

Standing Desks



Description: Introduce **standing desks in classrooms**. These would be adjustable so students have the option to sit or stand for lessons.

Will this change affect a lot of students within a school?

- If **put into place across a whole school** then all students would be exposed to these types of desks and would have the option to stand for lessons.
- It might only be practical to have these in a **small number of classrooms initially**, possibly focussed on particular subjects where it may be more suited (e.g., art and science). Therefore it could be that only those students taking these subjects get to have the option to stand for lessons.

Will this change affect all students equally?

- Students with **disabilities** might not be able to use the ‘standing option’ of a standing desk.

Will people like this change?

- Generally speaking, findings from studies show that **teachers** are supportive of standing desks.
- Evidence from studies in **secondary schools** suggests that student opinions **vary** with some students wanting to stand and others not. Teacher support also varied; unfavourable feedback included the potential challenges of group work and the large size of the desks.
- Students in some studies report that standing desks **make lessons more enjoyable** and make them feel **more energetic throughout the day** – although some (a minority) reported some **level of back/leg pain** from using a standing desk.
- Teachers in our CASE advisory group suggested that standing desks would be good for student-teacher relationships as students would be on ‘equal’ level to teachers. However, some were worried about **behaviour management** (for some students) and think it would “**take some getting used to**”.

How easy is it to make this change?

- There is evidence of standing desks working successfully in **secondary schools**, as well as primary schools and workplaces.
- The variability in the height of students may complicate the introduction of standing desks.
- Our CASE advisory group suggested that standing desks may be better suited to certain subjects (e.g., students already stand in art and science so students may be more used to it in these subjects).
- It may not be possible to fit 30 (individual) standing desks in a classroom, and a rotation system may be required (i.e., each classroom will have 10 standing desks and students rotate between a regular desk and a standing desk).

Will it work?

- Early evidence of the effects of introducing standing desks in **secondary schools** suggest that they increase **energy expenditure**, as well as **decrease sitting time** and **increase standing time**.
- In **primary school** settings, there is **consistent evidence** that standing desks reduce sitting time and increase energy expenditure.
- There is **no consistent evidence** that standing desks improve **concentration** or **learning** outcomes, but there is evidence that they **do NOT result in negative effects on** academic outcomes.
- Feedback from primary school teachers indicates that standing desks **improved focus and engagement in lessons**.

How much will it cost?

- Standing desks vary in price from **£25** for a basic model (standing option only, one height) to approximately **£400** (include sitting and standing options with adjustable heights); with bulk purchase this may be reduced to **£300 per desk**.
- Desks are usable for many years, so the annual costs will be much smaller. Overall spending will vary depending on classroom size and the number of students, but are likely to be quite considerable. For a class of 30 students, this would be **£9,000 to £12,000** per classroom.
- On a whole school level this could cost approximately **£270,000** to equip 30 classrooms (i.e., an entire school) with standing desks.