

SUBJECT / ACTIVITY	COMPUTING
HAZARDS	The main hazards associated with work on VDU's include, musculoskeletal disorders, (for example, upper limb aches and pains caused by poor posture), eyestrain and fatigue and stress. There are also tripping hazards from cables and manual handling from transporting equipment around the school.
CONTROL MEASURES	

Completed by M Dale reviewed September 2023/24

GENERAL

Although much of the specific visual display units (VDU) legislation is designed to cover employees, Headteachers and Computing co-ordinators have a responsibility to make sure that Computing equipment for pupils is used correctly and safely.

- Make sure that all equipment is electrically tested and that the correct rated fuse is used.
- Place Computing equipment in close proximity to the power supply. Where trailing leads are required, re-route and secure them or use a cable cover that alleviates the dangers of tripping and wear on the cable.
- Where possible, ensure that mouse and keyboard connecting cables do not hang over the front edge of the computer workstation. Where workstations are accessible from the rear, such as in the case of computer trolleys, ensure that the trailing loops of cable are tidied in such a way as to allow easy access to equipment for maintenance but to prevent equipment being dragged.
- Use a specially designed trolley to house and transport portable computer systems wherever possible.
- Lay out the bench/trolley as neatly as possible ensuring there is sufficient space in front of keyboard.
- When computer equipment is left unattended, it must be switched off unless it is being used for a specifically designed task.
- Provide adequate space around workstations for unhindered staff and pupil movement.
- Ensure that the necessary CO₂ fire extinguishers are positioned near to any Computing equipment. Computers should not be placed close to fire exits to ensure that they do not impede emergency exits.
- Computers in classrooms should be positioned at right angles to windows to prevent glare on screens and to prevent pupils/students from facing bright light sources coming from behind the monitor screen. In computer rooms, blinds should be used to reduce glare on computer screens from windows and lights.
- Food and drink should not be placed near a machine.
- It is recommended that all users of Display Screen Equipment (computers) take their eyes off the screen and undertake other work for at least 2 minutes every 20 minutes.
- **Heat** - Almost all Computing equipment gives off heat and the build up during the day can become quite oppressive for users, nor is this build up of heat good for the equipment. Ensure adequate ventilation in the classroom situation. In computer rooms,

where there is a concentration of equipment in one area, if insufficient ventilation is provided, mechanical systems e.g. fans may be a requirement.

- **Sounds from software** can be distracting in the classroom, particularly in areas of concentrations of Computing equipment such as computer rooms. Ensure that earphones are used wherever possible. It may be necessary to provide a splitter device to allow a group of pupils/students to work with sound simultaneously.
- **Printing** - dot matrix printers make a great deal of noise when printing. Consider keeping long print jobs until break time, lunchtime or until the end of the day. When using toners, printing inks they should not be used in confined spaces and adequate ventilation should be maintained. Printer toner is a fine dust and should not come into contact with the skin or be inhaled.
- **Headphones and speakers** - need to be adjusted so that the volume is not too loud. A child's ears are more sensitive than an adult's. It is advisable to ensure that volume controls are always turned down before use by pupils. In-ear headphones are not recommended for hygiene reasons.
- **Desk height** - ensure that the working desk height is appropriate to the height/size of the user. Workstations are manufactured in various heights, ensure that particular users are considered when ordering.
- **Positioning** - users should be comfortably positioned with easy access to all equipment and should be able to adjust position in relation to the equipment as appropriate. Encourage pupils to adopt postures etc., which do not impose a strain or require awkward movements.
- **Seating** - the height of the chair to the workstation should be adjustable bearing in mind that users should be aiming for a particular posture when operating computer equipment: the lower arms should be roughly horizontal when working with knees fitting comfortably under the desk with thighs roughly horizontal.
- **Keyboard** - users should have the option to have the keyboard flat or tilted. It is important that keyboard users develop a good keyboard technique to reduce disorders such as RSI.
- **Screens** - angle and height should be adjustable to a position that avoids awkward movements. The top of the screen should be at eye level. Users should be able to control the brightness and contrast. Adjusting screen colours may also enhance user comfort.
- **Peripherals** - should not be put in hard-to-reach positions, especially if users need access to drives, switches etc.
- **Projectors** - Never stare directly into the light beam and keep your back to the light. When in the beam, do not look at the audience for more than a few seconds. Point at information using a suitable stick or pointer. Children should be supervised at all times when a projector is being used. In bright daylight it is advisable to use window blinds rather than increase the brightness of the projector. A maximum of 1500 ANSI lumens is used.
- All users should be made aware of health and safety issues, warnings should be placed close to the whiteboard.
- **Wireless Networks** - According to Becta at this present time there is no evidence to suggest that schools should not use Wi Fi equipment. This area will be updated if guidance on the health and safety implications of Wireless Networks changes.