1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this procedure is to reduce the risk of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders (MSD) occurring in the workplace by:

- Identifying risk factors in work design that contribute to MSD work related injuries;
- Providing a procedure for evaluation and assessment working environments, and
- Controlling any risks associated with work design, workstation set up and operation.

2. **Scope:**

This procedure applies to all Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) workplaces including schools and central and regional offices.

3. **Definitions**

- **Ergonomics:** The assessment and design of the relationships between people and their work, objects, tools, equipment and environments. The working environment may include:
  - workstations (sitting and standing)
  - equipment layout and operation
  - computer systems, and
  - maintenance tasks performed on a plant item.

- **Management OHS Nominee:** A position nominated by the Workplace Manager to oversee the operational aspects of implementing health, safety and wellbeing initiatives, policies and procedures.

- **MSD:** Musculo-Skeletal Disorder which is an injury or illness that affects muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage or spinal discs.

- **Nominated Employee:** Employee nominated by management to complete specific OHS tasks (this can be the health and safety representative, a member of the health and safety committee or another employee in the workplace)

- **Workplace Manager:** The Manager or Principal responsible for the school, central office, regional office or other DEECD workplace.

4. **References:**

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*
- *HB59:1994 Ergonomics, the Human Factor – a Practical Approach to Work Systems Design*
- *Officewise – A guide to Health and Safety in the Office 2006 (WorkSafe Victoria)*

5. **Responsibility:**

**Workplace Manager and/or their Management OHS Nominees** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that ergonomic hazards relating to poor design of tools, equipment, work station or work practices are identified and the associated risks controlled;
- Ensuring that all employees have been provided with adequate equipment for tasks undertaken;
- Ensuring that employees, contractors and visitors have been provided with relevant information, instruction and/or training in the use of equipment and work practices;
- Encouraging and reinforcing proper working techniques;
Ensuring that resources are utilised to control hazards associated with ergonomics (e.g. manual handling, MSD) and reviewing suggested risk controls to ensure they are implemented and effective; and

Maintaining records of the ergonomic risk assessment procedure.

Nominated employees are responsible for:

- Participating in the identification and assessment of ergonomic hazards; and
- Identifying and documenting controls to eliminate or reduce ergonomic hazards in the workplace.

Employees are responsible for:

- Participating in training as provided;
- Completing ergonomic self-assessments and reporting task-related and equipment-related hazards as required;
- Correctly using equipment (e.g. trolleys, small stepladders, laptop support stands, adjustable equipment) where provided; and
- Following proper working techniques including safe work instructions.

The functions of Health and Safety Representatives and/or OHS Committees can include:

- Reviewing injury data to identify activities and/or equipment which give rise to injuries; and
- Advising relevant Workplace Managers and/or Management OHS Nominees of any incident and injury trends.

6. Procedure:

6.1 Ergonomic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

If an employee identifies an ergonomic issue associated with a work process, plant design or operation, it is to be reported to their Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee. The Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee will make sure that a Nominated Employee assists the employee to complete the Plant and Equipment Risk Management Form or Task Based Risk Management Form.

If an employee identifies an ergonomic issue associated with their workstation set up, it is to be reported to their Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee. The Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee will make sure that a Nominated Employee assists the employee to complete the Workstation Screen Based Risk Management Form.

The Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee may contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Regional OHS/WorkSafe Advisors or the OHS Advisory Service on 1300 074 715 for further advice or information if required.

6.2 Risk Control

For any ergonomic hazards identified during the assessment, controls are to be established and implemented. The Nominated Employee in consultation with the employee will identify appropriate controls to eliminate or reduce hazards as part of the risk assessment process. It is the responsibility of the Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee to review the controls and make sure ensure that they are implemented. The Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee will maintain records of all agreed controls documented on the Workstation Screen
Examples of ergonomic controls, from most effective to least effective, may include:

- Eliminating the task;
- Changing the nature of the task to remove repetition;
- Changing chairs that do not adjust to the suit the user for suitable alternatives;
- Providing flat screen monitors to increase desk space;
- Adjusting the distance and positioning of screens, keyboards, mouse, phone etc; and
- Providing information to employees on the importance of rest breaks and stretching.

6.3 Review of Controls

Workplace Managers or Management OHS Nominees are responsible for reviewing ergonomic hazard controls in consultation with employees. This review is to be documented on the Workstation Screen Based Ergonomic Risk Management Form, Plant and Equipment Risk Management Form or Task Based Risk Management Form.

If the control is deemed inadequate the Workplace Manager or Management OHS Nominee may request advice from the DEECD Regional OHS/WorkSafe Advisors or the OHS Advisory Service on 1300 074 715 for further information if required. If deemed necessary the advisory service can engage the services of an ergonomist to identify, assess and suggest controls for the hazard.

If the employee is not satisfied with the controls implemented, the employee may raise this grievance in accordance with the OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart.

6.4 Workplace Risk Register

Workplace Managers or Management OHS Nominees are to review and update the Workplace Risk Register when ergonomic issues are identified, assessed and controlled.

7. Related Documentation:

- Workstation Screen Based Ergonomic Risk Management Form
- Plant and Equipment Risk Management Form
- Task Based Risk Management Form
- OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart
- Workplace Risk Register

8. Version Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Section Amended</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Date Created</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Reviewed in line with 2 yearly OHSMS Review. Some wording changes and reference to Workstation Screen Based Ergonomic Risk Management Form instead of previous form.</td>
<td>April 2011</td>
<td>EHU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>