**Schools’ Accountancy Team**

Finance Regulations

This document should be used in conjunction with the [Suffolk Scheme for the Financing of Schools](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/schools-accountancy/finance-regulations).

# SECTION 2.1.3: PAYMENT OF SALARIES; PAYMENT OF BILLS

# SECTION 11.5: HEALTH AND SAFETY

# REIMBURSEMENTS TOWARDS THE COST OF VISION TESTS AND GLASSES

**DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) AND VISION TESTS/GLASSES**

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 sets out what employers may need to do to protect employees from any risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) such as computers and laptops. The regulations relating to payments for vision tests and ‘special corrective appliances’ only apply to *‘DSE Users’* i.e. employees who regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work (daily, for continuous periods for an hour or more, several times each day, most days of the week); they do not apply to employees who use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time. The duties relating to workstation assessments etc. apply to all who use display screen equipment for work.

These Finance Regulations only cover the financial requirements relating to the reimbursements for vision tests and glasses for DSE users. Schools should consult [LMS Document 2015/11](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/schools-accountancy/lms/lms-documents/lms-docs--2015) for information on health and safety responsibilities.

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR REIMBURSEMENTS TOWARDS THE COST OF VISION TESTS AND GLASSES**

The Health and Safety Executive states that the legal responsibility (and thus accountability) for health and safety lies with the employer. Who the employer is depends on the type of school:

Community and voluntary controlled schools:

maintained prus and nurseries:

The LA retains primary responsibility as the employer for health and safety for maintained, community and voluntary controlled schools and maintained PRUs/nurseries. In light of these responsibilities the LA requires Headteachers, staff and governors of these categories of schools to comply with the regulations set out below when claiming and reimbursing staff for vision tests/glasses.

N.B. These regulations are consistent with requirements set out on [*mySCC*](https://suffolknet.sharepoint.com/sites/myscc)for non-school SCC employees.

FOUNDATION AND VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS:

The governing body is the employer for foundation and voluntary aided schools and is legally accountable for health and safety; Suffolk County Council is not responsible. However, the LA recommends that governing bodies of foundation/VA schools implement the regulations set out below in line with community and voluntary controlled schools.

The governing body of any foundation/VA school wishing to adopt alternative regulations must agree a school policy for the reimbursement of vision tests and glasses.

ALL SCHOOLS:

Reimbursements towards the cost of vision tests and glasses are employee expenses paid from schools’ delegated budgets through the payroll system.

**entitlement to CLAIM**

*‘DSE Users’* are school staff that are required to regularly use display screen equipment such as computers and laptops as a significant part of their normal work in the school (daily, for continuous periods for an hour or more, several times each day, most days of the week). School ‘*DSE Users’* may claim reimbursements as set out in the ‘Limits to Claims’ section below.

* Experience has shown that in most working populations only a small minority (less than 10%) will need glasses for display screen work.
* Those who need spectacles specifically for display screen work may include users who already wear spectacles/contact lenses, or others who have uncorrected vision defects.
* School staff identified as *‘DSE Users’* should be made aware of the Finance Regulations relating to reimbursements for vision tests and glasses.

School staff that are only required to use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time are not entitled to claim.

**limits to claims**

Vision Tests

* The school should contribute up to £30 towards the cost of a vision test.
* Refunds for vision tests should not be given more than once in 12 months unless an individual is having particular visual difficulties which may reasonably be considered to be caused by the use of display screen equipment.

Spectacles/Contact Lenses

* The school will not contribute towards the cost of ‘normal’ corrective appliances (i.e. spectacles/contact lenses prescribed for any other purpose than display screen use).
* The school should contribute up to £50 towards the cost of a basic pair of spectacles prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned. If the employee chooses to have glasses or contact lenses of a higher specification then the employee is responsible for any additional cost.

**reimbursement PROCEDURES**

A School Employee Vision Examination Form (see Annex A) must accompany any request for reimbursement.

Reimbursements may only be paid through the monthly payroll; they must not be paid locally.

Employee Responsibilities:

The employee must ensure that:

* the Optician has completed the appropriate section of the School Employee Vision Examination Form
* VAT receipts have been supplied
* They have completed and signed the declaration before submitting the claim to the school

School Responsibilities:

* Incomplete submissions should be returned to the employee.
* It is the responsibility of the Headteacher (or their designated representative) to confirm that the claimant is a *‘DSE User’* and to verify the validity of the claim.
* The *School Section* of the School Employee Vision Examination Form must be completed in full before submitting the form and receipt to the school’s payroll provider for payment. The school must retain a copy of both the completed form and the receipt for audit purposes.

**Non-Compliance**

Schools should ensure that all claims comply with the Finance Regulations and that individuals are not over-claiming (value of claims/frequency of claims).

Any suspected fraudulent activity should be reported to the Schools Accountancy Team or Internal Audit. Schools should follow the advice issued by the LA in order that fraudulent claims can be fully investigated and action taken through both disciplinary and criminal routes where appropriate.

# HELP AND ADVICE

SCHOOLS’ ACCOUNTANCY TEAM

Statutory and compliance queries should be raised with the Schools’ Accountancy Team:

* [sat@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sat@suffolk.gov.uk)
* Tel: 01473 265626
* Schools’ Accountancy Team, Floor 3, Constantine House, 5 Constantine Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2DH
* Website: [www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/schools-accountancy](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/schools-accountancy)

INTERNAL AUDIT

Any suspected fraudulent activity should be reported to Internal Audit:

* [audit.enquiries@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:audit.enquiries@suffolk.gov.uk)
* Tel: 01473 264261

SCHOOLS’ CHOICE

Help and support on implementing the Finance Regulations is available from Schools’ Choice:

Finance Helpline:

* [finance@schoolschoice.org](mailto:finance@schoolschoice.org)
* Tel: 0345 603 7684
* Schools’ Choice, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX

Enhanced Finance Service:

* [efs@schoolschoice.org](mailto:efs@schoolschoice.org)
* Tel: 01473 264054

This document should be used in conjunction with the [Suffolk Scheme for the Financing of Schools](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/schools-accountancy/finance-regulations).

Carole Murton

Service Accountant (Schools)

Version: September 2015

We will on request produce this document, or particular parts of it, in other languages and formats, in order that everyone can use and comment upon its content.

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| **OPTICIAN TO COMPLETE**  **School Employee Vision Examination Form – Annex A** |

Would you please provide the following details that will assist us to reimburse the bearer appropriately for the cost of the vision test and spectacles or contact lenses if required.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cost of vision test: | **£** | *(as a guide a maximum of £30.00 will be refunded)* |

Refunds for vision tests should not be given more than once in 12 months unless an individual is having particular visual difficulties which may reasonably be considered to be caused by the use of display screen equipment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a) | Does the person require spectacles or contact lenses? | **YES / NO** |  |
| b) | If yes, are these ‘special’ i.e. prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for display screen work? | **YES / NO** |  |
| c) | If answer to b) is ‘Yes’, what is the cost of a simple pair of spectacles or contact lenses which would **solely enable the user to work on display screen equipment?** | **£** | *(a maximum of £50.00 will be refunded)* |
| d) | Date when you next require to examine this person: |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signature of Optician: |  | Date: |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Opticians Stamp: |  | **All receipts must be attached to this form for any reimbursement to be made.** | | |

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| --- |
| **SCHOOL EMPLOYEE TO COMPLETE** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name: |  | Payroll Number: |  |
| Signature of Employee: |  | Date: |  |

**Reimbursement will not be made unless all details are completed.**

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| --- |
| **HEADTEACHER TO COMPLETE** |

Headteacher authorisation: I confirm that the above employee is currently classified as a Display Screen Equipment “User” and that I have checked and verified the first part of this form.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School: |  | School Number: |  |
| Signature of Headteacher:  *(or their designated representative)* |  | Date: |  |
| Job Title of designated representative:  *(if appropriate)* |  | Print Name: |  |

Pay Group Employee Number

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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School Number £ £ P P

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **E** | **E** |  |  |  | **0** | **0** | **9** | **7** | **0** |  |  |  |  |  | Eye test & glasses |

*Other Indirect Employee Expenses Not to exceed £80.00*

Please forward to the Payroll Team at Constantine House (or your school’s payroll provider) for payment.

**A copy of the Form and the receipt(s) must be retained in school for audit purposes.**

**Employee Vision Form Notes**

The School Employee Vision Examination Form must accompany any request for reimbursement. Reimbursements will only be paid through the monthly payroll; they will not be paid locally.

Employee Responsibilities:

You must ensure that:

* the Optician has completed the appropriate section of the form
* you have attached the appropriate VAT receipt(s)
* you have completed and signed the declaration before submitting the claim to the school

Further Information

*‘DSE Users’* are school staff that are required to regularly use display screen equipment such as computers and laptops as a significant part of their normal work in the school (daily, for continuous periods for an hour or more, several times each day, most days of the week).

The School will contribute up to £30 towards the cost of a vision test and up to £50 towards the cost of a basic pair of spectacles prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned. If you choose to have spectacles or contact lenses of a higher specification then you are responsible for any additional cost.

‘Normal’ corrective appliances are spectacles or contact lenses prescribed for any other purpose than display screen use and are at the individuals own expense. Experience has shown that in most working populations only a small minority (less than 10%) will need glasses solely for display screen work.

There is no reliable evidence that work with display screen equipment causes any permanent damage to eyes or eyesight, but it may make users with pre-existing vision defects more aware of them. This may give some users temporary visual fatigue or headaches. Uncorrected vision defects can make work at display screens more tiring or stressful than it should be. If you are experiencing visual difficulties which may be considered related to the display screen work ensure you visit an optician immediately.

Those who need spectacles specifically for display screen work may include users who already wear spectacles or contact lenses, or others who have uncorrected vision defects.

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For schools purchasing the Schools’ Choice Payroll Service the form should be sent to:

Payroll Team

Constantine House

5, Constantine Road

Ipswich

Suffolk

IP1 2DH