



# Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

## Contents

1.	What is the purpose of these guidelines? .....	2
2.	Will I be required to work remotely? What if my duties can't be performed remotely? ...	2
3.	Who is allowed to attend the School? .....	3
4.	What should I do if I feel unwell or am in a high-risk health group? .....	4
5.	What are my obligations when working from home? .....	4
6.	How do I prepare for working remotely? .....	4
7.	How can I ensure that I am performing work safely when working remotely? .....	5
8.	Am I entitled to a laptop and reimbursement of internet and phone charges? .....	6
9.	What are my obligations with respect to security? .....	6
10.	How do I report safety incidents / accidents? .....	6
11.	How will the School support my wellbeing and provide me with support? .....	6
12.	Appendix 1 .....	8
13.	Appendix 2 .....	12
14.	Appendix 3 .....	15
15.	Appendix 4 .....	16



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy**

### **Response to COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines**

#### **1. What is the purpose of these guidelines?**

- 1.1 These guidelines are issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 Guidelines should be read in conjunction with: remote learning protocols, child safe standards, and all workplace policies.
- 1.3 These guidelines apply to all permanent and fixed-term employees including Principals, Deputy Principals, Teachers, Education Support Employees and School Services Officers.
- 1.4 The School will be moving to remote learning and working, with the core business of the School to be delivered by staff working offsite. This decision has been made in response to COVID-19, to protect the health and safety of our staff and School community. While we do not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19 within our School community, it is important that we are diligent and that we follow the government's advice.
- 1.5 As a consequence of our move to remote teaching, until further notice only a limited number of employees and contractors will be permitted to continue working on the School's premises. Any work to be conducted on School premises must be approved by the Principal, and subject to any mandated government requirements.
- 1.6 These guidelines set out which of our staff will be required to work remotely, the steps which must be taken by those employees who will be working remotely (including providing guidance on ensuring that the remote workspace is safe and without risks to health and safety, as far as reasonably practicable), and the principles which must be followed for any employees who will be continuing to work onsite.
- 1.7 As you will appreciate, the situation is rapidly evolving and we must continue to follow the government advice. The Principal will be in contact if there are any changes to these guidelines as a result of further advice received from the government.

#### **2. Will I be required to work remotely? What if my duties can't be performed remotely?**

- 2.1 As indicated above, the School will be moving to delivery of remote learning, with the core business of the School to be delivered offsite. This means that most of our School will be working remotely, with a limited number of staff continuing to work on the School's premises unless and until the government issues a direction requiring the School to be closed and/or it becomes unsafe for staff to continue working onsite.
- 2.2 For most of our staff, it will be possible to perform their duties remotely. However, there is a limited number of staff who will be unable to do so. If this is the case for you, please speak with the Principal directly about the nature and extent of the duties to be performed onsite, where current government advice permits. Where work is to be performed onsite, the following principles will apply:
  - (a) where possible, a rotating roster will be arranged to minimise the number of staff onsite at any given time and therefore minimise social interaction, reducing the risk and the spread of infection;
  - (b) working onsite will only be permitted in circumstances where there is appropriate supervision and security in order to ensure the health and safety of the limited number of employees onsite;



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

- (c) all attendances onsite must be approved by the Principal in advance, to ensure compliance with the above requirements; and
- (d) anyone attending School premises to perform work must comply with social distancing requirements (see further information below).

2.3 Whether you will be required to work remotely depends on the nature of your role at the School. Set out below are the expectations which apply, based on your role

Role	Expectations
Deputy Principals, Teachers and Education Support Employees performing student support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is anticipated that all of the School's teaching staff (including Education Support Employees engaged in student support) will be able to work remotely during this time, subject to some adjustments to the duties being performed.</li> <li>You will receive separate communication about the nature of the duties which you will be required to perform while working from home, including planning and delivery of teaching via online methods.</li> <li>You will be required to use your School-issued laptop when working from home and must comply with the obligations set out in these guidelines with respect to your working-from-home arrangements.</li> </ul>
Education Support Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certain Education Support Employees (for example, those responsible for IT and general office administration) may not be able to perform all of their duties remotely.</li> <li>Where possible, you will be encouraged to work remotely and will be provided with the necessary support to do so. When working remotely, you must comply with the obligations set out in these guidelines with respect to your working-from-home arrangements.</li> <li>If your duties are unable to be performed remotely, please contact the Principal directly in order to make arrangements to ensure that these duties can be safely performed at the School. When attending the School, you will be required to comply with social distancing requirements (see further information below).</li> </ul>

2.4 Employees who are unable to perform work (whether at the School or remotely) due to illness will be entitled to personal leave in accordance with usual practice.

2.5 Permanent employees whose duties cannot be performed remotely, and who cannot attend the School to perform their duties (for example, because they are in a high-risk health group or live with a person who is in this category), will be entitled to access paid personal leave entitlements. Please contact the Principal directly to discuss, if this applies to you.

### 3. Who is allowed to attend the School?

3.1 Everyone must comply with these Agile Working Guidelines in order to ensure the health and safety of all of our staff and School community. All face-to-face contact must be minimised in order to slow down the spread of COVID-19.

3.2 Only those individuals who have the prior approval of the Principal are permitted to attend School premises. Anyone who attends School premises to perform work, with the approval of the Principal, must implement social distancing. For more information on social distancing,



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

please see the Department of Health's factsheet at the following :

[www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing.pdf).

#### **4. What should I do if I feel unwell or am in a high-risk health group?**

- 4.1 If you feel unwell, and that includes any cold or flu-like symptoms, you should self-isolate and stay home. Similarly, if you are living with someone who is unwell, do not come into work. Stay home.
- 4.2 If you are too unwell to work, you are entitled to access your personal leave.
- 4.3 If you are well enough to work, but are still experiencing symptoms (even if only mild), you should stay home. Where possible, you can work remotely (as outlined above).
- 4.4 If you are in a high-risk health group (that is, you have a chronic health condition or compromised immunity), and you are unable to perform your role remotely (as outlined above), please discuss this with the Principal immediately.
- 4.5 Further information regarding your leave entitlements in the circumstances described above can be accessed from the following link: [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Employee-Relations/Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\)](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Employee-Relations/Coronavirus-(COVID-19)).

#### **5. What are my obligations when working from home?**

- 5.1 Working remotely means that you are available to be contacted at all times during normal business hours, save for standard and reasonable breaks which you would otherwise be taking if working at the School. If you take a break, you should let your team members know how long you will be away.
- 5.2 If you have preschool or school-aged children whose arrangements have been, or are likely to be, disrupted, you should contact the Principal to talk about what alternative measures may be put in place.
- 5.3 Employees working from home are required to:
  - (a) adhere to all of the School's policies and procedures;
  - (b) adhere to the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct;
  - (c) adhere to the School's professional dress code, so as to be available at all times for videoconferencing, where necessary;
  - (d) ensure the environment is appropriate for communicating with students via video link;
  - (e) in relation to teaching staff, advise students to adhere to all normal classroom and behavioural expectations;
  - (f) take all reasonable precautions necessary to secure the School's equipment.

#### **6. How do I prepare for working remotely? How do I set up an effective and safe home office?**

- 6.1 Before you leave the School, make sure you:
  - (a) download any required apps or programs to work from home];
  - (b) take your laptop, laptop charger, mouse and keyboard home (where applicable);



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

- (c) think ahead – take home anything else you are likely to need;
  - (d) take a note pad; and
  - (e) familiarise yourself with the videoconference functionality on your laptop. It is an excellent tool that has multiple purposes including video conferencing, sharing screens etc.
- 6.2 Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.) (OHS Act), the School must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of people in the workplace, which includes people working remotely. You also have an obligation under the OHS Act to take care of your own health and safety at work. These responsibilities continue to apply for both parties, wherever the work is being done.
- 6.3 You are required to ensure that the area in which you work is an acceptable workspace and you have an obligation to ensure that it remains safe. Keep the physical location of your home office away from areas of heavy traffic in your home. You should consider each of the following, as they apply to you:
- (a) manage time effectively;
  - (b) create and follow a priority list;
  - (c) know when to take breaks;
  - (d) set rules for children and other members of the household; and
  - (e) allocate family time.
- 6.4 These guidelines provide assistance with completing an OHS check when adopting agile work practices away from the School. If you are going to be working remotely, you are required to complete the **'Safe agile working self-assessment checklist'** below.
- 7. How can I ensure that I am performing work safely when working remotely?**
- 7.1 When working remotely, you should:
- (a) avoid cradling the telephone with your neck, as this will cause neck and shoulder fatigue. Use headsets or earphones. Standing up while using the telephone is a great posture and stretch break;
  - (b) pause every 30 minutes for a few minutes and stretch (see Appendix 4); and
  - (c) routinely interrupt your viewing of the screen or printed material to look at items in the distance and blink regularly.
- 7.2 Exercise and general fitness are important in any office environment, because they help to:
- (a) break up static muscle load, particularly across the neck and shoulders;
  - (b) increase blood flow and oxygen to the muscles; and
  - (c) promote muscle relaxation by stretching and contracting the muscles.
- 7.3 If you are working from home, you are required to read and follow the:
- (a) **'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices'**;
  - (b) **'Manual handling guidelines'**; and



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

### (c) 'Guidelines for taking breaks and stretching'

which are included below.

#### 8. Am I entitled to a laptop and reimbursement of internet and phone charges?

8.1 Where you have been issued a laptop by the School, you will be required to use this laptop when working from home. If you do not have a School-issued laptop, and will be working from home, please speak with the Principal about the arrangements which will apply. Where available, you will be permitted to use your personal computer provided that you can access relevant software and have appropriate security measures and anti-virus software in place. If you do not have a personal laptop, the Principal will determine what other arrangements can be put in place to ensure that you can continue working.

8.2 Most phone and internet providers have plans which provide unlimited data, calls and texts. However, if you do not have sufficient data in order to work remotely and/or are concerned about the use of your phone and internet to perform work, please speak with the Principal directly.

#### 9. What are my obligations with respect to security?

9.1 All equipment and information must be kept securely. In particular, private and confidential material must be kept secure at all times. When working remotely, you must ensure that you take all reasonable precautions to maintain confidentiality of material.

#### 10. How do I report safety incidents/accidents?

10.1 The reporting of workplace incidents is a critical component in the effective management of workplace health and safety. All employees are required to promptly report any workplace incidents (injury, illness, near-miss events and hazardous conditions) that occur in the home working environment to the Principal.

10.2 Workers compensation arrangements apply to all injuries arising out of or in the course of employment, whether the injury occurred while the person was working from home, another offsite location or in the usual workplace, subject to satisfying legislative requirements. The WorkCover agent will determine the eligibility of any claim in the usual manner.

10.3 It is recommended that employees develop a plan for, and practise, evacuating from the home with their family members to ensure everyone is aware of what to do in an emergency, such as a house fire. Preparing for emergencies will help to reduce panic and will ensure all family members arrive at a predetermined meeting point, such as at a neighbour's house or on the footpath outside the property.

#### 11. How will the School support my wellbeing?

11.1 It is vitally important to our School to ensure the wellbeing of all of our staff, including those who will be moving to remote working.

11.2 While our workforce will largely be working remotely, it is important that we remain connected. You are encouraged to use videoconferencing facilities as much as possible to speak with your colleagues and maintain the usual workplace relationships.

11.3 To assist you to feel supported while working remotely, the School will also take the following measures:

- (a) The Leadership Team will have regular contact with staff, to check in and see how everyone is doing;



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy**

- (b) The Leadership Team will continue to hold regular team meetings as we ordinarily would conduct onsite; however, these will may also be conducted using videoconferencing;
  - (c) The Leadership Team will regularly check in with you by phone or videoconferencing if you are not timetabled for onsite supervision;
  - (d) you are invited to call the Principal or a Deputy Principal at any time to discuss any concerns you have regarding your remote working arrangements; and
  - (e) you will continue to have access to the employee assistance program (EAP).
- 11.4 If you have any concerns about the content of these guidelines or have any questions, please contact the Principal immediately.





# Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

## Appendix 1 Safe agile working self-assessment checklist

The following checklist provides guidance on completing an OHS risk assessment when adopting agile work practices away from the School.

You must read and understand the information contained in this document and complete this checklist. It is important that you reassess your remote/home office work area regularly.

In ordinary and ideal circumstances, a home workstation should include the core components of an office workstation: a table or desk, a supportive chair, an external monitor, keyboard and mouse.

Where the optimal equipment and environment are not available, it will be a case of ensuring flexibility and developing workarounds for any issues as they arise. The guidance material below will also assist with these situations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Principal.

### Work environment

#### Designated work area

▪ A work area has been identified to provide adequate space for working – it is recommended that you have approximately 2.3 metres square unencumbered space	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The work floor is level and there is limited use of mats/or rugs	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The work area is away from activities of other household members and in a place which is free from distractions	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The area of the work surface is adequate for the task	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The most frequently used items are within easy reach from the seated position	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Where possible, in relation to the chair: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the seat height, seat tilt, angle and backrest are all adjustable</li> <li>- there is adequate lumbar support</li> <li>- the chair height is adjusted so that feet are flat on the floor and knees are bent at right angles with thighs parallel to the floor</li> <li>- the chair does not have armrests (or, where the chair has armrests, they are stowed out of the way while typing)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Environmental conditions

▪ Lighting is adequate for the tasks being performed – easy to see and comfortable on the eyes	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Glare and reflection can be controlled	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Ventilation and room temperature can be controlled, regardless of season	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ There is no excessive noise affecting the work area and ambient noise level is appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Walkways are clear of clutter and trip hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Non-smoking environment	<input type="checkbox"/>





## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

### Emergency exit

▪ Path to the exit is reasonably direct	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Path to the exit is sufficiently wide and free of obstructions or trip hazards to allow unimpeded passage	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Doors/windows can be easily opened in the event of an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Security

▪ Security is sufficient to prevent unauthorised entry	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Equipment and information (hardcopy and electronic) can be maintained securely	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Electrical

▪ Power outlets are not overloaded with double adapters and power boards	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Power boards (with overload protection) are used instead of double adaptors or piggyback plugs	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The use of extension cords is minimised, where use of the extension cord might provide a trip hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Electrical cords are safely stowed where they will not be damaged	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Connectors, plugs and outlet sockets are in a safe condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Electrical equipment is free from any obvious external damage (e.g. no evidence of frayed, torn, broken or loose electrical leads)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ All equipment in the home office is suitable and in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Storage and general housekeeping

▪ There is sufficient space around storage areas to enable easy and safe access	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Storage space is suitably utilised and is within reach (that is, where possible, between shoulder and mid-thigh height)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Filing cabinets and/or cupboards are stable	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Sharp corners of furniture and other fittings are situated so as to avoid a hazard to people passing them	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Work area is clear of unnecessary clutter	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The area under the desk is clear from general items	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Nature of tasks

#### Physical demands of tasks

▪ Safe posture is adopted	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Any lifting, pushing or carrying task is well within physical capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Work practices

▪ Wrists are kept straight and not supported on any surface while typing	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Sitting posture is upright or slightly reclined, with lower back supported	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The telephone, keyboard and mouse are within easy reach from the seated position	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Long periods of continuous activity are broken by performing other tasks, changing position, standing up and stretching	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School

# COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

### Other factors

#### Emergency

▪ Emergency contact numbers and details are known and current	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Smoke detector is installed in/near the work area and is properly maintained	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Individual factors

▪ Any dependent people have care arrangements in place, where possible, or are suitably separated from the work area to avoid distraction in so far as reasonably practicable (Note: if you are unable to make care arrangements for any dependants, please speak with the Principal so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place to ensure you can successfully work remotely)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Any special needs to ensure health and safety have been advised to your manager	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Work surface

▪ The area of the work surface is adequate for the task	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Seat height is set high enough to allow you to work at the computer without hunching or raising your shoulders	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ When seated, thighs are parallel to the floor with your feet supported either on the floor or on a footrest	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ The most frequently used items are within easy reach from the seated position	<input type="checkbox"/>

### If using a laptop

#### Height

▪ The laptop is positioned in front of you at a height that allows you to see the screen without bending your neck (your eyes should be as close as possible to level with the top of the screen). This can be achieved by using a laptop stand, a docking station or a monitor raiser. Where such items are not available, a stack of books or magazines, or a small box can be used.  See the attached 'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices'	<input type="checkbox"/>
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#### Safe typing

▪ Wherever possible, laptops should be used in conjunction with an external keyboard and mouse so that forearms are parallel with the work surface.  See the attached 'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices'	<input type="checkbox"/>
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#### Posture

▪ Be aware of the importance of posture when using the laptop. Arms should be resting by your side, elbows bent to 90 degrees and wrists straight while keying.  See the attached 'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices'	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Frequently rotate laptop use with other activities.  See the attached 'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices'	<input type="checkbox"/>

### If using a desktop PC

#### Keyboard and mouse

▪ Keyboard to user distance allows user to relax shoulders with elbows close to the body	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Keyboard position is flat	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

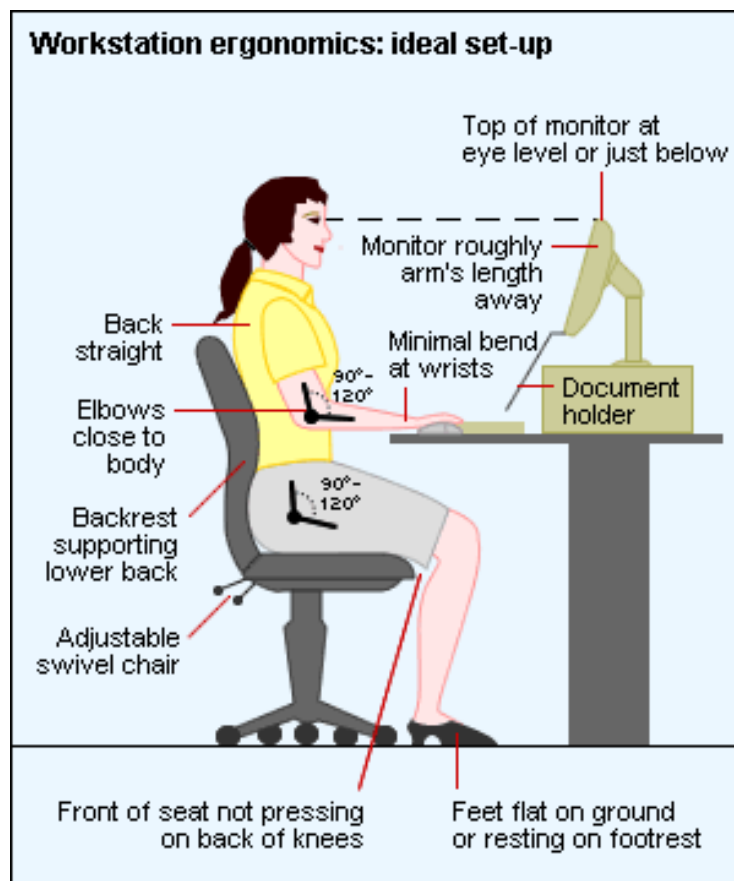
▪	Mouse is placed directly next to the keyboard	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪	Mouse is at same level as the keyboard	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Monitor</b>		
▪	Monitor height is adjusted so the top of the screen is at slightly lower height than eye level	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪	Viewing distance is between 500 mm – 750 mm (approx. an arm's length away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪	Monitor and keyboard are placed directly and symmetrically in front of the user	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪	Monitor is positioned to avoid glare (i.e. perpendicular to window or other strong light source)	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

If you can achieve the optimal workstation setup, then follow the guidance above (and in the attached 'Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices (PECD)' and replicate this setup at home. However, if you are only partially able to follow these principles, please follow the guidance below:

- If working from a laptop, use a laptop riser in conjunction with an external keyboard and mouse. If no riser is available, use books or a sturdy box to elevate the laptop screen to eye-level.
- If no external keyboard or mouse is available and your only option is to work from your laptop, increase the frequency of breaks as well as postural changes. Sustained static postures are not ideal and increase our risk of injury. Move around your home frequently throughout the day, working from different locations with your laptop.
- Stand as often as possible (e.g. when in a meeting or on the phone moving around while you do).
- Schedule postural breaks and follow the guidance for exercises and stretches.
- Use a headset/headphones when on the phone.





## Appendix 2

# Guidelines for safe use of portable electronic and communication devices (PECD)

Portable electronic and communication devices (PECD) include equipment such as tablets (iPads), laptop computers, and smart or mobile phones.

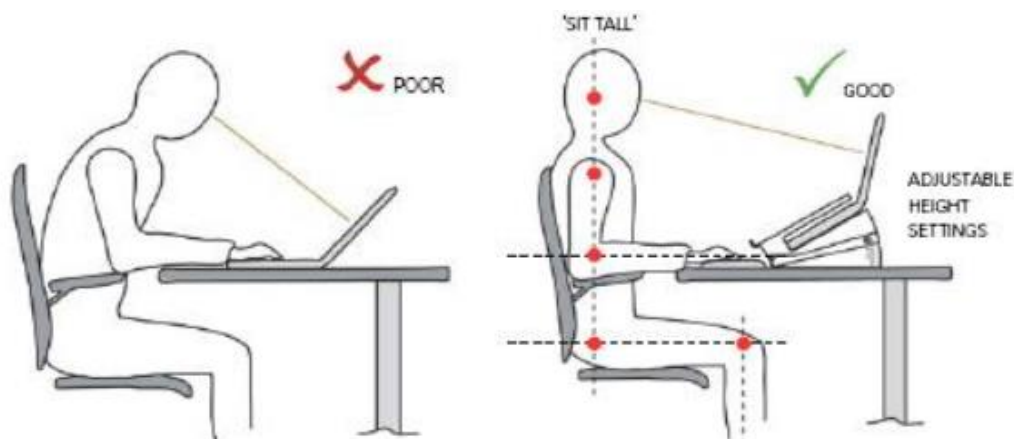
The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide guidance on the safe use of PECD when carrying out work-related activities.

### Basic principles

Laptops were originally designed for short duration and irregular use, not for daily continuous operation. If you need to conduct your work on a laptop for an extended period of time, or your laptop is your primary computer, the following guidance can help reduce the risk of musculoskeletal discomfort or injury.

The same principles apply as with regular computer use:

- the desk and laptop should be adjusted so the user can adopt a 'neutral' posture – ankles, knees, hips and elbows at about 90-degree angles, and hands in alignment with wrists (see image below)
- sit about arm's length from the screen (depending on individual eye conditions)
- keying and holding the mouse should be light, and hands and arms rested when not keying
- take regular breaks to rest both your eyes and your muscles – stand and walk to the printer, change posture to perform another task such as reading.



### Setting up your laptop

#### Position

Choose a position where you can achieve the best posture, including the ability to:

- adjust the screen position
- sit straight in front of the screen
- keep the laptop away from glare



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

- move your arms freely.

### *External keyboard*

This is the most important and easiest solution to poor postures created by the laptop design. The external keyboard allows you to independently adjust the screen and keyboard, and achieve a more appropriate position.

### *External pointing devices/mice*

Some people find the internal touchpad or trackball difficult to negotiate. It is preferable to use a full-sized mouse or a mouse that fits your hand, which encourages you to use your whole hand to manoeuvre the mouse and increases comfort for the user.

### *Laptop stations or stands*

These adjustable stands hold the laptop in a more upright position providing good screen height. An external keypad and mouse can then be used with the laptop. A sturdy box can be an adequate substitute.

### *Other accessories and advances*

- Laptop supports – cushions used on your lap to adjust the height of your laptop.
- Laptop models with screens that tilt back fully – allow greater options for improved head and neck posture.
- Docking stations – connect the laptop to regular standard-sized keyboards, mouse and monitors.
- Detachable screens – allow positioning of the screen anywhere.



### **Transporting your laptop**

To minimise the risk of pain or discomfort when carrying your laptop:

- reduce the weight of the bag by removing any unnecessary items
- try to pick up and put down the bag with smooth movements, rather than jerky and sudden actions
- if possible, use a backpack design with padded shoulder straps – carry over both shoulders.

### **Laptops, chargers and electrical safety**

If required, the laptop charger should have a current test and tag, and be connected to a safety switch.

### **Electrical items used at home**



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy**

Like all electrical equipment, laptops and chargers should be:

- used according to the manufacturer's instructions
- protected from damage through general care and maintenance.





## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy**

General care and maintenance include:

- protecting leads and equipment from damage (e.g. position leads and equipment where they are not likely to be damaged)
- making visual inspections of the lead, plug and item before use for any cuts, damage, cracks, burnt areas etc. If these are identified, remove the item from use
- using power boards (with overload protection) instead of double adaptors
- removing faulty electrical items from use immediately to ensure the item is not used inadvertently by someone else; clearly label these as 'faulty' or 'out of service'
- discarding faulty electrical equipment or having it repaired by an electrician.

### **Extra measures**

It is recognised that items such as laptops may be exposed to damage or greater wear and tear, as they are transported from home to work or within the workplace. In the home environment, staff may choose to plug laptops and chargers into power points that have safety switch protection. Connecting to a portable safety switch, such as a power board with an inbuilt safety switch, is an alternative where permanent safety switch protection is not installed.



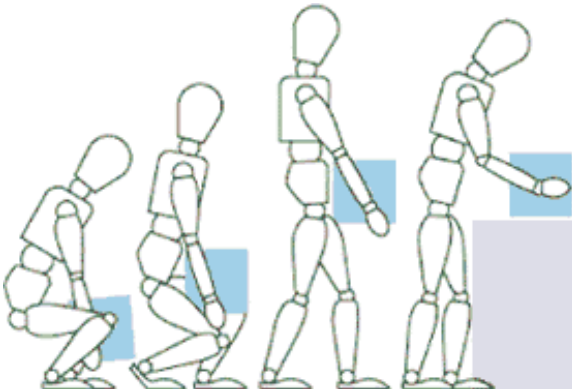
## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

### Appendix 3 Manual handling guidelines

Manual handling is part of every physical activity we do. It involves common actions such as lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, pulling, holding or restraining. It may also include stretching, bending, sustained and awkward postures, and repetitive movements.

Muscle strains can occur suddenly and may result from forceful exertion in a bent or twisted posture – for example, lifting a ream of paper from the floor without maintaining the natural curves of your spine. There is also a cumulative component to musculoskeletal disorders, whereby awkward positioning, excessive force or repetition over a prolonged period of time can ultimately result in wear and tear on the musculoskeletal system.

If you have any manual handling concerns, speak to the Principal.

Type of injuries related to manual handling	Examples of manual handling tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive strain injuries</li> <li>Muscle injuries</li> <li>Tendon and ligament injuries</li> <li>Bone injuries</li> <li>Injuries from falling objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typing</li> <li>Lifting and moving boxes</li> <li>Filing</li> <li>Carrying folders/books</li> <li>Printing large amounts of work</li> <li>Using trolleys</li> </ul>
<p><b>The S.M.A.R.T lifting technique</b> – This technique can be used to pick up small, light loads from low levels.</p> 	
Size up the load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the load (size, shape and weight).</li> <li>Assess whether the load needs to be moved.</li> <li>Where is it going to be placed? Check that there are no obstructions.</li> <li>Assess whether a trolley or assistance from another person is required.</li> </ul>
Move the load as close to the body as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A load is heavier to lift or carry if it is not close to the body.</li> <li>The whole hand should be used to ensure a firm grip.</li> </ul>
Always bend your knees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain balance.</li> <li>Tighten your stomach muscles to protect your back.</li> <li>Keep feet apart and in a comfortable position.</li> <li>Minimise lower back bending.</li> <li>Bend knees, but preferably keep the angle greater than 90° – use a semi-squat in preference to a full-squat.</li> </ul>



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School COVID-19 Agile Working Guidelines Policy

Raise the load with your legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Achieve the lift smoothly and without jerkiness.</li><li>▪ Maintain the normal curvature of the spine to allow the force of the load to be distributed evenly from the spine to the pelvis.</li></ul>
Turn your feet in the direction that you want to move the load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Avoid unnecessary bending, twisting and reaching.</li><li>▪ Change direction by turning your feet and not your back.</li><li>▪ To set the load down, squat, keep your head up and let your legs do the work.</li></ul>

## Appendix 4 Guidelines for taking breaks and stretching

### Take a break

Staying in the same position and using the same muscles for hours at a time is not good for your back or neck.

### Eye breaks

Looking at a computer screen for extended periods causes some changes in how your eyes work, including blinking less often and exposing more of the eye surface to air. Every 20 minutes, briefly look away from the computer screen for a minute or two to a more distant scene, preferably something more than 20 feet away. This lets the muscles inside the eye relax. Also, blink your eyes rapidly for a few seconds. This refreshes the tear film and clears dust from the eye surface.

### Micro-breaks

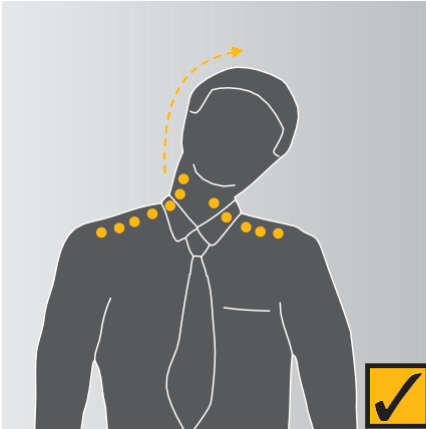
Micro-breaks are less than two minutes long and perfect to do between bouts of typing. A micro-break isn't necessarily a break from work, but it's a break from using a set of muscles (such as the finger flexors if you're doing a lot of typing). Most people type in bursts rather than continuously. Between these bursts of activity, rest your hands in a relaxed, flat, straight posture. Though micro-breaks are short, you can stretch, stand up, move around or do a different work task (such as make a phone call).

### Rest breaks

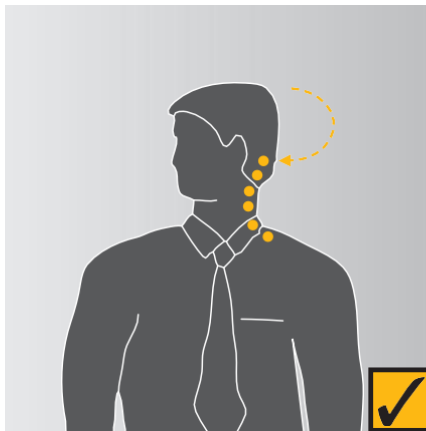
Every 30 to 60 minutes, take a brief rest break. During this break, stand up, move around and do something else. Get a beverage, have a walking phone call, chat to a co-worker over phone or videoconferencing. This allows you to relax and exercise different muscles, and you'll feel less tired.

### Exercise breaks

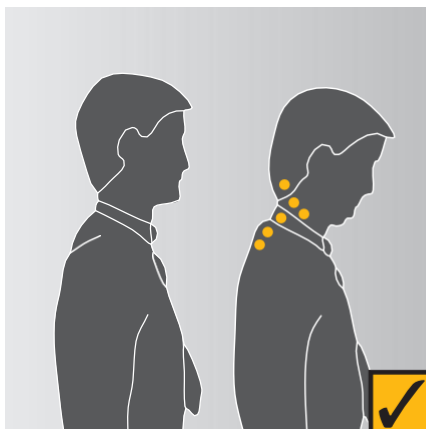
There are many stretching and gentle exercises you can do to help relieve muscle fatigue. You should do these every one to two hours. See below for guidance extracted from WorkSafe Victoria's [Officewise](#) handbook.



B.1 Neck stretch



B.2 Head turns



B.3 Chin tucks

## Stop, get up and move

Getting up and walking around is the best exercise you can get to provide a break from sitting, concentrating and using the muscles of the arms and hands. About every 20 to 30 minutes is a guide to how often it is helpful to move around.

Even getting up for 20 to 30 seconds to pick up papers from the photocopier or get some water is a way to change your posture and give muscles a chance to recover.

## S-t-r-e-t-c-h and check!

Stretching exercises help to relax muscles which have been working and move those which have been in a fixed position. If possible, stand up to do your stretches.

While you are exercising, read the notes alongside each instruction and consider whether your workstation is adjusted to suit you.

- Do a few of these exercises a few times every day.
- Dots show the muscles that you are exercising.
- Make sure you relax and perform them gently.
- Hold the stretch or repeat as indicated on the diagram.
- Do not over-stretch.
- Stop if you feel discomfort when performing an action.
- Remember to do each side.

## Neck

### Neck stretch

Keeping your chin tucked in, gently lower ear to shoulder and hold for 10 seconds on either side. Repeat several times. See Figure B.1.

### Head turns

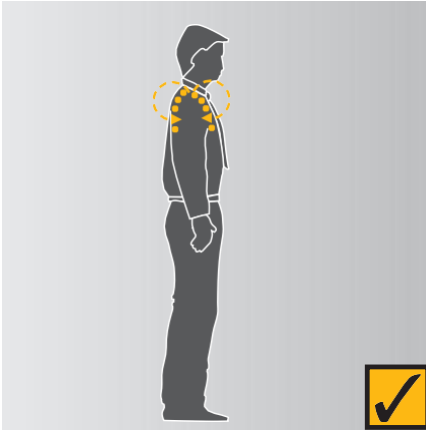
Turn head slowly to look over left shoulder. Turn head the other way. Repeat several times. See Figure B.2.

### Chin tucks

Raise the head to straighten the neck. Tuck the chin in and upwards creating a double chin. This also results in a forward tilt of the head. Repeat several times. See Figure B.3.

### Check neck posture

- Position the top of your screen at eye level.
- Use a document holder directly beside or below the screen – it saves you looking down.



B.4 Shoulder rolls

## Shoulders

### Shoulder rolls

Circle shoulders forward several times, then backwards. Repeat 3 to 5 times. See Figure B.4.

### Check shoulder posture

- Relax your shoulders and rest your hands on your lap. Bend your elbows to no more than 90 degrees and check the height of your fingertips against your current work height. If the work (keyboard or desk) is higher than your hands, you may be hunching your shoulders unnecessarily. If so, try and raise your chair height or lower your desk height, and try and relax your shoulders while working.

## Wrists, hands and arms

### Wrist and elbow stretch

Interlace fingers, palms outward, and straighten arms in front. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times. See Figure B.5.

### Wrist stretch

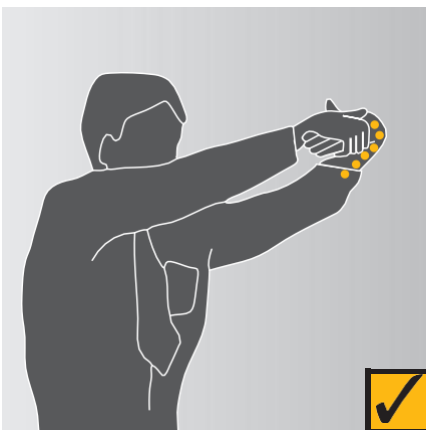
Straighten your arm in front and bend your wrist forward, gently assist the stretch with your other hand. Hold for 10 seconds then stretch your wrist back and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with other arm. See Figure B.6.

### Check hand and wrist posture

- While keying, keep your wrist straight while your fingers are suspended over the keyboard.
- Keep elbows at keyboard level. This may mean adjusting the desk or chair height.
- Don't rest your wrists on the desk or keyboard while keying. Keep hands suspended.
- Rest on the desk between periods of keying.



B.5 Wrist and elbow stretch



B.6 Wrist stretch



B.7 Upper and lower back stretch

## Upper and lower back

### Upper and lower back stretch

Interlace fingers and turn palms upwards above head; straighten arms then slowly lean slightly from side to side. Repeat movement several times. See Figure B.7.

### Back arching

Stand up. Support your lower back with hands and gently arch back and hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat as often as is needed. See Figure B.8.

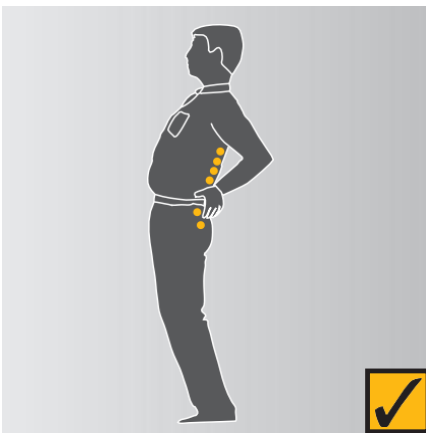
### Pectoral stretch

Raise both arms to shoulder height and bend elbows. Pull both elbows back slowly to bring shoulder blades towards each other.

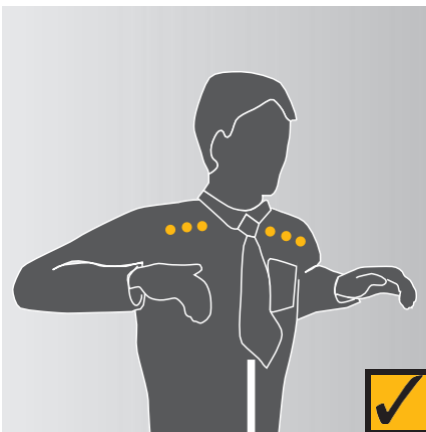
Repeat several times. See Figure B.9.

### Check back support

- Sit well back in your chair – if your feet need support, use a footrest.
- Adjust the backrest on your chair to support your lower back.



B.8 Back arching



B.9 Pectoral stretch



B.10 Foot pump

## Legs

### Foot pump

Stand up, holding the chair for balance if necessary, and alternately raise heels and toes. Repeat 10 times. See Figure B.10.

### Check leg comfort

- If the seat of your chair is digging into the backs of your thighs, check that it is not too high or whether it is tilted backwards.
- If the seat is too high, lower the chair and desk or use a footrest to support your feet.
- Also check the tilt of the seat and, if necessary, adjust it to a horizontal position.

## Eyes

### Eye exercise

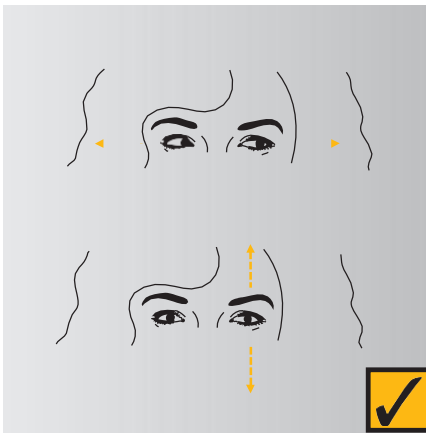
Sit up straight, face forward and repeat this sequence several times without moving your head. Look up, then down. Look left, then right. See Figure B.11.

### Visual rest

Look up and away from the screen. Focus on a distant object (more than 3 metres away). For example, look out of the window or at a picture on a far wall. Shift vision back to screen and refocus. See Figure B.12.

### Check eye comfort

- Is there enough light falling on your documents?
- Do windows or light fittings cause glare or reflection on the screen? If so, try turning the screen or blocking the path of the light.
- Use a screen with a light background when working with text. Software with a light background for text is more comfortable for the eyes.



B.11 Eye exercise



B.12 Visual rest



