Digital Learning Policy

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Introduction – A Gradual Approach to Digital Wisdom

At Eaton Square Prep School, traditional methods provide the foundation of teaching and learning. Digital enhancements are used selectively where they offer a clear educational benefit and do not displace handwriting, discussion, practical learning, sustained attention or meaningful interaction with teachers and peers.

This policy sets out the strategic balance between time-honoured **traditional pedagogy**, which we hold dear, and the rapid evolution of digital innovation. While digital tools, online assessments, and artificial intelligence are fundamentally reshaping the educational landscape, our priority remains the preservation of **human connection** and **healthy learning behaviours.** We do not pursue technical proficiency as an end in itself; instead, we cultivate **Digital Wisdom**. This is defined as the judgment, confidence, and literacy required to use technology safely and purposefully. Our goal is to ensure that technology serves as a powerful supplement to, rather than a replacement for, the relationships and wellbeing that sit at the heart of our school.

We are committed to managing the spectrum of **cognitive offloading**, ensuring technology supports the 'edges' of a task, such as formatting or organising, without replacing the 'core' mental work that belongs to the learner. Our goal is to ensure that technology serves as a powerful supplement to, rather than a replacement for, the relationships and wellbeing at our school's heart. To this end, our staff remain the essential **human in the loop,** actively engaging with pupils to protect the **desirable difficulties,** the productive struggle of thinking for oneself, that ensures genuine understanding and lasting knowledge are built rather than bypassed.

SEND

The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), can access digital learning safely, inclusively and effectively. Staff will take account of individual needs, vulnerabilities and communication preferences when supporting pupils to use online technologies, digital platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Appropriate safeguards, reasonable adjustments and supervision will be implemented to help pupils understand online risks, protect their personal information, recognise misinformation, and engage responsibly with digital content. Online safety

education (e.g. during PSHE or Computing lessons) will be tailored to individual needs and delivered in partnership with parents and relevant professionals (e.g. during after School clubs like Coding Club) to promote pupils' wellbeing, digital resilience and independence. In EYFS, pupils will not directly use generative AI tools. In accordance with current DfE early years screen-use guidance, the School will take a precautionary approach to AI use with children in the early years. This does not prevent the appropriate use of screen-based assistive technology for pupils with SEND where this supports communication, access, wellbeing or inclusion. All digital learning operates under the safeguarding principles outlined in the school's Acceptable Use of IT Policy, Online Safety Policy, and AI Policy.

Sustainability

The school will consider the sustainability implications of device use by promoting the thoughtful use of digital platforms in place of unnecessary printed materials where appropriate. Short, purposeful periods of screen use will be encouraged to support learning while limiting excessive exposure. This balanced approach ensures that digital and non-digital methods are used effectively, reducing environmental impact through lower paper consumption while maintaining high-quality teaching and learning.

Comparative Pedagogical Framework

Feature	Traditional Methods (Pencil-and-Paper)	Digital Enhancements
Primary Value	Concrete learning, motor skill development, and deep focus.	Efficiency, interactivity, and preparation for modern assessment formats.
Classroom Role	The foundation for handwriting, discussion, and core literacy.	A targeted tool for 11+ readiness, life readiness, and academic efficiency.
Cognitive Goal	Human connection and tactile problem-solving.	Developing digital literacy, critical evaluation, and technical fluency.
Assessment	Summative mastery of handwritten communication.	Formative feedback and familiarity with online 11+ assessment platforms.

The 11+ Imperative
Digital competence is no longer only a life skill but also a requirement for academic transition. Because modern 11+ processes use online assessments, pupils must develop the digital literacy to navigate these platforms with the same ease they do a physical exam paper. This policy outlines a progressive journey that ensures pupils are academically and technically prepared for these high-stakes transitions without sacrificing foundational motor skills, or cognitive ability. These values dictate the developmental stages that follow, ensuring that the tactile foundations of our youngest learners eventually support the sophisticated digital organisation of our Year 6 graduates.

EYFS (Nursery and Reception)

The pedagogical rationale for the Early Years focuses on communication, play, physical

development, relationships and motor skills. Minimal screen exposure is therefore a deliberate choice. Technology will never substitute for hands-on creativity, conversation, active play or high-quality interaction with adults.
In accordance with the EYFS statutory framework, the School will have regard to the DfE guidance on screen use in early years settings. The guidance advises avoiding screen time for children under two, other than in exceptional circumstances, and limiting screen time for children aged two to five to no more than one hour per day, and less where possible. As children may also use screens at home, screen use within School will be limited, carefully planned, adult-supported and linked to a specific learning or developmental purpose. Screens should not be used during mealtimes or within an hour of a sleep period.

Implementation – Devices
The use of hardware is strictly regulated to ensure it does not interfere with child-initiated learning:

- **Teacher-led use only:** iPads may be used occasionally, for short, carefully planned activities directed and co-engaged in by an adult, where there is a clear educational purpose.
- **Assessment:** Digital devices may be used by staff to support the recording or administration of appropriate assessments. Assessment of young children's development will remain rooted in observation, professional judgement and interaction with the child.
- **No Free Play:** Devices are not used for free play or child-initiated learning.
- **Interactive Whiteboard:** for teaching use only, linked to the curriculum, and never used to watch cartoons, etc.

Pedagogical Deep-Dive – Early Coding
In Reception, we use **Bee-Bots** to bridge the gap between physical and digital logic through **screen-free sequencing**. These programmable devices allow children to understand that technology is something humans control. Teachers must use physical maps to instruct pupils on:

- **Sequencing:** Ordering commands to reach a destination.
- **Directionality:** Understanding left, right, forwards, and backwards.
- **Prediction:** Estimating where a Bee-Bot will end up based on a set of instructions.

Working together with Parents

The Home Partnership is of great importance. We strongly encourage parents to support healthy screen habits at home, including avoiding screens during mealtimes and in the hour before sleep. Parents are encouraged to treat screens as tools rather than toys and to prioritise real-world play, conversation, reading, creativity and outdoor experiences.

The School recognises that children's screen use outside School will vary. Screen use during the School day will therefore be limited, purposeful and developmentally appropriate. We will work collaboratively with parents to promote healthy and balanced screen habits at home and at School.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

In Years 1 and 2, digital technology is used selectively and for clear educational purposes. The School seeks to minimise unnecessary screen exposure and ensure that digital activity does not displace reading, handwriting, conversation, practical learning, physical activity or play. Parents are encouraged to support similarly balanced habits at home.

Curriculum
In Key Stage 1, the Value-Add filter is applied to every digital interaction. Technology is only deployed when it provides a clear educational advantage that traditional pencil-and-paper methods cannot offer.

While the classroom remains centered on spoken language and physical writing, digital skills are introduced through:

1. **Weekly Computing Lessons:** Dedicated time for age-appropriate coding, foundational typing, and digital safety. Screen use outside dedicated Computing lessons will remain occasional, purposeful and teacher-directed.
2. **Supervised Research:** Use of school iPads for science-based research or simple recording apps.
3. **Interactive Tasks:** Using software to enhance curiosity rather than for passive consumption. (Numbots, etc.)

The Launch Pad
The **Launch Pad** serves as an interactive learning space designed for **structured curiosity**. It is not a room for digital consumption; it is a venue for exploration where technology is used to visualise concepts in ways that are impossible in a standard classroom, ensuring pupils remain active participants in their learning.

Homework
To prevent KS1 screen fatigue and prioritise motor skills, **homework at this stage remains predominantly paper-based**. While parental supervision is required if occasional online research is requested, or for specific practice using educational technology is required (Numbots, etc.), no formal digital assignments are set. This protects the supervised research habits that will transition into the increased independence of Year 3.

Working together with Parents

The Home Partnership is of great importance. We encourage parents to support the same

principles of balanced and purposeful screen use at home, including device-free mealtimes, avoiding screens in the hour before sleep, and prioritising reading, conversation, creativity, outdoor activity and family interaction.

Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3)

In Year 3, screen use remains purposeful and proportionate as pupils begin to develop greater digital independence. Digital learning should complement, rather than replace, handwriting, reading, discussion, practical activity and teacher interaction. Parents are encouraged to maintain the same balanced approach at home.

Curriculum

Pupils continue to receive planned Computing teaching, building on the digital literacy, coding and online-safety curriculum introduced in Key Stage 1.

Year 3 is the Pivot Year. It represents a strategic shift where we maintain a primary focus on handwriting and physical books while beginning to introduce the digital independence required for the 1:1 devices introduced in Year 4.

We introduce tools that transform abstract concepts into visual reality:

- **Merge Cubes and AR:** Used specifically in Science, these tools allow for augmented reality experiences. Crucially, these are deployed to maintain a **collective classroom experience** rather than isolated consumption.
- **Typing Fluency:** A focus on typing accuracy begins here, bridging the gap between the motor skills of KS1 and the digital literacy requirements of KS2.

Digital Responsibility

As pupils begin to navigate the web more independently, we introduce foundational online safety. Pupils must learn to:

- Distinguish between **safe and unsafe websites**.
- Understand the basics of responsible online behaviour.
- **Atom Learning:** This platform is introduced specifically for **Reasoning homework**.

Working together with Parents

The Home Partnership remains important as pupils become more independent online. Parents are encouraged to agree clear boundaries around device use, maintain device-free mealtimes and bedrooms, avoid screens in the hour before sleep, and maintain a healthy balance of digital learning with reading, physical activity, creativity and family interaction.

Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 4-6)

For pupils in Years 4–6, the School promotes purposeful and proportionate screen use. Our focus is on the quality, purpose and duration of digital activities, regular breaks, and ensuring that technology does not displace handwriting, discussion, physical activity, practical learning, sustained concentration or social interaction. Parents are encouraged to maintain similarly balanced routines at home.

Curriculum
The introduction of **Microsoft Surface Pros** in Year 4 marks a significant pedagogical shift. The challenge for the staff and parents is to ensure these devices support the curriculum without dominating it.

To support effective coordination of device use across specialist teaching teams in KS2, an editable version of each class timetable should be made available within the shared planning folder. This will allow teachers to indicate, by highlighting, when devices are required for specific lessons each week, enabling a clear overview and mapping of device usage across the timetable. In addition, the homework plan should also be saved in the same shared space to provide visibility of when devices are expected to be used at home. To promote consistent and appropriate screen time, all homework set via Atom should include a defined time limit: no longer than 40 minutes for Years 5 and 6 (aligned with pre-test expectations), and up to 30 minutes for Years 3 and 4. These measures will support effective monitoring and balanced use of digital devices alongside traditional resources, including a continued use of Galore Park materials for reasoning within class.

The Balance
To prevent screen fatigue and ensure cognitive variety, teachers must adhere to the following checklist:

- **Cognitive Variety:** If Mathematics is taught digitally, English must remain paper-based that day.
- **Homework Offset:** If an online homework task is set, staff must **reduce school-day screen time** accordingly.
- **Purposeful Deployment:** Devices are only opened when they specifically enhance the lesson or creative task.

Microsoft Teams & OneNote
The progression of digital organisation is managed through a clear ladder of complexity:

- **Year 4:** Introduction to receiving/completing assignments via Teams and using OneNote for digital organisation.
- **Year 5 & 6:** Mastery of **digital footprints**, **file management**, and **collaborative platforms**. **Safe use of AI to enhance human learning.** Pupils must demonstrate independence in organising folders and using spreadsheets to meet secondary-level

expectations. They must understand how to protect their own and other people's personal data and intellectual property safely.

Safety, Monitoring & Wellbeing

Filtering and Monitoring
The School maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems across its networks and school-managed devices in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and the DfE Filtering and Monitoring Standards. Responsibility for filtering and monitoring is clearly allocated to senior leadership, supported by the DSL and IT support. The effectiveness of these arrangements is formally reviewed at least annually and following significant changes to technology, systems or identified safeguarding risks, with outcomes and actions recorded. The review will take account of pupils' ages, SEND and other vulnerabilities and emerging risks including dynamic, personalised and AI-generated content.

SchoolCloud Firewall:

- School-managed devices and networks are subject to appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements.
- Monitoring arrangements operate in accordance with the School's safeguarding and online safety procedures, including where technically applicable when school-managed devices are used away from the School site.
- Identified safeguarding concerns are escalated to appropriate staff in accordance with the School's procedures.

Digital Wellbeing:
We teach children to understand:

- Safe online behaviour
- Respect and responsibility in digital interactions
- Healthy screen habits
- The importance of breaks, sleep, and balance
- How to evaluate information critically

Digital learning should enhance wellbeing—not compromise it.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI may only be used by pupils where the tool has been expressly approved by the School for the relevant age group and educational purpose. Before introducing an AI tool for pupil use, the School will consider its age appropriateness, safeguarding arrangements, filtering and monitoring, privacy and data protection, security, SEND accessibility and its potential impact on pupils' cognitive, emotional and social development.
Pupils must not enter personal, confidential or sensitive information into generative AI tools. AI must not replace the core thinking, reasoning, writing or original intellectual work expected of the pupil. Staff will remain the human in the loop and will teach pupils to critically evaluate AI-generated material, including recognising inaccuracies, bias, misinformation and fabricated content.

Pupil-facing generative AI will not ordinarily be used within EYFS. The School's approach should be read alongside the AI Policy, Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use of IT Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Data Protection and EdTech

Digital learning will be delivered in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy and applicable privacy notices. Before introducing new EdTech, online platforms or AI products that process personal data, the School will ensure that their use is lawful, transparent, secure and proportionate, with appropriate data-protection assessment undertaken where required. Pupil and staff personal data must not be entered into unauthorised digital or AI services.

Personal Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Pupils are not permitted to use personal mobile phones during the School day, including lessons, transition times, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Appropriate individual adaptations or reasonable adjustments may be made where necessary, including for medical, SEND or other exceptional needs. Further detail is contained within the School's Behaviour and Online Safety policies.

Summary

This policy ensures that digital learning at Eaton Square Prep School is:

- **Balanced** with traditional methods
- **Purposeful**, never excessive
- **Safe**, monitored, and aligned with safeguarding policies
- **Developmentally appropriate**, building skills progressively
- **Preparing pupils for future learning**, including online 11+ assessments
- **Grounded in human connection**, curiosity, and healthy learning behaviours

Our approach reflects our belief that technology is a powerful tool—but never a replacement—for exceptional teaching, meaningful relationships, and the joy of learning.

APPENDIX 1 – Parent Guidance on Healthy Screen Habits

This appendix provides clear, research-informed guidance for parents to support healthy screen use at home. Children thrive when school and home work together to create balance, protect wellbeing and encourage purposeful learning habits.

1. General Principles for Screen Use at Home

- Prioritise **real-world play, conversation, reading, and outdoor activity** over screen-based entertainment.
- Treat screens as **tools, not toys**—especially for younger children.
- Model balanced and healthy digital behaviour as adults.
- Ensure screens are used in **shared family spaces**, not behind closed doors.

2. Early Years (Nursery & Reception)

- We strongly recommend **limiting or avoiding** screen use at this age.
- No screens should be used **one hour before bedtime**, as blue light can delay sleep onset and affect learning the next day.
- Young children should use digital devices with appropriate adult supervision and support.
- Avoid using screens during meals, family time, or to soothe upset behaviour.
- Encourage hands-on learning: blocks, puzzles, pretend play, outdoor exploration, drawing, and conversation.

3. Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

- Keep screen use **occasional and purposeful** (e.g., supervised research, family videos).
- Prioritise reading, creative play, outdoor activity, and free play.
- Maintain **device-free bedrooms**.
- Avoid screens during the hour before bedtime.
- Support safe online behaviour from the earliest stages (not sharing personal information, always asking an adult before going online).

4. Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

- Screens may increasingly support learning (e.g., Atom Learning, Teams tasks), but balance remains essential.
- Agree **clear household rules** about when and how devices are used.
- Continue to keep all devices out of bedrooms.
- Encourage regular breaks from screens—every 20 minutes, look away and stretch.
- Reinforce the importance of **critical thinking** online: not everything is true, kind, or safe.
- Promote positive digital citizenship: respectful communication, kindness online, and responsible decision-making.

5. Sleep and Digital Wellbeing

To support healthy sleep habits:

- Avoid screens **one hour before bedtime** for all ages.
- Reduce exposure to blue-light devices in the evening.
- Create a calming routine (bath, story, low lighting).
- Ensure children sleep without devices in their rooms.

Good sleep is directly linked to memory, attention, mood, behaviour, and academic progress.

6. Talking to Your Child About Online Safety

- Have open, ongoing conversations about the online world.
- Encourage your child to tell you immediately if something online makes them uncomfortable.
- Remind them that **nothing online is ever truly private**.
- Know the apps they use, and use parental controls where appropriate.
- Reinforce the golden rule: **If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.**

7. Summary for Parents

Healthy screen habits at home:

- Keep screen time **intentional**, limited, and supervised
- Avoid screens before sleep
- Protect device-free spaces (bedroom, mealtimes)
- Encourage reading, outdoor play, creativity, and conversation
- Maintain open dialogue about online experiences

Working together, we can help children become **balanced, confident, responsible digital learners**.

APPENDIX 2 – Digital Skills Progression Map (EYFS- Year 6)

This appendix outlines the progression of digital literacy skills that pupils develop during their time at Eaton Square Prep School. It ensures a coherent, age-appropriate approach to preparing pupils for the modern digital world while maintaining our values of balance, safety, and wellbeing.

EYFS (Nursery & Reception)
Focus: **Exploration, Early Coding, Digital Awareness**
Children will learn to:

- Understand that technology is something we can control
- Use simple programmable devices (e.g., Bee-Bots)
- Sequence instructions to move an object on a map
- Begin to understand safe and unsafe online behaviour (very simple rules)
- Experience occasional, carefully planned adult-supported use of digital devices where this supports an appropriate learning purpose.
- Digital devices may support staff assessment and recording, but assessment of children's development remains primarily observational and based on professional judgement and interaction.
- Recognise devices as tools, not toys

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)
Focus: **Basic Skills, Early Typing, Foundational Online Safety**
Pupils will learn to:

- Use age-appropriate software and apps
- Develop basic typing skills
- Save and retrieve simple files
- Understand what to do if they see something worrying online
- Use school iPads safely (with supervision)
- Conduct simple research with an adult
- Begin coding using block-based programs
- Use the Launch Pad interactive technology for structured learning

Year 3 (Transition Year)
Focus: **Confidence, Independence, Responsible Use**
Pupils will learn to:

- Type with increasing accuracy and fluency
- Use school iPads for occasional classroom activities
- Conduct supervised online research
- Use Merge Cubes and AR tools in Science
- Progress in block coding and simple algorithms
- Understand the difference between safe and unsafe websites
- Begin using online homework platforms (e.g., Atom Learning Reading)
- Understand the basics of how to behave responsibly online

Key Stage 2 (Years 4–6)

Focus: **Proficiency, Digital Wisdom, Online Assessment Skills**

Year 4

Introduction of 1:1 **Microsoft Surface Pro** devices

Pupils will learn to:

- Use Microsoft Teams to receive and complete assignments
- Type confidently and efficiently
- Use OneNote, Word, and other Microsoft 365 applications
- Develop online research skills with good judgement
- Begin practising for online assessments
- Understand digital footprints and privacy
- Balance screen use with wellbeing

Year 5

Pupils will learn to:

- Produce structured written work using digital tools
- Use spreadsheets, presentations, and collaborative platforms
- Deepen coding knowledge and problem-solving
- Work with increasing independence on Teams
- Evaluate online content critically
- Manage files, folders, and digital organisation

Year 6

Pupils will learn to:

- Demonstrate readiness for secondary-level digital learning
- Complete online 11+ practice assessments
- Refine typing speed and accuracy
- Use digital tools for research, presentations, and extended work
- Understand how to behave safely, kindly, and responsibly online
- Show digital wisdom—using technology thoughtfully and purposefully

Skill Outcomes by the End of Year 6

Pupils leave Eaton Square Prep School able to:

- Use digital tools confidently, independently, and safely
- Navigate online assessments and learning platforms
- Demonstrate strong awareness of online safety and digital wellbeing
- Apply critical thinking when using the internet
- Use technology to enhance creativity, communication, and learning
- Maintain a balanced and healthy approach to screen use

This progression ensures that pupils develop the **digital literacy**, **discipline**, and **judgement** required for modern learning, future schooling, and the digital world.