



Early Years Computing Skills

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Introduction

Computing is not explicitly mentioned as part of the England EYFS curriculum, it is made explicit in the curricula of other countries. However, in **any** early years classroom, many topics can be explored using technology to produce creative work and solve problems. The suggested activities in the [Reception Scheme of Work](#) illustrate how this can be done.

This additional guide focuses on developing the foundations of computing skills in early years that will give children a sound basis to explore topics using technology and to be ready for progressing through the Computing curriculum.

Familiarity with some of these skills will reduce the cognitive load on children in future learning and enable them to make progress more rapidly.

We have divided the ideas in this document into skill-based themes with linked ideas that could be adapted to whatever topic you are covering in the rest of the curriculum. Some units are more suited to integrating into everyday classroom practice such as ideas about looking after devices in the Hardware unit.

'I can' statements are provided for each unit to support assessment.

Units are not presented in a required order. Units are not mandatory; they are simply provided to give a breadth of experiences to select from.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We identify SEND as a broad term which can include physical, sensory, cognitive, behaviour and learning access needs, of which some children with SEND needs may be functioning at above expected national levels.

Where appropriate, guidance has been given on how to simplify tasks or challenge those who are ready for more stretching tasks.

Consideration should be made of pupils who are using different input devices such as switches, big track devices, joysticks or alternative keyboards; the teaching will need to be adapted to the specifics of these devices.

For most pupils, activities can be differentiated by outcome and by the support and/or scaffolding children are given to meet their individual needs.

We aim to ensure that most resources are accessible for most children e.g. by using voice recording in addition to text in quiz resources and by consideration of colour palette and illustrations. Many resources can be edited by teachers and set as 2Dos to meet specific needs or overcome barriers to learning.

Many Early Years children with SENs will not yet have been identified, assessment of how they manage with activities can provide insight into where specific needs may be.

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Units

Mouse and Trackpad Skills

- This includes clicking, navigating using the movement of the mouse and dragging and dropping.
- The activities aim to support children in developing the hand-eye coordination skills and fine-motor required to operate a mouse effectively.
- A typical laptop trackpad is also introduced.

Keyboard Skills

- This includes simple typing, capital letters and function keys such as 'enter'.
- Activities are included that match lower-case and capital letters as most keyboards that children encounter will contain capital letters.
- It also includes recognising different fonts for example, an 'a' written a or α.
- Children can also combine mouse skills and typing skills using the mouse or arrow keys to control the cursor when writing.

Drawing skills

- This includes choosing pens and style and composing drawn images on screen.
- It also includes the undo function.
- The use of a tablet is suggested as well as a mouse to enable children to mark make using touch.

Robots

- Most early years classroom have access to floor robots; ideas are included for structured play with robots, starting with toy vehicles initially.
- There are also ideas that start to develop children's logical processing skills in terms of following and creating instructions and making predictions.

Sounds

- These ideas make use of recording tools within Purple Mash
- Children will also create music using the tools.

Photography

- Ideas for using photos in the classroom.
- How to upload images; a variety of devices and connections are suggested but will need to be adapted to the resources available in the school.

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Technology Around Us

- A selection of role-play ideas for including technology in play.

Hardware

- Introduces knowledge about the parts of a computer and how to look after equipment.
- Basic computer hygiene, including handwashing, being gentle and keeping food and drinks away from devices.

Safety and Privacy

- Cross-over with PSHE curriculum: many of these aspects will be covered in PSHE sessions and can be extended to lay the foundations for online safety awareness.
- Introduces the idea of ownership and privacy.
- How to recognise when you are not comfortable with something.
- The concept of a helping hand of people to get support from.
- The idea of how to say no to something
- Keeping healthy; link to screentime
- Being kind

Using Purple Mash with an Individual Login

- These ideas can be used if you wish children to access Purple Mash using individual accounts e.g. for home learning or as part of their progression in school.

Quizzes

- Children will encounter quizzes throughout Purple Mash, these ideas use simple quizzes to familiarise children with quizzing as a learning aid
- Children will use a variety of question types.
- Children will see how to find the correct answers.

Mouse and Trackpad Skills

- This includes clicking, navigating using the movement of the mouse and dragging and dropping.
- The activities aim to support children in developing the hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills required to operate a mouse effectively.
- A typical laptop touchpad is also introduced.

Tips:

- Smaller sized mice can be purchased suitable for smaller hands.
- Mice are also available with differently coloured left and right buttons.
- A small adaption is to stick a plastic sticker onto the left mouse button to help children distinguish the two buttons.
- Many children will not have definite hand preference at this age; posters include left and right-hand versions, but many left-handed children use a mouse in their right hand. Computer settings can be changed to accommodate left-handed users swapping the mouse to the left side of the keyboard.
- Touchpads are designed to be used one-handed. However, due to their hand-eye coordination and hand size, many children find it easier to use a touchpad two-handed: one hand to control the cursor position, and the other to press the buttons. This is an acceptable way to use the touchpad until greater control is developed as the child gets older.
- Touchpad control will vary by device; explore the device operation of the laptop that the children will be using.

Example Activities

Many other activities will also provide practise in the same skills using a mouse.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To know how to 'hold' a mouse.	How to Hold a Mouse Poster : Includes left and right-handed versions.	I can hold a computer mouse with my finger on the correct buttons.
To be able to move the mouse purposefully.	Move around Mini Mash to different areas to hear the names of the areas said out loud.	I can use a mouse to make the cursor move around the computer screen where I want it to go.
To be able to click the left-hand mouse button to perform an action.	Can children 'go outside and back in again' in Mini Mash? Pairs games in the Games area in Mini Mash and	I can click the correct mouse button to play games on the computer.

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	throughout Topic pins in Mini Mash. Mouse Finder Game; play to practice purposeful, quick movement and clicking. NB There is also a faster version of this game if required.	
To be able to use click and drag to move objects purposefully.	Mini Mash Jigsaws: In the Games area in Mini Mash and throughout Topic pins in Mini Mash. Simple City Activities: Activities in each area of Simple City such as designing a farm picture help children develop click and drag skills.	I can use a mouse accurately to click and drag objects on the screen.
To be able to use the scroll roller on a mouse.	Purple Mash is designed to minimise the need to scroll. One place that scrolling is enabled in in the Writing Templates in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash. Alternatively, demonstrate and practice this function when using the Internet as a class.	I can use the mouse roller to scroll up and down a page.
To know how to use a laptop touchpad	How to Use a Touchpad: Function will vary according to device; check your school devices for options available.	I can use a laptop touchpad.

Keyboard Skills

- This includes simple typing, capital letters and function keys such as 'enter'.
- Activities are included that match lower-case and capital letters as most keyboards that children encounter will contain capital letters.
- It also includes recognising different fonts for example, an 'a' written a or a.
- Children can also combine mouse skills and typing skills using the mouse or arrow keys to control the cursor when writing.

Tips:

Being able to use the keyboard is contingent upon recognising letters and could become part of classroom practice when introducing new letter shapes and sounds to children.

The first word a child is likely to want, and be able, to type is their name. name card can help with this when typing.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to find the individual letters on the keyboard.	Make matching quizzes in which children match hand drawn letters to keyboard images. Alphabet Paint Projects: Accessed in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash. Children can type the letter as well as paint. 2Publish Alphabet Writing Template: This is in Purple Mash. Use the dropdown to select upper or lowercase letters. Use the text space to practice typing the letter.	I can find all the letters of the alphabet on a keyboard.
To use the spacebar.	Children add first name and surname to paint projects with a space in between.	I can put spaces between words in my typed work.
To be able to delete using the backspace key and the DELETE key.	Teacher demonstration followed by: Use simple writing templates in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash such as Picture and Text to write and correct short sentences. Teachers	I know how to correct typed work without re-doing the work entirely using the delete keys.

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	could save incorrect sentences and set as a 2Do in Purple Mash for children to correct.	
To be able to type both uppercase and lowercase letters using CAPS LOCK and Shift.	Teacher demonstration followed by: Use simple writing templates in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash such as Picture and Text to write and correct short sentences. Adding name to work created in Mini Mash such as Paint Projects	I can type capital letters and lower case and know how to change between these.
To be able to type numbers.	Number Paint Projects: Accessed in the Numbers and Counting area of Mini Mash. Children can type the letter as well as paint. 2Publish Alphabet Writing Template: This is in Purple Mash. Use the dropdown to select a number. Use the text space to practice typing the number.	I can type numbers using a keyboard.
To be able to use the ENTER key.	Use of 2Create a Story in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash to create simple e-books. Demonstrate how to move to a new line.	I know how to move to the next line down when typing.
To be able to use the arrow keys.	Play the Arrow Keys Game; this is found in the Early Years area in Purple Mash. Use of 2Create a Story in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash to create simple e-books. Demonstrate how to move the cursor to correct typed	I can use the arrow keys to move around the screen.

	sentences using the arrow keys (non-tablet only).	
To be able to use the keyboard with all the above skills	Typing Quiz : This is found in the Early Years area of Purple Mash	I can use the different inputs of a computer keyboard.

Drawing skills

- This includes choosing pens and style and composing drawn images on screen.
- It also includes the undo function.
- The use of a tablet is suggested as well as a mouse to enable children to mark make using touch.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to select colours.	Paint Projects in Mini Mash; on the washing line or in the Drawing and Painting area.	I can select colours when painting on the computer.
To be able to mark make purposefully on the screen.	Many tools have opportunities to create purposeful illustrations: 2Paint a Picture Simple Mode (in the Drawing and Painting area). 2Create a Story (in the Reading and Writing area). Writing Templates such as Picture and Text (in the Reading and Writing area).	I can draw pictures on the computer to go with my work.
To be able to control the pencil width.	Use of the painting tools including 2Paint a Picture and Paint Projects.	I can use a computer to draw with different widths of pens.
To be able to choose tools to experiment with.	2Paint a Picture; explore different templates. Writing Templates such as Picture and Text to explore the tools in the Purple Mash Drawing Tools such as flood fill used throughout Purple Mash.	I can try the different tools that I can draw with on the computer.
To be able to use the undo button.	Most Mini Mash and Purple Mash creative activities (not quizzes) have undo buttons.	I can use the undo button correctly.
To be able to erase parts of pictures.	Use of Paint Projects and 2Paint a Picture.	I can use the erase button.

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To be able to draw using a touch screen.	All Purple Mash and Mini Mash activities can be done using a touchscreen. 2Handwrite is particularly effectively used with a touchscreen.	I can use a touchscreen device purposefully.
To be able to draw using mouse control.	See the unit about mouse control. Apply these skills to the drawing tools.	I can draw on a computer using a mouse.

Robots

- Most early years classroom have access to floor robots; ideas are included for structured play with robots, starting with toy vehicles initially.
- There are also ideas that start to develop children's logical processing skills in terms of following and creating instructions and making predictions.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to describe a route that is in progress.	While moving a toy vehicle, describe the route using words such as turn, forwards and backwards.	I can talk about where I am moving a toy vehicle whilst I am moving it.
To be able to describe a route taken by another person while it is being enacted.	Use recording equipment for one child to 'commentate' another child movements when driving a toy vehicle using words such as turn, forwards and backwards.	I can describe the route taken by a toy vehicle.
To be able to follow a route taken by another person after it has been enacted.	Use the recording from the previous learning objective to re-enact the route.	I can follow directions to make a route for a toy vehicle.
To plan routes for toy vehicles.	Record the directions in advance verbally. Use cue cards with pictorial directions to 'write' the route e.g. pictures of landmarks such as 'climbing frame', 'painting table', turn right arrow, turn left arrow, forward and backward arrows. Use custom resources such as floor maps to plan a route using matching cue cards.	I can plan a route for a toy vehicle.
To follow a plan for a toy vehicle.	Follow the plans made to 'drive' the toy vehicle.	I can follow my own plan for where the toy vehicle should move.
To use the buttons on a floor robot to make it move.	Use whichever floor robots the school has available along with supporting	I can make a floor robot move.

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	movement and button cue cards to experiment with the movements of the floor turtle in an open-ended way.	
To purposefully use the buttons on a floor robot to make it move one step at a time.	Use the routes planned for the toy vehicles or plan new routes using cue cards linked to the specific floor robot's functions using one move at a time to get from one point to another.	I can control the forwards, backwards and rotation of a floor robot one step at a time.
To be able to input a program of 2 or 3 steps into a floor robot and then run the program to make it move.	Use the program functions of a robot to input 2 or 3 steps of a journey at once in a purposeful way.	I can program a 3-step route for a floor turtle.
To be able to interpret simple instructions to predict the outcome.	Can children predict where a combination of 2 or 3 steps will lead the floor robot to. In Mini Mash, give children 2 or 3 steps to follow e.g., 'go to the outdoor area, then click on the bird in the tree.' or, 'click on the door to go inside, click on Simple City and go to the farm.'	I can predict where a floor robot will end up when given the instructions for a 2 or 3 step route.
To be able to plan and input instructions for a floor robot one step at a time.	Follow cue cards one step at a time to program the floor robot.	I can plan a route for a floor robot and then carry out these instructions one step at a time.
To be able to plan and input instructions for a floor robot more than one step at a time.	Follow cue cards more than one step at a time to program the floor robot.	I can plan a route for a floor robot and then carry out these instructions more than one step at a time.

Sounds

- These ideas make use of recording tools within Purple Mash
- Children will also create music using the tools.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To experiment in the music area of Mini Mash to combine sounds.	Encourage children to explore the pipes on the wall in the outdoor area of Mini Mash. In the Music area; experiment with the tools 2Beat and 2Explore	I can make music using a computer.
To use the built-in sound effects in Purple Mash	Use of 2Create a Story in the Reading and Writing area in Mini Mash to add sound effects to stories. Writing Template, Picture and Text has a sound button that can be used to link sound effects, children's composed and saved music from the music tools, recorded sound using a microphone, composed sound using the piano and guitar tools.	I can add sound effects to my work.
To be able to record spoken words and play these back.	Use of Mashcams in the Roleplay area of Mini Mash. Writing Template, Picture and Text has a sound button that can be used to link sound effects, children's composed and saved music from the music tools, recorded sound using a microphone, composed sound using the piano and guitar tools.	I can use a device to record myself speaking and play back the sounds.

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Photography

- Ideas for using photos in the classroom.
- How to upload images; a variety of devices and connections are suggested but will need to be adapted to the resources available in the school.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to look at photos and identify features.	Use the photo slideshows in Mini Mash (usually within topic pins). Can children relate the photos to their own experiences? Take photos from around the school and present for children to identify in real-life.	I can talk about what photos show.
To be able to take photos using a device.	Children take pictures using classroom devices. These can then be uploaded to writing project galleries by a teacher and saved in trays for children to use in their work. For example, use photos in the Writing Template Picture and Text to write or narrate a sentence about a photo.	I can take photos using a digital device.
To be able to use the webcam in Mini Mash.	Use the Mashcams in Mini Mash to add selfie images.	I can use the webcam in Mini Mash.
To be able to open photos in Purple Mash.	Photos can be uploaded (by a teacher) to writing project galleries and then saved into trays for children to use in their work. For example, use photos in the Writing Template Picture and Text to write or narrate a sentence about a photo.	I can open photos in Purple Mash.
To be able to use own photos in work on a digital device.	Children take photos of places around the school in the form of a photo 'treasure hunt'. Photos can be uploaded to a writing	I can open photos that I have taken, in Purple Mash.

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	template in Purple Mash such as a 6-frame storyboard and saved in trays for children to complete by adding the photos to each image box. These could be printed to follow to find the 'treasure'.	
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Technology Around Us

- A selection of role-play ideas for including technology in play.

Learning Objective	Suggested Resources\Activities	'I can...' statement
To know the technology used in the home.	Toy microwave, oven, hob, timer, music players, tv, cameras, clocks, magnifying mirror, scales, DIY tools, phones. Use Mashcams to talk about using technology in different home roles e.g. chef and refuse collector.	I can talk about what technology is used at home.
To be able to identify how technology is used outdoors.	Traffic lights, walkie talkies, toy petrol pump, metal detectors, torches, construction site tools, magnifying glass, binoculars, cameras. Use Mashcams to talk about using technology outdoors e.g. school crossing person, miner, construction worker, farmer, police officer and driver.	I can talk about what technology is used outdoors.
To be able to identify technology used in the wider world.	Toy shopping till, calculator, phone, barcode reader, QR codes, toy vehicles, spacecraft, doctors set. Use Mashcams to talk about technology used in different job roles.	I can talk about what technology is used in the world around me.

Hardware

- Introduces knowledge about the parts of a computer and how to look after equipment.
- Basic computer hygiene, including handwashing, being gentle and keeping food and drinks away from devices.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to take appropriate actions before using technology.	Examine and clean any dirty keyboards or touch screens: part of learning about illness prevention. Why is it sensible to have clean hands when using a keyboard, mouse or touchscreen? Use the photo prompt slideshow as a class to promote discussion.	I can understand why having clean hands is important when using shared devices.
To be able to understand why food should be kept away from devices.	Examine and clean any dirty keyboards or touch screens; part of leaning about everyday safety e.g. hot pans, plug sockets. Use the photo prompt slideshow as a class to promote discussion.	I can understand why it is not sensible to eat and drink whilst using a technological device.
To be able to identify electrical safety as important.	Look around the school at how wires and plugs are used safely or identify issues such as multiple plugs in one socket or trip hazards. Use the photo prompt slideshow as a class to promote discussion. Talk about the dangers of electric shocks from plugs and wires and how UK plug sockets and fuse boxes have protection in place.	I can understand why I need to take care with electronic devices and their plugs and wires.

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To know safe ways to transport portable devices.	Use the photo prompt slideshow as a class to promote discussion. Model and practice safe carrying of school portable devices.	I can take appropriate actions when I need to carry a device to a different location.
To be able to relate being gentle and sharing to the use of devices.	Through class discussion about being gentle, sharing and having respect for property in general. Use the photo prompt slideshow as a class to promote discussion.	I can use devices with care.
To be able to understand what technology is.	Use classroom examples (see role play ideas above). Use the What is Technology Quiz as a class to prompt thinking.	I can identify the technology used around me.
To be able to identify the main parts of a computer.	Use the Hardware Slideshow to discuss. This slideshow can be edited by teachers so that photos of the actual devices used in school can be added.	I can identify the parts of a computer and what they are for.

Safety and Privacy

- Cross-over with PSHE curriculum: many of these aspects will be covered in PSHE sessions and can be extended to lay the foundations for online safety awareness.
- Introduces the idea of ownership and privacy.
- How to recognise when you are not comfortable with something.
- The concept of a helping hand of people to get support from.
- The idea of how to say no to something.
- Keeping healthy; link to screentime.
- Being kind.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To be able to explain what it means to own digital content.	Use of personal trays within Mini Mash for saving work and discussion relating to these trays and physical tray rules in the classroom.	I can explain how my work on the computer belongs to me and other people's work belongs to them.
To be able to explain what 'private' means when using technology.	Extend PSHE discussion about privacy to use of technology. For example, if discussion talking to strangers, what would you tell them? Would you tell someone you don't know on the computer anything. What should you keep private? Use 2Quiz to create sorting activities based upon class discussion. Can children sort things into private and not private?	I can explain what it means for something to be private.
To be able to express how it feels to be uncomfortable with something.	Part of PSHE activities that start to form the foundations of online safety. How do you feel in your body when you are not comfortable with something? – Relate to heart beating faster, feeling in your tummy, feeling upset or worried, shaky hands.	I can talk about how my body feels when I am not comfortable with something.

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	This is your body giving you signals that you don't feel safe.	
To be able to name 5 people who can help with negative feelings.	Part of PSHE activity creating a 'helping hand' of trusted adults. Include the use of technology in the discussion; who can you go to if you see something that makes you feel uncomfortable when you are using a device?	I know who can help me when I am feeling worried.
To be able to think about how to show kindness to others.	Part of PSHE that could be related to sharing resources in the classroom including technology. Use of Mashcams for children to express their thoughts and ideas verbally.	I can show that I understand how to be kind to others.
To begin to be aware of the impact of a lot of screen time.	Use the Purple Mash file Screen Time Ideas as the basis for class talk about balancing time and choosing healthy activities.	I can choose activities in my free time that help me to be healthy.

Quizzes

- Children will encounter quizzes throughout Purple Mash, these ideas use simple quizzes to familiarise children with quizzing as a learning aid
- Children will use a variety of question types.
- Children will see how to find the correct answers.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To know what a quiz is.	As part of class discussion incorporate verbal class team quizzes with points.	I can understand what a quiz is.
To be able to participate in a multiple-choice quiz using pictures.	Use the Initial Sound quizzes in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash. Use the Counting quizzes in the Numbers and Counting area of Mini Mash. These quizzes have been set up as 'quick quiz' where correct answers are given upon pressing 'next.'	I can complete a multiple-choice quiz.
To be able to participate in a sequencing quiz using pictures.	Use the Ordering Numbers quizzes in the Numbers and Counting area of Mini Mash. These quizzes have been set up as 'quick quiz' where correct answers are given upon pressing 'next.'	I can complete a sequencing quiz.
To be able to answer quiz questions by typing.	Use the Measuring quizzes in the Numbers and Counting area of Mini Mash. These quizzes have been set up as 'quick quiz' where correct answers are given upon pressing 'next.'	I can type answers to quiz questions.
To be able to participate in a cloze quiz.	Use the Missing Sound and the phase 2 and 3 Phonics quizzes in the Reading and Writing area of Mini Mash. These quizzes require a correct answer before	I can complete a cloze quiz.

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	moving to the next question.	
To be able to participate in a matching quiz.	Use the example quiz and copy the format by using 2Quiz in Purple Mash to make quizzes related to class topics.	I can complete a matching quiz.
To be able to participate in a sorting and sequencing quiz.	Use the example quiz and copy the format by using 2Quiz in Purple Mash to make quizzes related to class topics.	I can complete a sorting and sequencing quiz.
To be able to complete a quiz with mixed questions.	Use the example quiz about the book, The Three Bears . Use 2Quiz in Purple Mash to make quizzes related to class topics. This quiz has been set up as a 'gameshow quiz' (in the settings cog) to be done by a class split into teams.	I can complete quizzes on the computer.
To be able to play a quiz game	Play 2Race in the Numbers and Counting area of Mini Mash.	I can play games that ask me questions.

Using Purple Mash with an Individual Login

- These ideas can be used if you wish children to access Purple Mash using individual accounts e.g. for home learning or as part of their progression in school.

Learning Objective	Activity Ideas	'I can...' statement
To navigate to PM login page	Use the quick login shortcut at school; see the admin settings on Purple Mash for this (drop-down arrow next to your name on the home screen). Print login cards for pupils to take home; see the admin settings on Purple Mash for this. In school show children how to input the web address or communicate this to parents. Add the web address to favourites and children practice logging on in class to their own individual account.	I can get to the Purple Mash page on my device at school and at home.
Using login shortcuts	Practice saving work to trays; when you click save having used a login shortcut, you are prompted to enter a username and password.	I can login to Purple Mash \ Mini Mash in school using the shortcut icon.
Login in picture password	Set all passwords to picture passwords; this can be done by the school admin. Print login cards.	I can login to Purple Mash and Mini Mash using my username and password.
Login in numbers	<optional; if school requires this format>.	I can login to Purple Mash a Mini Mash using my username and password.

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	Set all passwords to numbers; this can be done by the school admin.	
Login in words	<optional; if school requires this format>. Set all passwords to words; this can be done by the school admin.	I can login to Purple Mash a Mini Mash using my username and password.
My work area	In Mini Mash, this is the trays and file names are automatically generated. In Purple Mash, children have a named folder within the class that they can access by clicking on My Work; encourage saving, and opening of previously saved work in this area. Discuss naming files so they can be found e.g. don't name them all as your own name.	I can save work in my own tray\work folder when I am using Mini Mash \ Purple Mash. I can open work that I have done earlier.
2Dos	Teachers can set work for children to do using the 2Do system. Work is then easily found by children in the 2Do area. If children begin using Purple Mash rather than Mini Mash set 2Dos so familiarise children with the process of completing and handing in work.	I can find and complete 2Dos that my teacher has set for me.