

Safe and Ergonomic use of Mobile Devices

(adapted from the Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development resource: 'Netbook and iPad Safe Usage Guidelines for Teachers and Parents')

Portable devices, such as Laptops and iPads, are designed to be used in a wide variety of situations and environments. Due to their portability, there are a number of things you can do to use Laptops and iPads safely and effectively. In doing so the learning environment, health and outcomes for students will be improved.

The aim of this document is to provide a resource for teachers and families when supervising students using mobile technologies.

This information aims to provide guidance on the safe usage in the following settings: General Usage, Classroom, Home and Out-of-Class. With guidance and reminders from significant adults, young people will be better able to self monitor their posture as they mature.

General Usage

Rest Breaks

It is generally recommended that rest breaks are taken for at least 5 minutes for every 30 minutes of use.

Posture

Promoting and encouraging suitable posture during use is a key factor in preventing injury and promoting a healthy learning environment. It is important to ensure students maintain good posture, with a particular focus on their:

- > Back
- > Neck and Shoulders
- > Arms and Forearms and
- > Wrists and Hands.

Awkward Postures

Sustained (30-60 minutes) or **extended** (+1 hour) use while adopting awkward postures is generally not recommended. Awkward postures may include:

- > Sitting on the bed
- > Kneeling
- > Side lying
- > Resting Netbook or iPad on hand / arm
- > Sitting cross legged
- > Lying on back
- > Slouching whilst seated
- > Sitting on floor with device on a desk or chair

Eyestrain/Vision

When using a device it is important to be conscious of blinking frequently to refresh your eyes, it is recommended to blink as often as every 15 seconds to ensure your eyes stay lubricated. It is always important to maintain a safe working distance from the screen (a minimum of 60cm) and ensure you are in a well lighted area with minimal glare, this is why using a mobile device in bed is not encouraged.

Stretches/Exercises

Regular breaks should be combined with some approved stretches and exercises. (e.g. standing tall and reaching stands into the air, while engaging core/stomach muscles).

Eye exercises and visual rest should be used to assist in preventing eye strain (e.g. look at an object 10 metres away for 20 seconds).

Noise/Hearing

There may be an issue when listening to music or other media, particularly for long periods of time at a high volume, usually when using earphones. This should be monitored and kept to a minimum.



Classroom / Home Study Guide

Avoid sustained or extended usage while adopting awkward postures.

Where extended usage is to be undertaken, a suitable desk and chair is recommended.

Hazards	Ergonomics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Regularly change between use of device, paper and teacher-based activities where possible. > Regularly change between typing-based and browsing tasks where possible. > Where device usage exceeds 30 minutes of continual work encourage short rest breaks (5 minutes for every 30 minutes) including stretching and exercises.
	Lighting/Glare and Optical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Always work within a well lit space and/or provide additional lighting as needed. > Enlarge the print or change the contrast or brightness for better viewing. > Maintain a comfortable viewing distance from the device screen – approximately 450-700mm. > Tilt the screen of the device so that it is at a 90 degree angle to the users line of sight. > Arrange work areas so that reflections and sun glare do not cause a visual disturbance. Use blinds where available.
	Electrical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure that cables are managed appropriately and a sufficient number of power outlets have been provided. > Ensure that electrical safety tags are up to date.
	Slips, trips & falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure that cables do not cause a trip hazard. Wall mount or use cable covers where appropriate.
	Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensure that the laptop/iPad is appropriately stored when moving. > It is encouraged that a bag/carry-case is used at all times.

