






Advice and Guidance for Staff Working with Children and/or Young People with a Visual Impairment 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 visual impairment but who are currently due to the coronavirus pandemic.

<p>Glasses</p> <p>Specialist Equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children and young people with a visual impairment, glasses (where they are prescribed) are important. For children and young people who access support from our service, glasses will not correct their visual impairment. • Children and young people should be encouraged to wear their glasses as they usually would. If the glasses are damaged or broken, or not in school, staff should discuss this with parents/carers. • Glasses should be kept clean. Some children may need support from an adult to check and clean their glasses. <p>Specialist Equipment -if the child/young person has any specialist equipment it is important for the child that it is used as it usually would be. Contact the Teacher of the Visually Impaired or Specialist Sensory Technician if the equipment is not working, or the staff are new to using it as they are not the child's/young person's usual teacher, for over the phone advice.</p>
<p>Seating</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The child / young person may be able to tell you about the best place for them to sit so that they are best able to see. • When trying to establish if a child/young person can see from where they are sat, try asking them 'what' they can see, rather than 'if' they can see
<p>Being Included</p>  <p>Background Noise</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to the visual environment e.g. if the child is spending more time in the hall or outside this is may be more challenging - some children/young people struggle to see well over distance. This means children and young people might miss things, they have to work harder/put more effort in to looking and trying to work out what they can see which can be tiring etc. • Social times for children and young people with visual impairment can be challenging and they can easily feel left out. • Children with visual impairment also need a good listening environment, so they are best able to use what they can hear to help compensate for what they are not easily or clearly able to see. • 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 support them to cue into any whole group visual prompts. • Staff should provide instructions and information before activities begin, so the child/young person has the best opportunity to hear what is being said. If it is something new, children/young people may need time to explore and investigate themselves before they are able to engage in an activity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In dim or bright light/glare from windows children may find it difficult to see, consider closing blinds and allow some time for adjusting when entering new environments or going inside → outside or outside → inside.
<p>Audio and Visual Equipment</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to stand where the image might project on to your face. • Make sure the lights or light from the window doesn't reflect off the screen • The child / young person may need to sit nearer the front or further back to get the best possible view. Remember, for some children and young people watching presentations/videos etc. can be effortful. • Presentations e.g. PowerPoint slides need to be high contrast, so any images or texts stand out clearly from the background. Many children and young people with a visual impairment will need enlarged text and this will be the same in a presentation (it will need to be larger than it would need to be for children/young people without a visual impairment)
<p>Supporting Understanding</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With new routines now in place the child/young person may initially require extra support to understand what is expected of them. • Be aware of the likelihood of gaps in vocabulary, experiences or knowledge which may impact on a child/young person's ability to understand what you are asking/telling or teaching them - especially if it is something new or unfamiliar. • Please check that the child understands by using open questioning, but allow for longer processing time. • In group activities, please allow the child/young person to explore the materials being used, to watch an adult or competent peer to see what to do and/or provide clear instructions so that the child/young person can be included • Check with the child/young person if anything else can be done to support their vision needs.
<p>Other Sources of information</p>	<p>There a wide range of types/causes of visual impairment and visual impairment can affect children and young people in many ways, even where they have the same condition. More specific information for each individual child/young person will be available in their most recent functional vision assessment report from the Teacher of Children/Young People with Visual Impairment (available in school).</p> <p>Further information about different types of visual impairment can be found at: https://www.fightforsight.org.uk/about-the-eye/a-z-eye-conditions/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI-aTiiI3M6AIVzLTtCh06VgukEAAYyAAEgKM2fD_BwE</p> <p>RNIB also produce information related to visual impairment and education: https://www.rnib.org.uk/services-we-offer-advice-professionals/education-professionals</p>

If you need to contact the Teacher of Visually Impaired Children/Young People please do so directly. If you're not sure who the child/young person's Teacher of the Visually Impaired is please contact the Inclusion Service office for your area: inclusion.north@lancashire.gov.uk inclusion.south@lancashire.gov.uk inclusion.east@lancashire.gov.uk