



Working From Home Guidance for School Support Staff

When working from home it is important you are safe and protected in carrying out your duties and understand what is expected from you. As you are aware, GDPR is a very important part of your role and it remains so whilst working at home. Because you work in a school and with children it is most important you do not use your own equipment for work purposes as there could be issues with confidentiality and data protection. If you are required to take paperwork home with personal data on then you need to ensure this can be kept in a secure and confidential manner.

ACAS offer the following advice for employees who are required to work from home.

Equipment and technology

- It's important for employees to have the right equipment and technology needed to work from home effectively. This can also help avoid extra stress.
- Things employers, employees and any representatives should agree on include: what's needed to do the job, for example a reliable and secure internet connection or a suitable desk and chair
- who will provide or cover the costs of equipment and repairs
- technical support for setting up any new equipment or technology, including any training. Employers should have clear policies around work equipment and technology, including: how to report any issues and to who, for example the IT team and how they will monitor use and handle information
- rules around data protection and cyber security
- what to do if a work device is lost or stolen
- Employers should regularly check with employees to assess how technology and equipment is working, and make any improvements. For example, checking: IT systems are handling the number of staff working remotely, the level of IT support needed for homeworkers and any extra equipment that might be needed from time to time, for example headsets or stationery

Employer responsibilities

By law, employers are responsible for the health and safety of all employees, including those working from home.

Risk assessments

Employers must conduct a risk assessment of their employees' work activities, including any work from home.

Under the law, a risk assessment must be 'suitable and sufficient'.

If the employer is not able to carry out a full risk assessment due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, they should provide their employees with information on working safely at home. This could include asking employees to carry out a self-assessment of their workspace and equipment. If changes are needed to make sure an employee can work at home in a safe and healthy way, employers are responsible for making sure they happen.

Employers should review risk assessments regularly to make sure employees' working environments at home remain safe and healthy.

Employee responsibilities

Employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work. Anyone working from home should keep in regular contact with their manager. They should also tell their manager about:

- any physical or mental health and safety risks
- any working arrangements that need to change, for example because of caring responsibilities
- It's important that employees and managers communicate regularly and work together to find suitable solutions.

Looking after mental and physical health

While working at home during the coronavirus pandemic, people might be experiencing problems such as:

- stress, anxiety, loneliness or other mental health issues
- feeling unhealthy as they're not able to take their usual exercise
- finding it harder to switch off from work
- working longer hours
- feeling pressure to work while ill ('presenteeism')
- physical pain because they do not have the right working equipment, for example musculoskeletal problems caused by an unsuitable chair and desk at home

Everyone should make sure they:

- look after their mental and physical health, for example by getting support and doing regular exercise
- take regular screen breaks, the rest breaks they're entitled to, and switch off their work equipment at the end of the working day
- manage their work-life balance, for example by having clear start and finish times
- know what sick pay and leave they're entitled to
- have the necessary equipment and information to work safely
- It's important to remember that everyone's experience will be different. Employers and managers should talk together with their employees and:
- follow the law on working hours
- encourage sharing of any problems they may have
- not make assumptions about what support might or might not be needed
- agree on what support may be needed, for example if an employee with a disability needs reasonable adjustments

If you have any concerns or would like further advice on working from home safely, please contact your Rep, Branch, Regional Organiser or schoolsteamlondon@gmb.co.uk

MEMBERS FIRST

