

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Workstation Policy</b>
<b>Associated Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and Safety Policy</li></ul>

### 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1** The Northampton School for Girls Trust takes the health, safety and welfare of its staff seriously. The Trust will provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, working and learning environments, which are safe, without risks to health, and as a minimum satisfy the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation.
- 1.2** This policy is underpinned by the Northampton School for Girls Health and Safety Policy and sets out the expectations of the Trust with regards to work station assessments, including the use of display screen equipment (DSE).
- 1.3** The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002, requires an analysis of workstations for the purpose of assessing risks. In particular, the risks of musculo-skeletal discomfort, visual disturbance and mental stress.  
  
All new IT workstations, related furniture and equipment will be in compliance with the schedule to the Regulations. Any risks highlighted must be rectified as far as is reasonably practicable at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.4** A workstation assessment should be completed for any member of staff who is covered by The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations. Under the regulations a DSE user is someone who uses DSE daily, for an hour or more at a time. This could be a new employee, or a current employee who has changed the nature of their role.
- 1.5** In the case of a new job role where a new Job Description is required, an assessment should be made at the early stages of creating a Job Description as to whether the post holder would be considered a DSE user. If the postholder is considered to be a DSE user then reference should be made to this in the Job Description.

### 2 Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1** This applies to all staff across the Trust who is a considered a DSE user. A DSE user is someone who uses DSE daily, for an hour or more at a time.
- 2.2** Students, for the purposes of the regulations, are deemed as “members of the public” and as such IT equipment used by them is exempt from the requirement for assessments. There is also no need for the individuals concerned to be assessed to determine their “user status.”
- 2.3** The Trust though, has a duty of care with regards to its students and therefore those managers responsible for the provision of IT for their use should ensure that reasonable steps are taken to provide workstations that comply, where appropriate, with the provision details for a compliant workstation in the schedule. Students should also be advised, where appropriate as part of their introduction, to the correct use of a workstation, on health and safety aspects, such as posture, excessive usage and workstation layout etc.

## 3 Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

**3.1.** The Health and Safety policy details how the Trust is organised for the management of health and safety by the establishment of responsibilities and relationships which are designed to promote a positive health and safety culture. It will thus ensure that all within the organisation are committed to the continued development of the safety management system and thereby the health, safety and well-being of all staff at the school.

**3.2.** The below sets out the responsibilities with regards to the management of work station assessments for individuals.

### **3.3. The Northampton School for Girls Trust**

**3.3.1.** The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with legal standards and for monitoring progress on the implementation of this policy.

### **3.4. Headteacher**

**3.4.1.** The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that Line Managers carry out work station assessments with new starters, or colleagues who have changed the location they work in or the Display Screen Equipment they use.

### **3.5. Line Managers**

**3.5.1.** Line Managers are responsible for identifying any employees who require a workstation assessment and use DSE as part of their role, as set out in section 1.4 above.

**3.5.2.** Line Managers are responsible for supporting employees in completing the DSE self-assessment, and where required organising the completion a further risk-assessment by a relevant trained individual by liaising with the Health and Safety Manager. This should involve a suitable and sufficient analysis of the workstation.

**3.5.3.** Where health and safety issues have been highlighted in the DSE Assessment, managers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate and reasonable action is taken to reduce any identified risks. This may include liaising with the Headteacher, HR Manager or Health and Safety Manager to identify if an Occupational Health Assessment is required, liaising with IT to ensure all DSE equipment is functioning correctly, or if an eye test and DSE use glasses are needed.

### **3.6. Health and Safety Manager**

**3.6.1.** The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for the regular review and updating of this policy.

**3.6.2.** The Health and Safety Manager is responsible for maintaining records of DSE self-assessments and risk assessments.

**3.6.3.** The Health and Safety Manger is responsible for arranging the allocation of any relevant courses.

**3.6.4.** The HR Manager is responsible for arranging Occupational Health referrals where necessary.

### **3.7. Employees**

- 3.7.1.** Employees are responsible for completing the DSE self-assessment in Appendix A with their Line Manager, informing them if anything is wrong with the equipment and letting them know about any discomfort.
- 3.7.2.** Employees should comply with safe systems of work, e.g. taking regular screen breaks by changing their activity, such as doing some filing, using their telephone, or carrying out relevant work away from their screen. Section 5 below provides further guidance on rest breaks.

### 4 Workstation Assessments

- 4.1.** Line Managers are responsible for ensuring a suitable and sufficient assessment of each workstation is carried out by all their staff, taking into account all aspects of the working environment. Workstation assessments should take place as part of an employee's induction as soon as practically possible.
- 4.2.** Line Managers will support employees who use DSE as part of their work, to complete the DSE self-assessment form at Appendix A. Where an employee 'hot desks', or changes desks regularly, they should carry out a basic assessment using the same form.
- 4.3.** Relevant employees should review their self-assessment annually, or when there are significant changes to their workstation. Workstation DSE assessments should be repeated / reviewed where there is:
- A major change to the software used
  - A major change to the DSE or furniture
  - A change in workstation location
  - A substantial increase in the amount of time required to be spent using DSE
  - Modification to the lighting
  - If requested by the user
- 4.4.** Once completed by the employee it should be returned to the Line Manager who will review and make any reasonable and necessary adjustments. If required, further additional support will be sought from the Health and Safety Manager and HR Manager, who will liaise with relevant parties such as Occupational Health.
- 4.5.** If potential risks are identified upon completion of Appendix A, a further risk assessment may be required, where obvious solutions cannot be put in place. This should be completed by a relevant trained person and should be organised by liaising with the Health and Safety Manager and/or HR Manager.
- 4.6.** Further advice about safe use of DSE can be found in the Employee Factsheet on DSE in Appendix C.

5	Rest Breaks
	<p><b>5.1</b> When using DSE regularly, rest breaks should be taken to prevent the onset of fatigue. There is no prescribed frequency or duration of breaks from DSE work, but the amount should be reasonable.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> General guidance on rest breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breaks or changes of activity should be included in working time – they should reduce the workload at the screen.</li><li>• Short, frequent breaks of routine are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks: e.g. a 5–10-minute break after 50–60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be more beneficial than 15-minute break every 2 hours.</li><li>• If possible, work routine and rest breaks should be taken away from the screen.</li></ul> <p><b>5.3</b> The work break in the context of DSE means a break in the DSE work routine, not a break in work altogether.</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Any employee who believes that their DSE workload does not permit adequate breaks should bring this to the attention of their Line Manager.</p>

6	VDU Glasses and Eyesight Tests
	<p><b>6.1.</b> Employees if they are deemed a user at greater risk with regard to their use of DSE as it is a significant part of their normal day-to-day work, are entitled to an appropriate eye sight test at the commencement of their employment with the school and at appropriate times thereafter.</p> <p><b>6.2.</b> Employees deemed at greater risk with regard to their use of DSE as it is a significant part of their normal day to day work can apply to the school for a reimbursement of eye test costs. The employee should arrange their own eye test and present the receipt and proof of the test to the School Business Manager for consideration of reimbursement of the eye test cost.</p>

7	i-Pads, Tablets and Smartphones
	<p><b>7.1.</b> The use of these types of equipment is becoming increasingly prevalent. These appliances are designed only for work of a short duration, and should not be used in preference to a desk-top computer set up.</p> <p><b>7.2.</b> Smartphones do not need a DSE self-assessment unless used for prolonged periods at work. They are of a small design which can place strain on the thumbs if used frequently for prolonged periods of time. Users should follow these basic rules to minimise the risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't use for extended periods of time</li><li>• Don't use when a fixed computer workstation or landline phone is available</li><li>• Don't use when driving</li><li>• Keep messages as short as possible</li></ul>

<b>8</b>	<b>Working from home</b>
	<p><b>8.1.</b> Working from home places the same health and safety responsibilities on you as working within your school. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and report any health and safety concerns to your line manager.</p> <p><b>8.2.</b> We would ask you to ensure you have undertaken a brief, sensible and pragmatic review of any health and safety risks you face whilst working from home (see Appendix A for a risk assessment template).</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Record Keeping</b>
	<p><b>9.</b> Records of all risk assessments, action plans and reviews should be kept on file, and replaced where new documentation is completed. Self-assessments must be shared with the Health and Safety Manager for filing.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Policy Review</b>
	<p><b>10.</b> Records of all risk assessments, action plans and reviews should be kept on file, and replaced where new documentation is completed.</p>

## **DSE Self-Assessment Form**

Employee:		Completed on date:	
Line Manager:		Further Risk Assessment Needed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### **How to complete the self-assessment form**


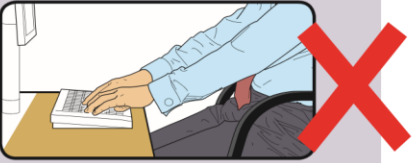
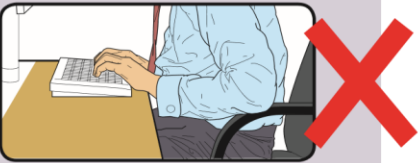

The questions and 'things to consider' in the below checklist cover the requirements of the Schedule to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.

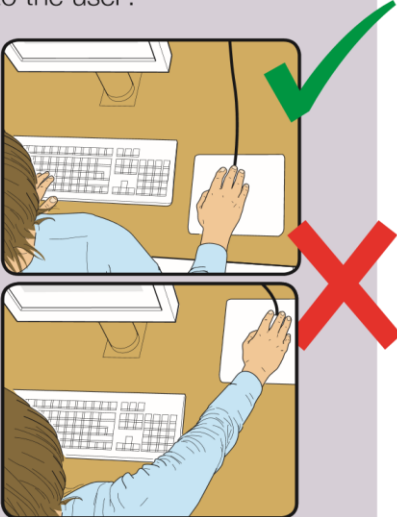
Work through the checklist, ticking either the 'Yes' or 'No' column against each risk factor:

- 'Yes' answers require no further action.
- 'No' answer will require investigation and/or action by your Line Manager or workplace assessor.

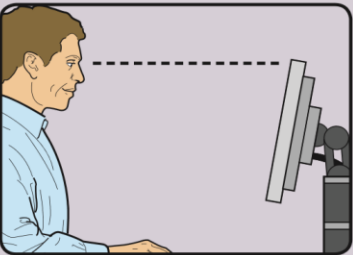
The workplace assessor will record any decisions in the 'Action to take' column. Assessors should check later that actions have been taken and have resolved the problem.


For more advice on these see Working with display screen equipment (DSE): A brief guide.



Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<b>1 Keyboards</b>				
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?			This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (eg where there is a need to use a portable).	
Does the keyboard tilt?			Tilt need not be built in	
<p>Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?</p>    			<p>Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists.</p> <p>Users of thick, raised keyboards may need a wrist rest.</p>	
Does the user have good keyboard technique?			<p>Training can be used to prevent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ hands bent up at the wrist;</li> <li>■ hitting the keys too hard;</li> <li>■ overstretching the fingers.</li> </ul>	
Are the characters clear and readable?			<p>Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read, the keyboard may need modifying or replacing.</p> <p>Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.</p>	

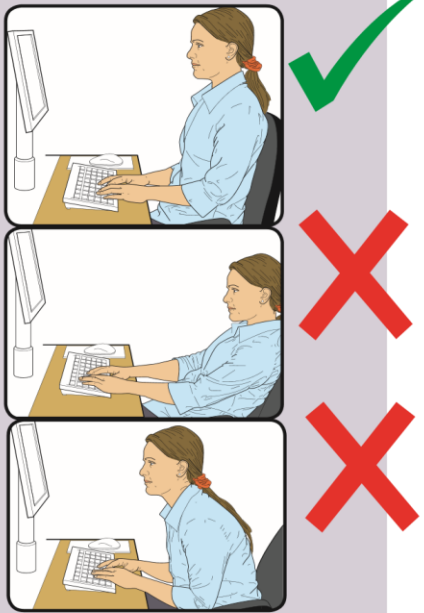
Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<b>2 Mouse, trackball etc</b>				
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?			If the user is having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general-purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Alternative devices such as touch screens may be better for some tasks (but can be worse for others).	
Is the device positioned close to the user? 			Most devices are best placed as close as possible, eg right beside the keyboard.  Training may be needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ prevent arm overreaching;</li> <li>■ encourage users not to leave their hand on the device when it is not being used;</li> <li>■ encourage a relaxed arm and straight wrist.</li> </ul>	
Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?			Support can be gained from, for example, the desk surface or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help.  The user should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device.	
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?			See if cleaning is required (eg of mouse ball and rollers).  Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.	
Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?			Users may need training in how to adjust device settings.	



Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<b>3 Display screens</b>				
<p>Are the characters clear and readable?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Health and safety</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #FF0080; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Health and safety</b></p> </div>			<p>Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are available.</p> <p>Check that the text and background colours work well together.</p>	
<p>Is the text size comfortable to read?</p>			<p>Software settings may need adjusting to change text size.</p>	
<p>Is the image stable, ie free of flicker and jitter?</p>			<p>Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker, eg darker background and lighter text.</p> <p>If there are still problems, get the set-up checked, eg by the equipment supplier.</p>	
<p>Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?</p>			<p>For example, intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to small details may require large display screens.</p>	
<p>Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?</p>			<p>Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times.</p>	
<p>Does the screen swivel and tilt?</p> 			<p>Swivel and tilt need not be built in; you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism.</p> <p>However, you may need to replace the screen if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory;</li> <li>■ work is intensive; and/or</li> <li>■ the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position.</li> </ul>	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<p>Is the screen free from glare and reflections?</p> 			<p>Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from.</p> <p>You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of the reflections.</p> <p>Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections.</p>	
<p>Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?</p>			<p>Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones.</p> <p>If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.</p>	
<p><b>4 Software</b></p>				
<p>Is the software suitable for the task?</p>			<p>Software should help the user carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly.</p> <p>Check users have had appropriate training in using the software.</p> <p>Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.</p>	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<b>5 Furniture</b>				
<p>Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc?</p>  			<p>Create more room by moving printers, reference materials etc elsewhere.</p> <p>If necessary, consider providing new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved.</p> <p>There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.</p>	
<p>Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?</p>			<p>Rearrange equipment, papers etc to bring frequently used things within easy reach.</p> <p>A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements.</p>	
<p>Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?</p>			<p>Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.</p>	
<p>Is the chair suitable?</p> <p>Is the chair stable?</p> <p>Does the chair have a working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ seat back height and tilt adjustment?</li> <li>■ seat height adjustment?</li> <li>■ castors or glides?</li> </ul>			<p>The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.</p>	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<p>Is the chair adjusted correctly?</p> 			<p>The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably.</p> <p>Consider training the user in how to adopt suitable postures while working.</p> <p>The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably.</p> <p>Move any obstructions from under the desk.</p>	
<p>Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?</p>			<p>The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.</p>	
<p>Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the DSE?</p>			<p>Adjust the chair height to get the user's arms in the right position, and then adjust the DSE height, if necessary.</p>	
<p>Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?</p>			<p>If not, a footrest may be needed.</p>	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
<b>6 Environment</b>				
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?			<p>Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget.</p> <p>Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions.</p> <p>Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard.</p>	
Is the lighting suitable, eg not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?			<p>Users should be able to control light levels, eg by adjusting window blinds or light switches.</p> <p>Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting, eg desk lamps (but make sure lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).</p>	
Does the air feel comfortable?			<p>DSE and other equipment may dry the air.</p> <p>Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help.</p> <p>Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.</p>	
Are levels of heat comfortable?			<p>Can heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can users be moved away from the heat source?</p>	
Are levels of noise comfortable?			<p>Consider moving sources of noise, eg printers, away from the user. If not, consider soundproofing.</p>	

### 7. Final questions to users...

- Has the checklist covered all the problems they may have working with their DSE?
- Have they experienced any discomfort or other symptoms which they attribute to working with their DSE?
- Has the user been advised of their entitlement to eye and eyesight testing?
- Does the user take regular breaks working away from DSE?

Write down the details of any problems here:

Employee request for VDU eye test

**PART A: To be completed by employee**

Name:

Department:

**PART B: Declaration**

By requesting a VDU eye test reimbursement, I confirm that I am considered a DSE user. A DSE user is someone who uses DSE daily, for an hour or more at a time.

Signature:

Date:

**PART C: Line Manager Authorisation**

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Health and Safety Manager  
Signature:

Date:

Confirmation from Finance

Date:

### Employee Factsheet on Display Screen Equipment

#### Working safely with your computer equipment

##### Work pattern

- Rotate work activities where possible. Try to spend around five minutes in each hour carrying out work activities away from the computer.
- Take regular screen breaks.

##### Your desk and equipment layout

- Remove anything from under your desk that causes you to twist when sitting.
- Arrange pieces of equipment that you use frequently, e.g. the telephone, so that you do not stretch to reach them.
- Use a document holder if you frequently refer to paper documents at the same time as working on your screen, e.g. when entering data.
- Do not cradle the telephone receiver between your neck and shoulder. Ask for a telephone headset if you spend long periods on the phone while working on your screen.

##### Your chair

- Adjust the seat height so that you can work in comfort. Your elbows should be at, or just above, desk height with your shoulders relaxed.
- When you are sitting at the correct height in relation to your desk, sit close to your desk with your feet flat on the floor (or on a footrest if your feet do not comfortably reach the floor when you are sitting at the correct height in relation to your desk).
- Adjust your chair's backrest height so that it supports the small of your back.
- Adjust the chair's backrest angle so that you are sitting fairly upright.
- If possible, adjust seat depth to give a five centimetre gap between the seat edge and the back of your knee.
- Do not sit in the same position for long periods. Change your posture as often as you can.
- Adjust or remove chair armrests so that you can sit close to your desk.



### Seated Position for DSE Use

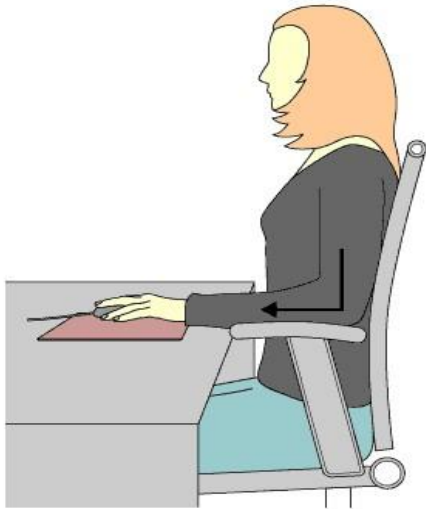


### Your monitor

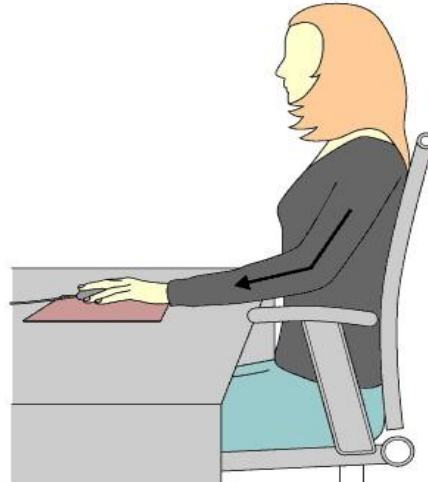
- Face your monitor directly, i.e. square-on, with the screen approximately arm's length away.
- Adjust the height of your screen so that the top of your monitor is approximately level with your eyes, achieving a slightly downward viewing angle.
- Your screen should be tilted so that it is perpendicular to your line of sight.
- If you can see reflections on your screen, close any blinds and reposition the screen to avoid glare from overhead lights. If glare is from a window, position the screen at a right angle to the light source.

## Your mouse and keyboard

### Correct Arm Position for DSE Use

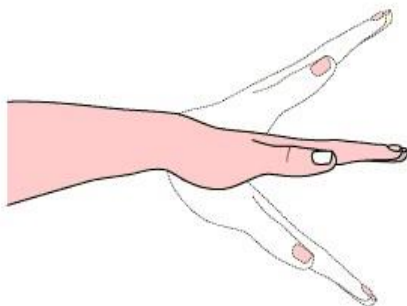


### Incorrect Arm Position for DSE Use

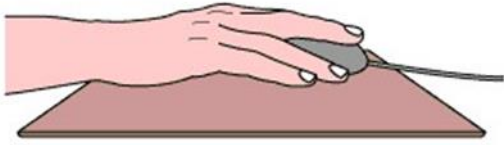


- Position your keyboard directly in front of you. Leave a little space in front of the keyboard so you can rest your arms between periods of keying.
- Position your mouse close to your body so that you can use it without stretching.
- Sit close to your desk when typing or using the mouse. Your upper arms should be approximately vertical and your forearms approximately horizontal, with an elbow angle of around 90°.
- Maintain a neutral (straight) wrist posture when keying and using the mouse to avoid straining tendons and damaging nerves.
- Avoid putting pressure on the underside of the wrist, e.g. from desk edges or hard wrist rests. If a wrist rest is required, soft foam or gel-filled wrist rests and mouse pads can help to minimise pressure and maintain a neutral wrist posture.
- When using the mouse, hold it lightly — do not grip it hard. Remove your hand from time to time and change hands periodically if you are able to work with either hand.
- Alternate between keyboard and mouse use as much as possible when working. Use keyboard shortcuts to break up long periods of mouse use.

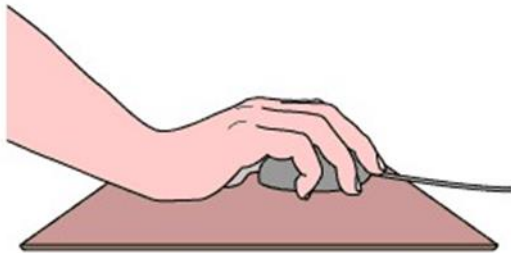
### Wrist Position for DSE Use



### Correct Mouse Position for DSE Use



### Incorrect Mouse Position for DSE Use



### Lighting and vision

- Adjust blinds to avoid reflections and glare.
- Adjust screen brightness and contrast to a comfortable level.
- Take regular screen breaks to avoid eye strain. Focus on distant objects. Conscious blinking helps if eyes become dry.
- Use a desk lamp if needed.
- Have regular eye tests. The cost of eye tests for visual display unit work may be recoverable on application to the organisation.