**VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

**Children having special educational needs due to difficulties with visual impairment should be treated as individuals within the learning environment.**

Visual impairment refers to a range of difficulties from partial sight through to blindness. Pupils with visual impairments cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, a pupil is considered to be VI if they require adaptations to their environment or specific differentiation of learning materials in order to access the curriculum.

**Degrees of visual impairment**

The following are nationally agreed definitions of degrees of vision loss. They refer to the corrected vision (with glasses/contact lenses if worn) in the better eye.

1. Mild loss – slightly reduced distance vision of 6/18 with good near vision OR a diagnosed visual condition
2. Moderate loss – reduced distance vision of 6/18-6/36 and slightly reduced near vision OR moderately reduced distance vision of 6/24-6/36 but good near vision
3. Severe loss – may have some, but not necessarily all, of the following in addition to those in levels 1 and 2: difficulty accessing large amounts of text so that modified materials are required / safety issues with regard to PE, practical science, technology / requires mobility and independence and daily life skills training
4. Profound loss – educationally blind who uses Braille to access the curriculum, 6/60 or less. May have some, but not necessarily all, of the following in addition to those in levels 1, 2 and 3: inability to handwrite / need to use mobility aids and training to move around safely / use Braille or audio to access text

All children and young people diagnosed with a moderate, severe or profound loss in accordance with the nationally agreed definitions meet the criteria for referral for their visual impairment.

**NB: The involvement of the Visually Impaired Service requires a medical diagnosis prior to referral.**

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| **Symptoms that may indicate visual impairment** | **yes / no** |
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| long term inflamed, cloudy, bloodshot or weeping eyes |  |
| long term eye lids which are drooping or swollen |  |
| squints of any kind in one or both eyes |  |
| unusual eye movements including a rapid involuntary movement of both eyes either in a horizontal or vertical direction. |  |
| frequent blinking, rubbing and screwing up of the eyes and obvious discomfort in bright light. Children may complain that their eyes feel ‘dusty’ or ‘gritty’ |  |
| the child moves their head rather than eyes while reading |  |
| closing or covering one eye |  |
| unusual very short or long working distance |  |
| frequent ‘nodding’ movement of the head or unusual sideways gaze when concentrating on visual tasks |  |
| frowning or facial grimaces when focussing |  |
| complaints of dizziness, headaches or general eye discomfort |  |
| clumsy movements, bumping into objects at the side or at the feet, moving down steps |  |
| reluctance to join in playground activities |  |
| not answering to questions or commands unless addressed by name (this can often be mistaken for ‘rude’ or uncooperative behaviour) |  |
| fumbling over fine hand/eye co-ordination activities |  |
| difficulty in searching for information on a page |  |
| difficulty navigating steps, stairs, uneven ground |  |
| under or over reaching for objects |  |

**Visual Impairment: Universal Support and Quality First Teaching Strategies**

The child or young person experiences a mild vision loss. There may or may not be advice on management of the loss from the Visually Impaired Service.

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| **Assess, plan, do, review** | **Teaching and learning** | **Resources** |
| **Assess**   |  | | --- | | Class teacher identifies pupil as having difficulty following the lesson content.  Class teacher aware that the pupil is experiencing visually related learning difficulties. |   **Plan**  Class teacher’s seating plan is relevant to the child’s visual needs.  Class teacher makes adjustments to planning and to the classroom environment.  Planning ensures teaching methods which facilitate access to the curriculum, social / emotional development and class participation.  Class teacher shares planning with support staff to ensure resources are prepared in advance of lesson.  Pupil performance is closely monitored.  **Do**  All staff made awareness of visually related learning difficulties and use strategies to improve visual access within the classroom.  Monitor that glasses are worn if prescribed.  Class teacher uses quality first teaching methods.  Peers are made aware of strategies to use with pupil.  Pupil performance is monitored to determine effectiveness of strategies.  Strategies shared with pupil and parents/carers.  **Review**  The impact of strategies and quality first teaching methods is reviewed by class teacher and SENDCo to decide whether or not further assessment is required.  The views of the pupil and their parents/carers should also be sought as to the effectiveness of strategies employed. | * Attention to the classroom environment to ensure appropriate lighting and layout and consideration of safety. * Ensure the best seating position for the pupil; close to the board but not facing a window. * Read aloud as you are writing on the board. * Ensure the child is positioned close to demonstrations and include plenty of verbal explanation to ensure pupil understands the activity. * Address the pupil by name to gain their attention as they may be unaware that you are looking at them. * Check that the pupil has understood the task before they begin. * The use of additional time to allow for processing of information, formulating responses and completing tasks. * Make whiteboard writing large, clear and bold | Ensure the classroom is a visually friendly environment.   * Use curtains or blinds to control light entering the room. * Ensure even, ambient artificial lighting. * Ensure furnishings are in strong contrast to the surroundings. Apply brightly coloured tape or images if necessary. * Shiny, reflective surfaces should be avoided as they cause dazzle (e.g. laminated materials, table tops, white-boards). * Chairs should be pushed in when not in use and cupboard doors and drawers should never be left open as these are hazards. * All learning materials must be clear, well-structured and in a font size that the pupil can read comfortably at approximately 32 cm. * Avoid the sharing of texts and resources, unless doing so is a priority for social reasons. Shared resources may not be clearly visible for the child with reduced vision as they may not be close enough or at an appropriate angle.   **Staff Training**  School based training for whole staff, groups of staff or individual staff is provided by the Visually Impaired Service.  Centrally based 1 and 2 day training for teachers and teaching assistants/support staff is delivered annually.  Parent/carer training days delivered annually. |

**Visual Impairment – Targeted Support**

The child or young person experiences a moderate/severe vision loss that necessitates the support of a Specialist Teacher of Visual Impairment and may also need programmes of support at key times from a Habilitation Specialist for mobility and touch typing training.

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| **Assess, plan, do, review** | **Teaching and learning** | **Resources** |
| **Assess**   |  | | --- | | Functional vision assessment is completed by the Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment who will make recommendations to enable the pupil to have visual access to the curriculum and environment.  Pupil’s strengths and weaknesses will be analysed using enlarged curriculum-related assessment, criterion related assessment and may be supplemented by standardised tests and / or diagnostic tests. These will need to be in the pupil’s print size.  Pupil voice should be included in the assessment which should inform planning. |   **Plan**  Planning based on current visual performance and prognosis.  Support plans should be set using “SMART” outcomes targeted at the areas of need with appropriate provision to achieve these outcomes.  Assessment information informs further adjustments to teaching and learning that may be required as well as identifying additional intervention required.  Pupil and parent/carer involvement in the teaching programme will be clearly defined. Strategies on how to support the pupil at home should be included in the support plan.  **Do**  Advice from external agencies is included in the Support Plan and recommended interventions and strategies are implemented.  Some additional support time may be required. The SENDCo facilitates assessment, planning and monitoring. Appropriate provision and interventions are deployed without delay targeted at the area of need.  All staff working with the pupil are aware of the plan and follow the advice and strategies contained within it.  Parents follow the plan in supporting the pupil at home.  **Review**  Assessment of progress should be analysed in terms of effectiveness of interventions and rate of progress, age expectation and should take into account other related needs such as cognitive difficulties, emotional well-being and additional difficulties.  Regular reviews should be held at least termly and must include parent/carers and pupil. Review should focus on pupil progress, effectiveness of strategies, new information or factors and the setting of new outcomes | Class or subject teachers are responsible for the progress and support of the pupil and may need to adjust timetable to allow for Habilitation sessions as directed by the Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment (mobility / touch typing / life skills)    All of the above ‘Universal’ strategies must be in place plus additional adult support may be needed to:   * prepare enlarged reading materials, * adaptation of equipment and resources, * repeat demonstrations as required, * supervise safe use of tools and safe practice in practical lessons, * encourage and supervise the use of specialist equipment * provide alternative writing implements such as black felt tip pen, 4B pencil | * Environmental Audit completed by VI service with recommendations for VI friendly environment to ensure safe navigation for VI pupil. * Daily checks that prescription glasses are being worn when necessary and kept clean (not all VI pupils may need to wear glasses) * Large print learning materials in pupil’s specific print size, font style, line spacing and colour of paper. * Provision of additional time for the completion of work (it takes longer for the VI pupil to complete work than for fully sighted peers) * Appropriate specialist equipment such as reading slopes, book stands, magnifiers. * Key person for social / emotional development and support.   The following organisations produce large print books; fiction, non-fiction, revision guides etc.   * **The RNIB National Library** - **free** service -[http://librarycatalogue.rnib.org.uk/](https://webmail.halton.gov.uk/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://librarycatalogue.rnib.org.uk/) * **Seeingear** is a **free** online library [www.seeingear.org](http://www.seeingear.org) * **Load2learn** is a **free** service [www.load2learn.org.uk](http://www.load2learn.org.uk) * **‘CustomEyes’** (Blind Children UK) produces tailor made books [www.blindchildren.org.uk](http://www.blindchildren.org.uk)   **Staff Training**  School based training for whole staff, groups of staff or individual staff is provided by the Visually Impaired Service.  Centrally based 1 and 2 day training for teachers and teaching assistants/support staff is delivered annually.  Parent/carer training days delivered annually. |

**Visual Impairment – Specialist Support**

The child or young person experiences a severe/profound visual impairment and likely to be registered partially sighted or blind. Visual impairment necessitates large print and / or tactile learning (Braille) and the support of a Specialist Teacher of Visual Impairment. There will also be continual support and advice from Habilitation Specialists for mobility, touch typing and independent life skills training.

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| **Assess, plan, do, review** | **Teaching and learning** | **Resources** |
| **Assess**  Functional vision assessment is completed by the Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment who will make recommendations to enable the pupil to have visual or tactile access to the curriculum and environment.  Awareness that pupil may be experiencing visually related learning difficulties and monitor pupil performance in this respect.  If there has been little identified progress towards achieving outcomes, it may be necessary to adjust the outcomes and the time frame to achieve these outcomes. More regular reviews and shortened cycles of assess-plan-do-review may be required to monitor the impact of intervention.  School will continue to use the assessments identified at specialist level to inform any further plans. These will need to be in the pupil’s specific print size or Braille.  **Plan**  Planning based on current visual performance and prognosis.  Support plans will include very carefully considered targets, delivery methods and evaluation techniques. Any advice from external professionals is clearly evidenced in the plan and carried out**.**  Information contained within a speech and language care plan will be included in the support plan.  Planning incorporates a multi-sensory approach (visual, kinaesthetic, auditory)  **Do**  Schools follow the support plan as they have at targeted level.  Strategies and advice from external professionals are implemented and evidenced in teacher’s planning, further adjustments to teaching and learning and provision.  **Review**  Reviews will be carried out in consultation with the pupil, parents/carers and the specialist services involved to consider the impact the interventions have had on pupil progress. It is recommended that at least 2 cycles of Assess, Plan, Do, Review are completed. | As for targeted support plus:   * Human / technical support for whiteboard work * Significant adaptations to curriculum delivery and learning resources * Teaching assistant proficient in reading and writing in Braille; to reinforce Braille teaching and to produce and transcribe Braille teaching resources and pupil work from Braille to print and print to Braille. * Additional group and individual work to facilitate learning and inclusion, as appropriate * Additional individual work with a key adult to check the pupil has understood the concepts of the lessons and for the completion of work to ensure the pupil completes the week on a par with fully sighted peers.   . | As for targeted support plus:   * For pupils using Braille, a Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment to teach the Braille code throughout the pupil’s educational career, up to 3 sessions per week. * Provision of a Perkins Brailler and a Braille Note for the production of written work. * Production of 3D and tactile diagrams, charts, maps, pictures. * Targeted weekly / fortnightly lesson with Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment.   **Staff Training**  School based training for whole staff, groups of staff or individual staff is provided by the Visually Impaired Service.  Sign posting for key staff to access Braille training from external providers.  Centrally based 1 and 2 day training for teachers and teaching assistants/support staff is delivered annually.  Parent/carer training days delivered annually. |