







Advice and Guidance for Staff Working with Children and/or Young People with a Hearing Loss  
Accessing School During Covid-19 period.

The following is some general advice and guidance for staff who may not ordinarily work with or support children and/or young people with a hearing loss but who are currently due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<p><b>Hearing Aids</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hearing aids do not restore hearing to normal. Hearing aids work best within a one to two metre range</b> so staff working with children wearing hearing aids should be aware of this, especially in relation to social distancing practices.</li> <li>• Children and young people should be encouraged to wear their hearing aids as they usually would - they should be worn at all times - if the hearing aids are not working or not in school, staff should discuss this with parents/carers.</li> <li>• There is a red dot on the hearing aid that is for the right ear. Blue dot for left ear. Each aid is individually programmed for each ear.</li> <li>• Spare batteries should be kept <b>safely</b> in school (risk of harm from ingestion or being poked in ears/up nostrils). Parents are provided with these (free) from Audiology. Parents should call or email the audiology clinic if new batteries are required and they should be then posted out during the Covid-19 period of time. In an emergency, if the child has run out of batteries and can't get replacements from their usual NHS service, it may be possible for parents/carers to purchase them from chemists, high street hearing aid dispensers or opticians if they are operating as usual.</li> <li>• The child's ear moulds (see image numbered 1) and tubing (numbered 2) need to be clean and free from wax and condensation. Please liaise with parents if the tubing /moulds look full of wax, parents have been given cleaning tools from their Audiologist. The NDCS also provide a useful video re: hearing aid cleaning and management <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n13WRngfB5g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n13WRngfB5g</a> (5:20mins for part 4 - cleaning). Staff can contact the child's Teacher of the Deaf for over the phone, or email for any advice.</li> <li>• Please be aware that hearing aids amplify <b>ALL</b> background noise so there may be noisy environments which the child will find uncomfortable or find it difficult to listen in.</li> </ul> <p><b>RADIO AID</b> -if the child/young person has a radio aid it is important for them that it is used all the time, but especially when there is background noise or the adult is at a distance from the child/young person. Contact the Teacher of the Deaf if the radio aid is not working, or the staff are new to using a radio aid as they are not the child's/young person's usual teacher, for over the phone advice.</p>
<p><b>Seating</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child/young person needs to be sat in a good position so that they can see and hear the other children/young people if they are contributing to a group activity, discussion or having a conversation.</li> <li>• The child/young person needs to have an unobstructed view of whoever is speaking (whether that is an adult or peer) with the opportunity for easy eye contact and lip reading.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Being Included</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay attention to the acoustic environment e.g. if the child/young person is spending more time in the hall or outside this is more</li> </ul>

If you need to contact the Teacher of the Deaf please do so directly. If you're not sure who the child/young person's Teacher of the Deaf is please contact the Inclusion Service office for your area:  
[inclusion.north@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion.north@lancashire.gov.uk) [inclusion.south@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion.south@lancashire.gov.uk) [inclusion.east@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:inclusion.east@lancashire.gov.uk)

 <p><b>Background Noise</b></p>	<p>acoustically challenging. The larger spaces, without all the things that help to absorb background noise make it harder to hear. This means children and young people might miss things, they have to work harder/put more effort in to hearing which can be tiring etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social times for children and young people with hearing loss can be challenging and they can easily feel left out.</li> <li>• Fast-paced social situation conversations are hard to follow. The child/young person may need support to facilitate and maintain friendships, especially if they are not mixing with their usual friends.</li> <li>• Children and young people may need some support from an adult; to focus attention on what is happening round them, to provide some 1:1 to e.g. explain the rules of games being played, to repeat back what someone has said, to support them to cue into any whole group verbal prompts.</li> <li>• Staff should provide instructions and information before any noisy activities begin, so the child/young person has the best opportunity to hear what is being said.</li> <li>• If speaking to the group stop the activity and gain the child's attention before speaking. Ordinarily staff would want to stand close to the child/young person to ensure they are best able to hear - remember social distancing will have an impact on children/young people's ability to hear - you might need to use a visual signal to prompt a child to stop and pay attention.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilitating Lip-Reading</b> (30 to 35% of English sounds can be speech read)</p> 	<p>Whilst speaking, staff or other children/young people should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face the child/young person with a hearing loss while speaking.</li> <li>• Avoid speaking whilst turning their back to the child / young person with a hearing loss</li> <li>• Avoid standing in front of a window where backlight may obscure the view of the face and mouth.</li> <li>• Avoid covering or obstructing the mouth.</li> <li>• Remember that lip reading can be extremely tiring.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Audio and Visual Equipment</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to stand where the image might project on to your face.</li> <li>• DO NOT switch all the lights off. Leave some on if possible or use a desk lamp so that when adults are speaking, their faces are not in shadow and lip-reading can still occur.</li> <li>• Enhance video clips, films with subtitles when available and if appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting Understanding</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With new routines now in place the child/young person may initially require extra support to understand what is expected of them.</li> <li>• Be aware of the likelihood of significant gaps in vocabulary knowledge which may impact on a child/young person's ability to understand what you are asking/telling or teaching them - especially is it is something new or unfamiliar.</li> <li>• Please check that the child understands by using open questioning, but allow for longer processing time.</li> <li>• In group activities, please repeat or rephrase other children's/young people's contributions, so that the child / young person with hearing loss gets that information/contribution is therefore included.</li> <li>• Check with the child/young person if anything else can be done to support their hearing needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Sources of information</b></p>	<p>The Buzz is a website for children and young people in the UK with hearing loss. It provides information and support for Y6-secondary aged children. (Also can be accessed via Buzz Facebook, Instagram and YouTube)</p> <p>Further information on supporting a child/young person of any age, is available from National Deaf Children's Society at <a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk">www.ndcs.org.uk</a></p>

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