

Getting Seating Right!

Good seating and positioning is essential to prevent back strain and poor posture. It is also important for good use of the hands, especially for tasks that require a high level of dexterity and concentration such as writing and cutting activities. A child who has poor sitting posture will use more effort to carry out these types of activities. If they have to concentrate on keeping a stable or comfortable sitting position they will be less able to concentrate on the task that has been set. They can also appear fidgety and distractible. Improving a child's sitting posture can have a significant impact on their academic attainment and confidence in the classroom.

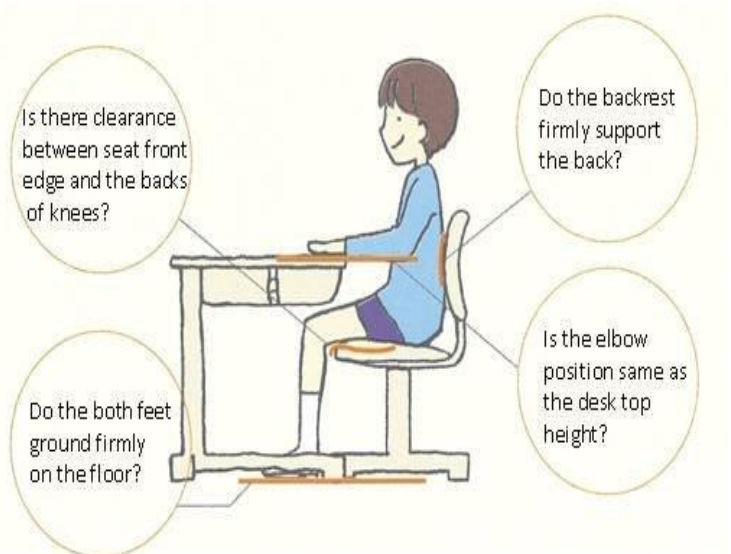
A Rough Guide

Tables should be half the pupil height.

Chairs should be a third of the pupil height.

What does a good posture look like?

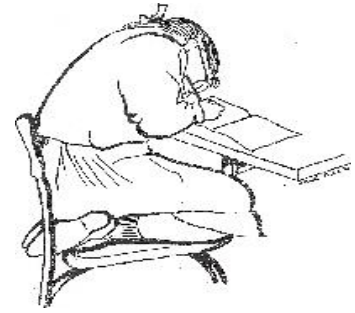
- Hips, knees and ankles are at 90 degrees (hips can be a little higher than the knees if this is more comfortable and the feet are supported)
- Appropriate seat depth so that the bottom is at the back of the chair and the thighs are fully supported. Make sure that the front of the seat is not digging into the back of the knees
- Appropriate seat height so that the feet are flat on the floor or are supported in some other way
- Forearms rest comfortably on the table, without shoulders being "hunched"
- Chair can be pulled fully under the desk
- Head should be up and in midline.



Sitting in this way means that hands can be used to the best effect.

Watch out for: Children who sit awkwardly on their chair because it isn't the correct height. You might see them

- Sitting on the front edge of the seat
- Kneeling on the chair
- Wrapping their legs around the chair legs
- Tipping the chair forward onto the front 2 feet
- Hunched over the desk with their head too close to their work because the table is too low
- Working with their elbows and shoulders raised because the table is too high



Seating for children with mild motor difficulties

The principles of good seating and posture are especially important for children with mild motor difficulties including those with Developmental Co-ordination Difficulties. In addition to the tips for good posture provided above it may also be beneficial to provide the following:

- A chair with sides or arms to provide guidance re trunk position
- A chair with a full back rest
- A chair with a straight, rather than angled seat and back
- A good, heavy footrest (bound catalogues can be used)
- A chair than can easily be moved in and out of the table



- A sloped writing board (a lever arch file is a cheaper option)
- A "Move 'n' Sit" cushion

Sometimes a more suitable chair already exists somewhere in the school and should be used even if it doesn't match the other furniture in the classroom!