Victoria | State Government | Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Netbook and iPad Safe Usage Guidelines for Teachers and Parents

Introduction:

As with all computers of a portable nature, Netbooks 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 Netbooks and iPads safely and effectively. In doing so, you will be improving the learning environment and outcomes for students.

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide a resource for teachers and parents supervising students using Netbooks and iPads. This information aims to provide guidance on the safe use of Netbooks and iPads in a number of different settings.

General Guidance:

Duration of Usage:	There are no defined time limits with regards to portable computer usage. For the purposes of this guideline however: ▪ **Sustained** usage may be continuous work periods of 30-60 minutes; and ▪ **Extended** usage may be continuous work periods of >1hour.
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 or Extended** use while adopting awkward postures is generally not recommended. For the purposes of this document, awkward postures may include: ▪ Sitting on the bed; ▪ Sitting cross legged; ▪ Standing, sitting and leaning against a wall with Netbook or iPad on flexed knees; ▪ Kneeling; ▪ Lying on back; ▪ Side lying; ▪ Slouching whilst seated; ▪ Resting Netbook or iPad on hand / arm; and ▪ Sitting on floor with Netbook or iPad on a desk or chair.
Rest breaks	It is generally recommended that rest breaks are taken for at least 5 minutes for every 30 minutes of use.
Stretches/ exercises	Regular breaks should be combined with some approved stretches and exercises. 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	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.

Environment Specific Guide:

Classroom		
General	Avoid **Sustained or Extended** usage while adopting awkward postures. Where **Extended** usage is to be undertaken, a suitable desk and chair setup (as pictured above) should be provided.	
Hazards	**Ergonomics**	- Regularly rotate between Netbook/iPad, paper and teacher-based activities where possible. - Regularly rotate between typing-based and browsing tasks where possible. - Where Netbook/iPad usage exceeds 30 minutes of continual work encourage short rest breaks (5 minutes for every 30 minutes) including stretching and exercises.
	Lighting/ Glare	- Provide sufficient lighting. - Enlarge the print or change the contrast or brightness for better viewing. - Maintain a comfortable viewing distance from the Netbook/ iPad screen – approximately 450-700mm. - Tilt the screen of the Netbook/iPad 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	- Ensure that cables are managed appropriately and a sufficient number of power outlets have been provided. - Ensure that electrical safety tags are current.
	Slips, trips and falls	Ensure that cables do not cause a trip hazard. Wall mount or use cable covers where appropriate.
Home		
General	Avoid **Sustained or Extended** usage while adopting awkward postures. Where **Extended** usage is to be undertaken, a suitable desk and chair setup (as pictured above) should be provided.	
Hazards	**Ergonomics**	- Regularly rotate between Netbook/iPad and paper-based activities where possible. - Regularly rotate between typing-based and browsing tasks where possible. - Where Netbook/iPad usage exceeds 30 minutes of continual work encourage short rest breaks (5 minutes for every 30 minutes) including stretching and exercises.
	Lighting/ Glare	- Work where lighting is most sufficient, or provide additional lighting - Position work area so that glare does not cause a visual disturbance *(e.g. use blinds to eliminate sun glare).* - Enlarge the print or change the contrast or brightness for better viewing. - Maintain a comfortable viewing distance from the Netbook/ iPad screen – approximately 450-700mm. - Tilt the screen of the laptop so that it is at a 90 degree angle to the users line of sight.
	Electrical	- Ensure that cables and power outlets are managed appropriately - Ensure that Netbook/iPad is turned off when not in use and appropriately stored overnight
Out-of-class, Free time or Excursion (Includes transit)		

General	Avoid **Sustained or Extended** use while adopting awkward postures. **Extended** usage whilst mobile is generally not recommended.	
Hazards	**Ergonomics**	- Ensure that the Netbook/iPad is appropriately stored for carriage - Ensure that the designated bag/carry-case is used at all times
	Electrical	Ensure that only permitted power outlets are used
	Slips, trips and falls	Ensure that cables do not cause a trip hazard