



DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT USERS' POLICY

Reviewed and updated autumn 2024 | Next review autumn 2025

Legal Position

The law relating to the use of Display Screen equipment (DSE), such as desktop or laptop computers, is covered by the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002). These Regulations set down a series of minimum standards for the workstations used by DSE users. This includes seating, lighting levels and workstation layout.

Definition of User

The Guidance to the DSE Regulations defines a “user” as someone who uses a computer for “continuous spells of an hour or more at a time” on a “more or less daily” basis.

Risk Management

The school will perform a suitable and sufficient assessment of all workstations used by regular computer users. Staff are actively encouraged to try to rotate their job tasks to spend a few minutes an hour away from the computer screen. Staff who find this difficult to achieve should discuss the problem with their Head of Department. Guidance is available from the Bursar and from the Health and Safety Executive in their leaflet “Working with VDUs” which is available on their website: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf.

Eye Tests

Users of DSE will be provided with eye and eyesight tests on request, both initially and at regular intervals thereafter. The test will be paid for by the school.

The school will also pay for spectacles if special ones (for example, prescribed for the distance at which the screen is viewed) are needed and normal ones cannot be used.

Display Screen Equipment Advice

Getting Comfortable

- Adjust the chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a general guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes at the same height as the top of the VDU.
- Make sure you have enough workspace to take documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, mouse, and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help to avoid awkward neck and eye movements.

- Arrange your desk and screen to avoid glare. Adjust curtains or blinds, as necessary.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

Keying In

- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and do not over-stretch your fingers. A good keyboard technique is important.

Using a Mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach so that it can be used with your wrist straight
- Sit upright and close to the desk, so that you do not have to work with your mouse arm outstretched.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and do not grip the mouse too tightly.
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the Screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions.
- Make sure the surface of the screen is clean.
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background and vice-versa).
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and Breaks

- Do not sit in the same position for extended periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable but avoid stretching to reach things you need.
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.