



Digital Strategy 2026-28

Rationale

At Vermont School, technology is used carefully, intentionally and developmentally appropriately within our primary SEMH provision. Many pupils require high levels of relational support, co-regulation, movement, sensory input, practical learning and trusted adult connection in order to feel safe, engage with learning and develop independence.

The school recognises that, for some pupils, screen-based activities may form part of established home regulation routines. Vermont School's approach is therefore not anti-technology, but instead focused on ensuring that technology use within school remains purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and balanced with direct interpersonal and practical learning experiences.

For pupils with SEMH needs, excessive or passive screen use can sometimes increase avoidance, reduce opportunities for communication, limit peer interaction, affect attention, and contribute to difficulties with emotional regulation. Therefore, the school aims to provide a calm, relational and low-screen environment where pupils are supported to develop a wider range of regulation strategies.

Technology will be used where it clearly enhances learning, accessibility, communication, safeguarding or curriculum delivery. It will not become the default approach for regulation, reward, passive engagement or classroom management. Instead, the school prioritises relational practice, communication, sensory experiences, practical learning and meaningful interaction as the foundation of effective SEMH provision.

This approach supports pupils to build healthier habits, strengthen social communication, develop resilience, engage in practical learning and experience school as a safe place for connection, creativity and purposeful learning.

Strategic Principles

At Vermont School, the use of technology will be guided by the following principles:

1. Technology Must Have Clear Purpose

Technology will only be used where it demonstrably improves learning, communication, accessibility, safeguarding or curriculum delivery.

2. Relationships Come First

Face-to-face interaction, communication, co-regulation and trusted adult relationships remain central to effective SEMH practice.

3. Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Technology use will reflect the developmental, emotional and sensory needs of primary-aged pupils.

4. Balance and Wellbeing

Pupils will experience a balance of practical, outdoor, sensory, creative and relational learning opportunities alongside purposeful digital learning.

5. Technology Is Not a Default Regulation Tool

Staff will support pupils to develop a broad range of regulation strategies rather than relying solely on screen-based activities.

6. Safe and Responsible Digital Learning

Pupils will be taught digital literacy, online safety and appropriate technology use in an age-appropriate and supportive way.

7. Inclusive and Accessible Practice

Technology may be used to support communication, accessibility and additional learning needs where appropriate.

Curriculum and Learning

At Vermont School, technology will support learning where it adds clear educational value and enhances pupil access, engagement or communication. The school recognises the importance of preparing pupils for life in a digital world; however, technology will be used in a balanced and developmentally appropriate way within the context of a primary SEMH setting.

Pupils will continue to receive high-quality computing teaching, including:

- digital literacy
- online safety
- basic computing skills
- responsible use of technology
- communication and research skills

Technology may also be used to:

- support accessibility and additional learning needs
- develop communication and language
- provide creative learning opportunities
- enhance curriculum delivery where appropriate
- support assessment and recording processes

However, digital devices will not replace the core principles of primary SEMH education. Vermont School prioritises:

- practical and experiential learning
- outdoor learning opportunities
- sensory and creative experiences
- communication-rich teaching
- play-based and relational approaches
- direct interaction with peers and adults

Staff will carefully consider whether technology genuinely enhances the learning experience or whether pupils would benefit more from direct, practical or relational approaches. Screen-based activities will therefore be purposeful, time-limited and linked directly to learning intentions.

The school aims to ensure that pupils develop confidence and competence in using technology while also building independence, resilience, social communication and emotional regulation through a broad and balanced curriculum.

Use of Technology across the school day

At Vermont School, technology use throughout the school day will be carefully planned, purposeful and proportionate to the needs of pupils within a primary SEMH environment.

Technology may be used:

- during discrete computing lessons
- to support specific curriculum activities
- to enhance communication and accessibility
- for short, focused research or creative tasks
- to support assistive technology needs
- for staff-led teaching and modelling
- to support safeguarding and assessment systems.

Technology use will be balanced with:

- movement and sensory breaks
- outdoor learning
- practical and hands-on activities
- social interaction
- communication-based learning
- therapeutic and relational approaches.

The school recognises that many pupils already experience high levels of screen exposure outside of school. Therefore, classroom environments will aim to minimise unnecessary screen use.

Interactive whiteboards and visual technology will be used selectively and thoughtfully to support teaching rather than dominate classroom practice. Staff will consider the sensory, emotional and attentional impact of screen-based learning on pupils and adjust provision accordingly.

Technology will not routinely be used as the primary strategy for:

- emotional regulation
- transition management
- reward systems
- passive occupation during unstructured times

Instead, Vermont School prioritises:

- relational regulation
- communication and connection
- structured routines
- sensory support
- physical activity
- restorative and therapeutic approaches

This balanced approach aims to ensure that pupils experience technology as one supportive tool within a wider learning environment, rather than the central feature of the school day.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

At Vermont School, safeguarding remains central to all technology use. The school recognises that pupils may be particularly vulnerable to risks associated with online content, digital

communication, social media and excessive screen exposure. As a result, technology use within school will be carefully supervised, structured and developmentally appropriate.

The school is committed to teaching pupils how to use technology safely, responsibly and respectfully. Online safety education will be delivered through the computing curriculum, [Jigsaw PSHE](#) programme and daily classroom practice, and will be adapted to meet the emotional, developmental and communication needs of pupils.

Pupils will be taught:

- how to stay safe online
- how to report worries or concerns
- the importance of respectful communication
- safe use of search engines and online platforms
- age-appropriate understanding of privacy and personal information
- how to recognise unsafe or inappropriate content.

The school will maintain appropriate filtering, monitoring and safeguarding systems in line with statutory guidance and best practice. Staff will remain vigilant to:

- inappropriate online content
- unsafe online behaviours
- cyberbullying
- excessive dependency on devices
- online influences that may negatively affect wellbeing, behaviour or emotional regulation.

Technology use within school will always be supervised appropriately, and pupils will not have unrestricted access to digital devices or online platforms.

The school also recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to promote healthy and safe approaches to technology use both within and beyond the school environment.

Staff Expectations and Professional Practice

At Vermont School, all staff share responsibility for ensuring that technology is used safely, appropriately and in line with the school's relational and trauma-informed approach.

Staff will model positive and purposeful use of technology and will carefully consider the emotional, sensory and developmental needs of pupils when planning screen-based activities. Technology should enhance teaching and learning where appropriate, but should not replace direct interaction, communication or relationship-based practice.

Staff are expected to:

- use technology purposefully and selectively
- ensure screen-based activities have clear educational value
- maintain appropriate supervision of pupils when using devices
- follow safeguarding and online safety procedures at all times
- promote balanced and healthy approaches to technology use
- support pupils to develop a range of regulation and engagement strategies beyond screen-based activities
- consider the sensory and attentional impact of prolonged screen exposure

- maintain professional standards when using digital communication and online platforms.

Staff will also support pupils to:

- engage in practical and experiential learning
- develop communication and social interaction skills
- build independence and resilience
- access sensory and movement-based regulation opportunities
- understand safe and respectful use of technology

Where technology is used to support accessibility, communication or individual learning needs, this will be planned carefully and reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the pupil effectively.

The school recognises that consistency across classrooms is essential. Leaders will therefore provide guidance, monitoring and professional development to ensure that the principles outlined within this strategy are implemented effectively across the school.

Partnership with Parents

The school recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers to promote safe, balanced and developmentally appropriate use of technology.

The school understands that many families face significant challenges in supporting children with SEMH needs and that technology may sometimes form part of established routines at home. The purpose of this strategy is not to criticise or monitor home practices, but to ensure that pupils experience a balanced, relational and supportive learning environment during the school day.

Vermont School will work collaboratively with families to:

- promote healthy and balanced approaches to screen use
- support online safety awareness
- encourage routines that support sleep, wellbeing and emotional regulation
- share guidance and resources where appropriate
- maintain open communication regarding pupils' individual needs

The school will provide opportunities for parents and carers to access information relating to:

- online safety
- age-appropriate technology use
- gaming and social media awareness
- emotional wellbeing and screen time balance
- digital safeguarding

The school recognises that every family context is different and will always aim to approach conversations around technology use with sensitivity, understanding and a non-judgemental approach.

By working together, the school and families can support pupils to develop healthy habits, positive relationships and safe, responsible use of technology both within school and beyond.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The implementation and impact of this strategy will be monitored regularly to ensure that

technology use remains safe, purposeful, balanced and aligned with the needs of pupils within the primary SEMH provision.

Senior leaders will review:

- the effectiveness of technology in supporting learning outcomes
- the impact of screen use on pupil engagement and regulation
- safeguarding and online safety arrangements
- consistency of practice across classrooms
- staff confidence and training needs
- pupil wellbeing and participation
- parent and carer feedback where appropriate.

The school will also monitor:

- the balance between screen-based and practical learning opportunities
- the use of technology to support accessibility and inclusion
- online safety incidents or concerns
- developments in national guidance and best practice

This strategy will be reviewed annually by school leaders and governors, or earlier where significant changes in guidance, safeguarding requirements or school needs arise.

The review process will ensure that the school continues to provide a balanced and developmentally appropriate approach to technology that reflects the school's values, safeguarding responsibilities and commitment to effective SEMH practice.

Conclusion

At Vermont School, technology is viewed as one tool within a wider therapeutic, relational and child-centred approach to education. The school recognises the importance of preparing pupils for life in a digital world while also protecting opportunities for communication, play, creativity, movement, sensory development and meaningful human interaction.

This strategy reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that technology use is:

- purposeful
- balanced
- safe
- developmentally appropriate
- inclusive
- supportive of positive emotional wellbeing

By maintaining a calm, relational and low-screen environment, Vermont School aims to support pupils to develop confidence, resilience, independence and healthy approaches to technology that will benefit them both within school and beyond.

