

HERMMES: COMMUNITY AND CULTURE (C&C) GUIDE

Whilst the HERMMES curriculum gives guidance on children and young people learning within the educational setting (kindergarten, schools), the Community and Culture guide supports teachers and parents/caregivers to make changes to (digital) media across many aspects of the wider community, supporting children's well-being more broadly.

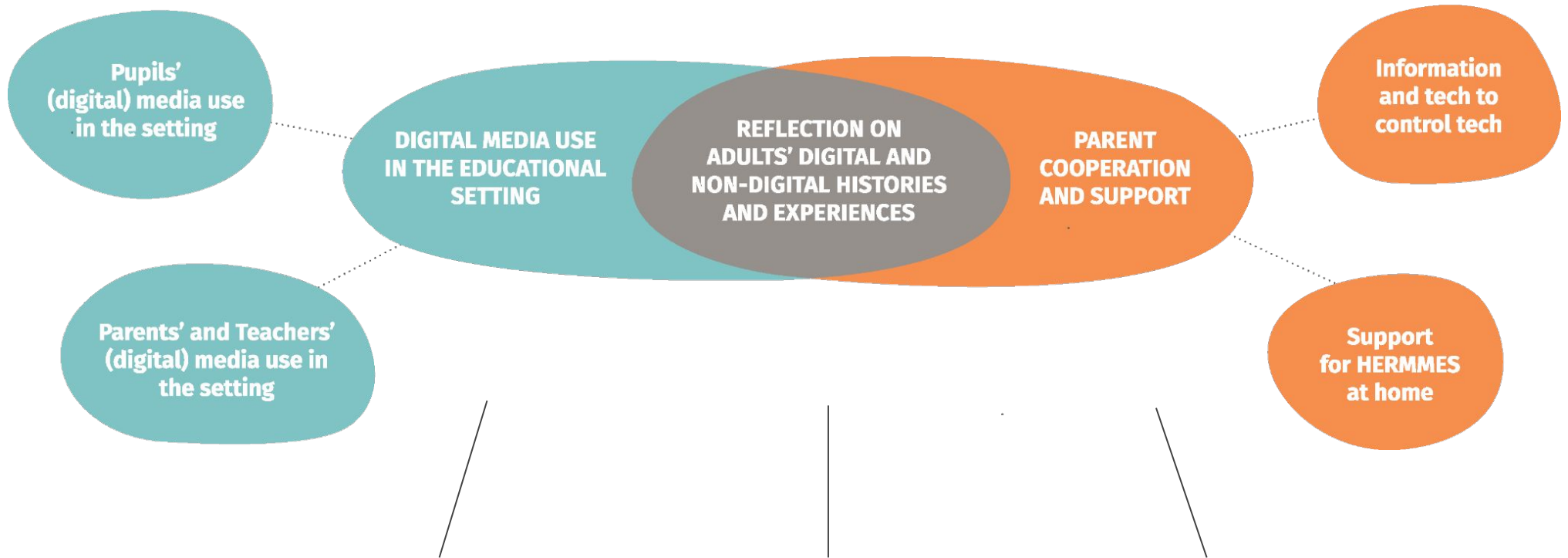


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THE STRUCTURE



Support for managing and regulating (digital) media use in the educational setting

For all adults working with children, there are empowering questions and resources, which include reflecting on adult digital distraction in the presence of children.

For parents and caregivers directly, but also for teachers wanting to get involved more in this area

EMPOWERING QUESTIONS (EQS)

The C&C guide offers questions rather than answers. Each of the above areas contains several HERMMES EQs. Each of the EQs can be used to start a discussion about the respective topic.

Many of the EQs have been pre-tested, changed, validated in an expert survey, and revised again through a PhD thesis by Denzl (2025). In the HERMMES version, they are designed to help build a culture of communication and acceptance between pedagogical teams and families within the educational settings.

You can use the HERMMES EQs:



As a topic for a parent/caregiver partnership workshop



For pedagogical staff meetings



To frame discussions around the creation of policies



Or in any other way that helps to drive change in a collaborative way

EMPOWERING QUESTIONS (EQs)

DIGITAL MEDIA USE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Pupils' (digital) media use in the setting

- How do we ensure that children and young people participate in an age-appropriate way in shaping and communicating our guidelines and regulations regarding (digital) media use in our school or kindergarten?
- Which policies, rules and contracts to regulate the PRIVATE digital device use of LEARNERS (children, young people) are appropriate for our setting?
- Do (young) children have a right to non-participation in the digital world? How do we create an offline "village" around the child?
- Are students using EdTech or is EdTech using students? What are age groups, spaces, goals, contexts, learning phases where EdTech (Educational Technology) use is more suitable - and less suitable?
- How does the school/setting regulate students' school-related digital media use for documentation and communication?
- When and how do we want to teach students about a critical, reflected use of genAI (e.g. ChatGPT)? How can we make it less attractive for students to use it (for cheating)?
- How can HERMMES CASA media policies be represented and communicated to children and young people appropriately? And how do we deal with non-compliance?

Parents' and Teachers' (digital) media use in the setting

- How do we ensure that staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders are appropriately involved in shaping guidelines and regulations regarding (digital) media use in our school or kindergarten?
- What experience and expertise is accessible within our school/setting and family communities across all media and computer education domains? How can we activate these resources without exploiting teachers' and parents' good will?
- How do we establish and implement policies, rules and contracts regarding the PRIVATE digital device use of STAFF and PARENTS/CAREGIVERS in our setting?
- How do we establish and implement policies, rules and contracts regarding the EDUCATIONAL digital device use of STAFF (both for preparing lessons and for presenting during lessons)?
- What policies and regulation are appropriate for media use by teachers and parents for (digital) documentation and (digital) communication in the context of our setting?
- How can schools/settings ensure that the topic of (digital) media remains a priority in spite of other pressing demands?
- How do we communicate our approach to media education to ensure that parents and staff (especially if new to the school/setting) are aware of it, and are brought onboard? How do we react to repeated non-compliance?

REFLECTION ON ADULTS' DIGITAL AND NON-DIGITAL HISTORIES AND EXPERIENCES

- What can we do to create a non-judgemental, open and honest communication space for parents/ caregivers and teachers/staff?
- What different motives and needs (e.g. social contact, stress management, information search,...) can we identify that drive our own adult digital media use? As a strategy to change unhealthy adult digital media use patterns, how can we support each other in finding offline/analog ways for meeting the same needs?
- Do children use (digital) media because WE need them to use them or because THEY do? What function (reward, surveillance, distraction, babysitter,...) etc. Do digital devices have in navigating the interactions between adults and children in family and school/ kindergarten life?
- Are we aware that technoference (adults' digital distraction in the presence of children) can be harmful to them? Can reflecting on motives (EQ 3.2 and EQ 3.3) and finding analog alternatives help us to minimize negative impact on children?
- Children are "copy cats". What analogue technologies (wristwatch, analog birthday calendar or bus timetable,...) would we consider using just to be healthier "role models" for children? And are we aware that we may profit from this in terms of a healthier digital balance, too?
- What were my routines of using analog and digital media during my own childhood and how was this regulated by parents/caretakers? Which parts of these memories do I value or reject in retrospect? How does this affect my attitudes and values on media education today?

PARENT COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

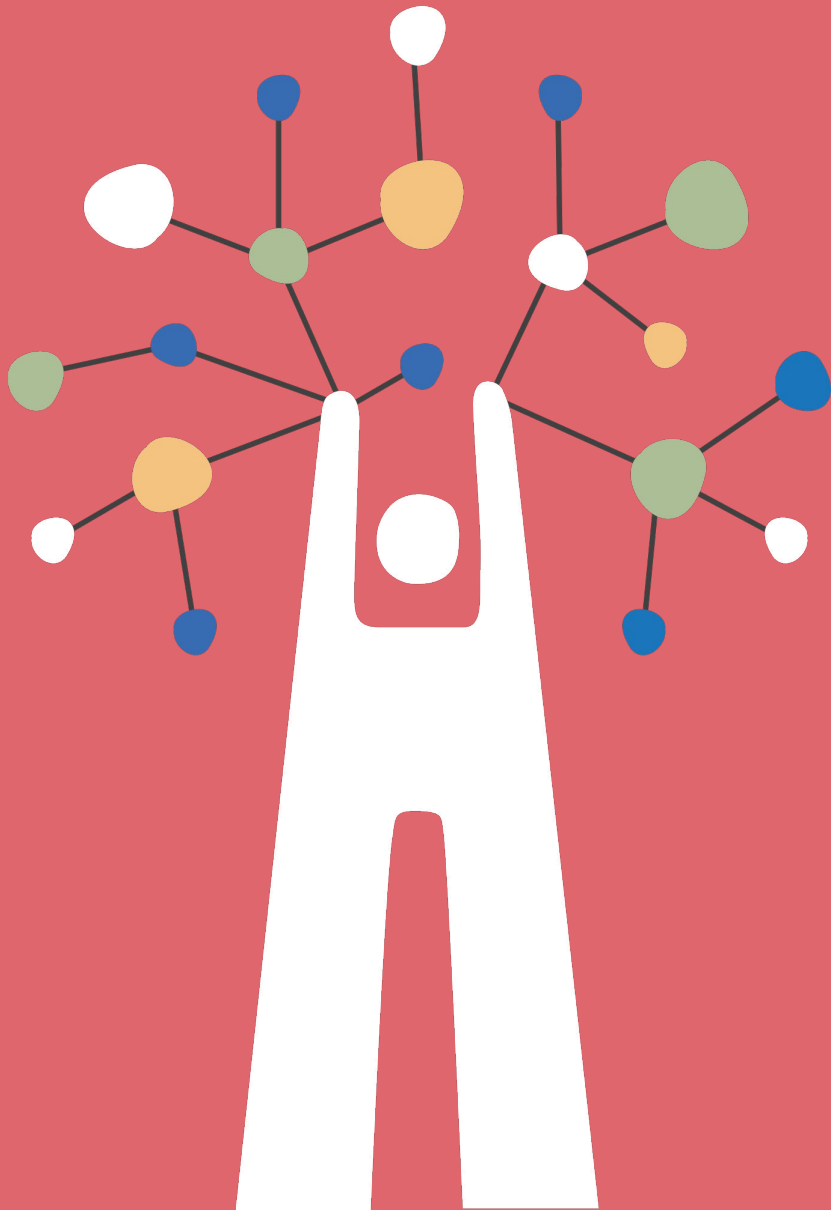
Support for HERMMES at home

- What do we know as kindergarten or school teachers about children's and young people's (private and educational) digital device use at home and their motives?
- What do we know as kindergarten or school teachers about the motives of parents/caregivers for the (digital) media use patterns in the family? How can we support parents in changing unhealthy patterns?
- What are parent/caregiver beliefs around the educational value of digital media? How can we reduce the perceived pressures for early high tech education created by marketing and advertising?
- How can parents support each other to delay children's digital device ownership and limit device use at home? How can the school support parents in this - without putting pressure on them?
- How can parents support their children to develop a healthy offline social life? How can the school support parents in this?
- How do teachers recognise the limits of their direct professional responsibilities and where do they need to call on outside agencies?

Information and tech to control tech

- How can schools and kindergartens help parents to use technology to limit technology on the level of device configuration (time limitation and filter software, router configuration) and on the level of using specific apps?
- What are the positives and limitations of tech to control tech, compared to a pedagogical approach of rules, guidance, and discussion at different ages?
- How do we ensure that parents/ caregivers and schools/settings are aware of and up to date with relevant media trends and can evaluate any associated benefits and risks (e.g. apps, games, influencers, cartoons, music, etc.)?
- How do we let parents/caregivers know about the real-life resources, services and alternatives to digital media/ entertainment that are available to them and their children?

HERMMES DOOR OPENERS AND CASA POLICIES



To help you realise the goals set out with the help of the empowering questions, you can find a number of Door Openers below that are grouped by age. They each contain a short description of an often problematic everyday situation with children. After that, there are three continuations of the story, plus a number of tips and resources related to the situation.



If you need more instructions to use the Door Openers or wish to create your own, you can consult [this document](#).



The HERMMES CASA* media policy template for schools and for kindergartens is being worked on and will be published in AUTUMN 2026. This template will go far beyond only smartphone bans.

* CASA stands for a setting that is conscious of the age-dependent balance of opportunities and risks of digital media use and puts a high priority on:

C Connection **A** Attention **S** Safety **A** Academic Success

Door Openers

0-3

3-6

6-9

9-12

12-15

15-18

1.1 Boy or girl? Send ultrasound pics pls :-)

1.2 Justin won't stop crying

1.3 "Shhh, baby! Mummy needs to work"

1.4 Nanny Juana (45) caught red-handed feeding virtual rabbits

1.5 „Put down that pen and quickly document this on video...or it will be lost!“

1.6 Ruben (15 months) refuses to eat in kindergarten

1.7 Anna (3) cries for her mum's smartphone in a restaurant

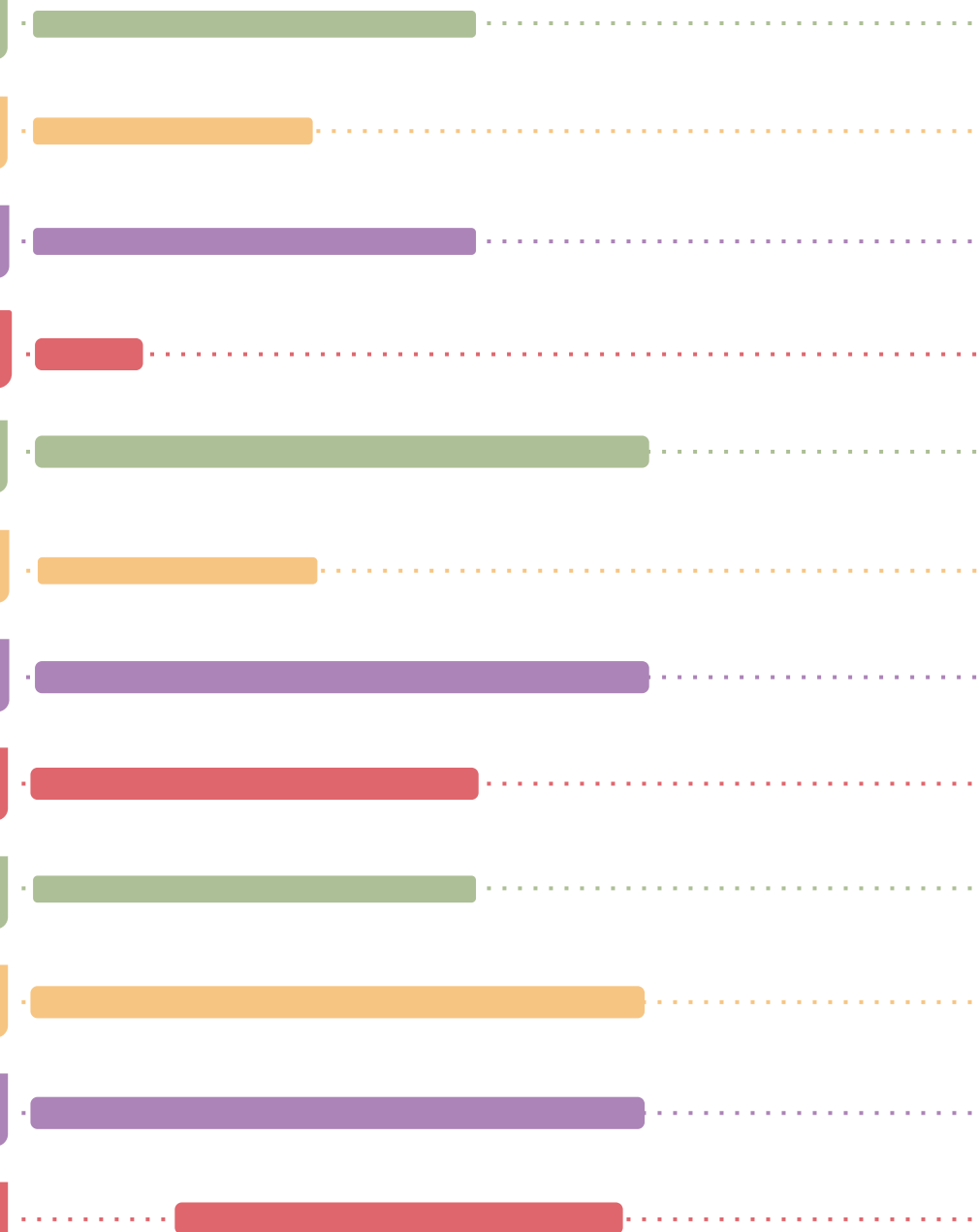
2.1 "I want to play on the tablet, too!"

2.2 "I want to go to Paw Patrol Academy, too!"

2.3 „only if we are allowed to watch a cartoon as a reward!“

DO 2.4 "I want to watch a cartoon like my older sister!"

2.5 Has Rowan been kidnapped? Tracking device alarms parents



0-3

3-6

6-9

9-12

12-15

15-18

3.1 Sally is distracted by gaming at the dentist

DO 3.2 "Yippee, I won a phone in a prize contest!"

DO 3.3 "I want a game account for my birthday"

3.4 "I tell my teacher I need to go to the restroom, but it's really because of my rabbits."

4.1 "I can't join you! I can't risk losing my streak."

4.2 Everyone else has a smartphone in my class!

4.3 "My plan for Christmas is to ask Grandma for loot box money."

4.4 "I hate being the new kid in class. I want to meet my old friends online."

4.5 "Betty, you are only 12. Tell us where and why you got those expensive low-cut shirts!"

4.6 River (12) deletes Insta to avoid all those horrid comments.

5.1 "But AI saves so much time, and I do proofread!"

5.2 Frank exchanges pictures with his virtual girlfriend

5.3 Bill (13) is watching a blue movie when Mom enters the room.

5.4 Summer's (13) mother wonders, "Ed Sheeran? Sounds more like an X-rated movie soundtrack!"

