

Information for schools for children undergoing treatment for amblyopia

Information for parents and teachers

*This leaflet has been jointly devised with the Orthoptic Department and
the Visual Impairment and Sensory Support Teams for Warrington and Halton.*

Information for Parents

Aim

The aim of this leaflet is to give your child's school/nursery information regarding your child's treatment and to allow them to have the necessary advice to limit the impact the treatment will have on your child.

Your child's school can use the advice in this leaflet to better understand your child's condition and treatment.

Information for Schools/ Nurseries

What is amblyopia?

Amblyopia (lazy eye) is when a child can see better with one eye than the other.

Treatment of Amblyopia

Amblyopia can be treated by wearing glasses, wearing a patch or using eye drops. These treatments can be used alone or in combination.

How long will the treatment last for?

This will vary for each child and depends upon their age, level of vision, compliance and how quickly the vision responds to treatment.

How are glasses worn?

In most cases children are asked to wear their glasses all of the time. This normally includes outdoor play and P.E.

How is the patch worn?

The patch is worn over the good eye to encourage the brain to use the eye with the poor vision.

The amount that the child needs to wear the patch for will vary and depends upon the level of vision in the "lazy" eye. The majority of children are advised to wear their patch during school time to stimulate the vision.

How will wearing the patch affect the child?

The child will have blurred vision whilst wearing the patch over the good eye.

The level of vision will vary with each child. Some children will have much worse vision than others and therefore may struggle more with their treatment.

Children may struggle to read, see the whiteboard or experience difficulty with P.E. or outdoor play.

Once the patch is removed the child will be able to see with the good eye again. Some children may feel self-conscious about wearing the patch and it has been known that other children may say hurtful things. It may affect the child's confidence and social interaction. It is important to be aware of this as it can affect compliance with the treatment.

As the child's vision improves with treatment (patching or eye drops), the child should find the treatment is less of a struggle.

How are eye drops (atropine) used?

An eye drop is placed in the good eye once per day. The effect of this is to blur to vision in the good eye to make the brain use the lazy eye.

How may the eye drops affect the child?

The aim of this treatment is to blur the vision in the good eye. The pupil in the good eye will be dilated (large). The effect of the drops does not wear off until the treatment has stopped so until that time the vision in the dilated eye will be blurred.

The child may struggle to read, see the whiteboard or experience difficulty with P.E. or outdoor play.

Other possible side effects that you may notice are light sensitivity, restlessness and hyperactivity. Side effects are not very common although on sunny days children may complain of having difficulty in seeing in bright light. You may find that allowing the child to wear a hat or sunglasses on these days may help, as well as ensuring that your child is not sitting in direct sunlight. If you are concerned about any side effects please speak to the child's parent.

Helpful Websites:

www.load2learn.org.uk

www.spacekraft.co.uk

www.posturite.co.uk

Further Information:

If you wish to speak to an Orthoptist or Optometrist please contact us:

Tel: 01925 662772 Orthoptist

Tel: 01925 662485 Optometrist

Useful strategies for school use

Distance Viewing

The child may find it difficult to view the displays or the Interactive White Board across the classroom and consideration may need to be given as to the seating position within the classroom for board work or looking at displays. A central position, away from windows and the possibility of glare may be appropriate.

P.E.

Your child may become more apprehensive about playing games that involve catching a ball or a lot of movement. You may also notice some deterioration in the child's balance during P.E. lessons. Use verbal prompts to reassure the child and brightly coloured equipment which will be easier to see.

Social Impact

The child may find it difficult to find their friends in the playground, especially if they are playing games that are already in progress. Strategies may need to put in place to offer opportunities for the child to find their friends.

Environment

Peripheral vision will be affected and the child may not see bags or clutter on the floor. Classroom and access corridors should be kept clear with good lighting. Depth perception may also be affected and children should be reminded to use hand rails where available when using stairs.

Reading

Depending upon the child's vision they may require work to be adapted into a larger print. Early reading books are usually large print and may be suitable for younger children. However if the child is struggling to access reading books then a vision support teacher can assess the child and advise on the appropriate print size required. Worksheets and font on the board may also need to be enlarged. A sloping board may aid posture whilst reading as the child may need to read at a closer distance than normal.

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www.warringtonandhaltonhospitals.nhs.uk