

VISUAL BEHAVIOUR INTEGRITY PROTOCOL

Visual Behaviour by Design

Make healthier visual habits easier to practise.

VBIP proposes a practical way to build visual breaks and supportive routines into the places where people work and learn. Healthier visual habits should be enabled by environments, schedules and leadership, rather than depend entirely on individual reminders. The framework connects three responsibilities: **Mitigate - Mobilise - Maintain.**

1. Context and rationale

Digital work and learning often involve prolonged near work across several devices. Visual discomfort can make these activities harder to sustain comfortably. VBIP focuses on practical opportunities for recovery, appropriate working conditions and shared organisational responsibility.

Its preventive purpose is to reduce the risk of screen-related visual fatigue and headaches. Comfort, attention, performance and health-related limitations while working (presenteeism) are outcomes for evaluation; benefits of the complete VBIP framework have not yet been established.

The intended users are employers, employees, education providers, occupational-health and eye-care professionals, and researchers. Implementation must reflect task demands, age, accessibility and safety. Workplace and school applications require distinct evaluation.

20-20-2: continuity of adoption

Keep the regular 20-minute / 20-second distance-viewing habit across life stages. For children, the outdoor message is two hours daily. For adults at work, VBIP proposes two outdoor breaks where feasible. Schools, families and employers enable continuity through routines, role models and practical support.

2. Scientific basis

Visual breaks: the 20-20-20 rule suggests looking approximately 6 metres away for 20 seconds after 20 minutes of near work. VBIP treats this as a practical reminder to evaluate, rather than a universally proven dose or a legal requirement.

Children: two hours outdoors each day. The outdoor component of 20-20-2 is a message for children, supporting healthy eye development and helping prevent or delay myopia onset. Evidence is stronger for onset than progression. Outdoor settings offer opportunities to shift focus between distances and attend to wider surroundings. [1]

Adults: two outdoor breaks during the workday, where feasible. VBIP proposes this practical routine for daylight exposure, movement and a change of visual activity. Daylight may support wellbeing and sleep. [8] These breaks complement frequent visual breaks; two is a practical adoption target, not a clinically established dose. [9]

Development status

Author-led proposal. Open for independent review. VBIP is intended to develop into an openly accessible framework. It is not yet a validated protocol or formally recognised standard. Governance and reuse terms remain to be defined. Publication and participation in meetings do not imply institutional endorsement.

Evaluation before wider adoption

Independent review should assess each recommendation. Pilots should specify setting, duration, comparison approach and success criteria; measure feasibility, participation, acceptability and comfort; and assess attention, performance and presenteeism separately. Use proportionate data collection and transparent privacy safeguards.

References: [1] IMI (2025), [The Role of Light in Refractive Error Development and Myopia](#). [8] Boubekri et al. (2014), [daylight exposure, wellbeing and sleep in office workers](#) (pilot study; does not establish a two-break dose). [9] HSE, [Work routine and breaks](#).

3 / THE PROTOCOL

Shared responsibility.

Visible leadership. Everyday practice.

01 Mitigate

Reduce the risk of screen-related visual fatigue and headaches through better-designed environments and practical recovery routines.

Review prolonged, uninterrupted near work alongside lighting, glare, task demands and workstation conditions. Create opportunities to vary visual activity and take short recovery breaks. Recommendations should be proportionate to the setting and complement professional assessment where needed.

02 Mobilise

Engage employees, managers and organisations in adopting regular visual breaks. Leaders model the behaviour and make time for these breaks within the working day.

Role models are central to the proposed approach. Managers visibly practise the routines, communicate permission to take breaks and organise workloads so participation is feasible. Employee ambassadors can encourage colleagues and identify practical barriers. School leaders and teachers can enable age-appropriate routines in education.

Lead by example. Make time. Make it routine. Breaks should be supported by task planning and team expectations. Participation should not become another demand placed on people without the time or autonomy to act.

03 Maintain

Make these routines part of everyday working culture through consistent leadership, organisational support, feedback and adaptation.

Include guidance in onboarding, reinforce it through team routines and regularly ask what helps or obstructs participation. Use feedback to adjust timing, prompts and working conditions. Measure feasibility and sustained adoption before attributing wider benefits to the framework.

In everyday practice

A team enables two outdoor breaks where feasible, alongside regular visual breaks throughout the day. Managers take part and make time. Schools and families help children accumulate two hours outdoors daily. Outdoor breaks should be screen-free; safety-critical tasks require a safe stopping point. Prompts must never divert attention from essential duties.

Micro Habits. Macro Impact.

Small, supported routines are the basis of the proposed approach. They can be tested and improved over time. The ambition is to support visual comfort through sustained adoption across work and education, with links to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work). Activity data must be distinguished from demonstrated impact and formal ESG reporting.

Scope and safeguards

VBIP does not diagnose conditions, establish fitness for work or replace eye care, occupational-health assessment or legal advice. Persistent or concerning symptoms need professional attention. Expert participation and institutional endorsement will be stated only when confirmed.

POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION

4. Legislative Alignment

VBIP creates no new legal duties. It proposes practical support for existing prevention obligations. These European and international references illustrate potential alignment; applicability depends on the jurisdiction and setting. None prescribes VBIP or its specific break rhythm.

Framework	Core requirement / policy basis	Proposed VBIP contribution
EU Directive 90/270/EEC, Art. 7 [2]	Periodic interruption of screen work by breaks or changes of activity.	Practical routines for visual breaks.
EU Framework Directive 89/391/EEC [3]	Assess risks and implement prevention measures.	Support assessment of visual load.
Belgium Codex Welzijn, Book VIII, Title 2 [4]	At least five-yearly risk analysis; organise breaks or other activities.	Support risk-informed routines.
Netherlands Arbobesluit, Arts. 5.10-5.11 [5]	Alternate screen work with other work or breaks; access to eye examination.	Support break planning and care awareness.
Luxembourg Regulation, 4 November 1994 [6]	Display-screen safety framework, including breaks or changes of activity.	Support practical interruption routines.
ILO C155 / C187; ILO-IAPB 2023 [7]	General OSH frameworks; 2023 policy guidance on eye health at work.	Align with prevention and eye-health programmes.

5. Institutional Record

The author records that in May 2026 he addressed the IOE Global Occupational Safety and Health Network Meeting in Vevey, Switzerland: a closed session convened by the International Organisation of Employers, listed on the EU-OSHA calendar, with ILO, EU-OSHA and employer-federation representatives. The submission addressed employer responsibility, environmental design, the reported 35% headaches/eyestrain figure and the \$411 billion global eye-health productivity estimate. These figures are not estimates of VBIP impact.

Record source: author's account in White Paper v2; speaker contribution and attendance are not independently verified here and do not constitute institutional endorsement.

Legal and policy references (click to open): [2] Directive 90/270/EEC; [3] Directive 89/391/EEC; [4] Belgian FPS Employment; [5] Arboportaal; [6] Legilux; [7] ILO-IAPB, Eye health and the world of work (2023).

Contact and collaboration

contact@vbip.org

For general and institutional enquiries about VBIP.
Learn about the framework, its purpose and its development.

partnership@vbip.org

For organisations interested in pilot projects and collaboration.
Explore how to evaluate VBIP in workplaces and education.

advisory@vbip.org

For experts interested in joining the VBIP Advisory Board.
Contribute to scientific review, governance and implementation.

Jean-Michel Viaene | Founder & Author, VBIP

6. Policy Recommendations

Competent authorities and employer organisations are invited to consider three steps:

- 1. Recognition:** acknowledge elevated visual load in multi-device work, school and social settings as an issue requiring assessment and practical operational guidance.
- 2. Operational standard:** consider the 20-20-20 and age-appropriate 20-20-2 principles, applied through VBIP, as a proposed reference for supporting periodic interruption requirements, subject to evidence review and competent-authority assessment.
- 3. Coordinated pilot evaluation:** invite education authorities, employer federations and institutional partners to test deployment across school, work and related environments, with findings submitted to competent authorities.