

Screen Time Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines Grantham Farm Montessori School's approach to the use of screens and digital technology for children aged 2–7. The policy aligns with Montessori principles of hands-on, sensorial, real-world learning and supports healthy child development, concentration, independence, and meaningful social interaction.

Philosophy

Montessori education emphasises:

- **Concrete, real-life experiences** as the foundation for learning
- **Uninterrupted work cycles** that promote deep concentration
- **Movement, exploration, and social collaboration**
- **Developmentally appropriate limits** that protect children's sense of order, attention, and emotional wellbeing

For these reasons, screen use in the Montessori classroom is intentionally limited and carefully managed.

Policy Overview

Classroom Screen Use

For children ages 2–7, screens **are not part of the daily curriculum**. Montessori classrooms rely on hands-on materials, books and real-life activities.

Permitted Uses (Occasional and Purposeful)

Screens may be used **only when**:

- Supporting a specific lesson that cannot be taught effectively without digital media (e.g., viewing a weather satellite image during a geography unit for Grantham Farm class children)
- Displaying **short**, factual videos related to a cultural, scientific, or environmental lesson
- Supporting pupils with documented learning needs when advised by a specialist

All screen use in the classroom:

- Must be teacher-directed
- Must be brief, intentional, and relevant
- Must never replace hands-on Montessori materials

Not Permitted

- Entertainment videos
- Passive screen time (e.g., “filler” activities)
- Personal devices (phones, tablets, smartwatches)
- Apps or games unrelated to Montessori lessons

Age-by-Age Guidelines

Toddlers (2 year olds)

- No screen use for children at this age.
- Teachers may use digital tools for planning and documentation, but not with children.

Children’s House / Primary (3–6 years)

- Screens used only sparingly for short, teacher-guided lessons.
- No child-operated devices.

Primary (6–7 years)

- Occasional, structured, teacher-led technology use for:
 - Research demonstrations
 - Digital reference tools
 - Documenting projects (teacher-supervised)
- No independent internet browsing.

Home–School Partnership

Families play a vital role in supporting healthy developmental habits.

School Recommendations for Home

While families make the final decisions, the school strongly encourages:

- Limiting total screen time for 2–5-year-olds to less than one hour per day, ideally co-viewed and interactive
- Establishing screen-free routines:
 - At meals
 - Before school
 - One hour before bedtime
- Encouraging alternatives: outdoor play, reading together, practical life activities, creative projects

Personal Devices

Personal devices must remain at home. If a child brings a device, staff will store it safely until pickup.

Special Circumstances

Learning Support

Screen-based tools may be used when:

- Recommended by occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, or other specialists
- Integrated into an individualized support plan

School Events

Occasionally, screens may be used for:

- All-school presentations
- Guest speakers using digital slides
- Parent education sessions, e.g. My Montessori Child

These instances do not involve direct screen use by children unless explicitly stated and developmentally appropriate.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff members must:

- Work in alignment with the schools' screen time policy
- Model responsible, minimal, and purposeful screen use
- Ensure any approved screen use is intentional, brief, and educational
- Support children in learning appropriate, safe use of screen devices.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least bi-annually with input from teachers, administrators, and families to ensure it reflects best practices in Montessori education and child development research.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the school	Date for review
January 2026	<i>E. Wetherley</i> HEAD TEACHER <i>C. Palmer</i> DDSL Filtering & Monitoring	January 2028