in personal communication, including on social networking sites, with children and parents with whom they act in a professional capacity. There may be occasions when the educator and family are friendly prior to the child coming to the setting. In this case information is shared with the manager and a risk assessment and agreement in relation to boundaries are agreed

Use/distribution of inappropriate images

- Staff are aware that it is an offence to distribute indecent images and that it is an offence to groom children online. In the event of a concern that a colleague is behaving inappropriately, staff advise the designated safeguarding lead who follows procedure Allegations against staff, volunteers or agency staff.

Further guidance

- NSPCC and CEOP *Keeping Children Safe Online* training: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/keeping-children-safe-online-course/

- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings Online Safety Considerations for Managers:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776470/UKCIS_Early_Years_Online_Safety_Considerations_for_Managers.pdf
- Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionals in Early Years Settings Online Safety Guidance for Practitioners:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776473/UKCIS_Early_Years_Online_Safety_Guidance_for_Practitioners_1_.pdf
- Early Years practitioners: using cyber security to protect your settings:
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-practitioners-using-cyber-security-to-protect-your-settings>

Children's screen use

Policy statement

From 1 September 2026, the EYFS requires providers to have regard to Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings. Screen use is limited, purposeful, age-appropriate and linked to clear learning, communication, inclusion or operational aims. Screens do not replace responsive adult interaction, physical activity, outdoor play, sleep, shared reading or play-based learning.

Children under two

Screen use for children under two is avoided other than in exceptional circumstances, such as a video call with a parent/carers or where screen-based assistive technology is needed for a child with SEND or communication needs.

Children aged two to five

Screen use is kept to a minimum and, as a general limit, should not exceed one hour a day in the setting, and less where possible. Staff recognise that children may also use screens at home.

Safe and purposeful use

Children do not access screens without adult co-engagement. Content is checked in advance, age appropriate, slow-paced, predictable and free from advertising, scrolling and autoplay features. Screens are not used routinely to occupy children, manage behaviour, calm children, during mealtimes or within an hour before sleep. Background screens are not left on.

Screens are used for short periods and staff actively talk, comment, question and interact with children. Screen-based assistive technologies for children with SEND are considered individually and are not restricted by general screen-time limits where they are necessary for communication, inclusion, wellbeing or access. Images and videos of children are kept to the minimum necessary and are captured, stored and shared only through authorised secure systems in accordance with the setting's e-safety, safeguarding, confidentiality and data-protection procedures. Personal devices are not used unless expressly permitted by the setting's written policy and compliant with the EYFS.

Further guidance: Department for Education, Help for early years providers – Screen use (published July 2026).

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Parkside Playgroup

Held on

Sept 2026

Date to be reviewed

Sept 2027

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory	Brenda Henrick
Role of signatory	Chairperson