



How your child with **visual impairments** is supported in school



Information for parents and carers

This leaflet provides examples of what you and your child can expect from schools through a graduated approach for supporting Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).



There are different types and degrees of visual impairments (VI) that require different levels of support. A visual impairment is likely to affect how your child makes sense of the world around them and how they move within it.

Visual impairment is often identified early through a consultant ophthalmologist. Once you receive a diagnosis a referral is sent to the Sensory VI Team, the specialist team who will support you, your child and the school at every stage. A qualified teacher of the visually impaired (QTVI) will work with you and your child to make sure you get the support that you need.

The type and level of support required will depend on your child's needs. Schools will use the graduated approach, a system to identify and meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Most children and young people with visual impairments will make good progress and achieve well when the right support is in place.



Quality First Teaching

Quality First Teaching is high quality teaching which provides appropriate learning opportunities to all pupils, whatever their individual needs. It is the first step of the graduated approach in responding to pupils who have, or may have, SEND. Staff knowledge and understanding of SEND is a key factor to Quality First Teaching.

All staff are also required to have knowledge and understanding of the SEND Code of Practice 2014 and the The Equalities Act 2010.

You will be involved in decisions about your child at every stage of the graduated approach and all staff who come into contact with your child should be made aware of their needs and given strategies to cope with them.

Examples of what might be expected from this level of school support:

The class teacher will:

- Provide resources to support your child's needs, as advised by the qualified teacher of the visually impaired (QTVI).
- Monitor your child's progress and seek advice if required.
- Provide your child with their own copy of text.
- Ensure your child is included in class.
- Ensure the curriculum includes examples of diversity.
- Provide commentary on what is happening in class.
- Use models and objects to help your child to understand.
- Be aware that your child may need more time to complete tasks.
- Make adjustments to ensure that your child can access PE.

The qualified teacher of the visually impaired will:

- Provide schools with training and advice to help them meet the needs of your child.
- Visit your child in school.
- Spend time with the class teacher to make sure your child is fully included in the class.
- Plan with the class teacher to make sure the work is adapted to meet your child's needs.
- Monitor to check that your child is wearing their glasses, if prescribed, and that the glasses are clean, positioned correctly and in a good state of repair.
- Identify whether some technology may be needed to support your child.

The school will:

- Consider the lighting and environmental conditions.
- Provide an inclusive curriculum, for example making special arrangement for trips, after school clubs, assemblies and sports days.
- Carry out risk assessments for safety.
- Consider how to help your child to get involved at times such as playtime.



SEN Support Plans

Some children will require SEN support which should be ‘additional to’ or ‘different from’ what schools provide for all pupils.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and the teacher will work with you and your child to create a SEN Support Plan which should be reviewed three times a year. This will be based around your child’s strengths and needs and will identify outcomes for your child that will be agreed with you.

It will be important to identify the main characteristic of your child’s need (primary need). However, support plans will identify all the needs of your child within these four broad areas:

The four broad areas of need are:

- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Communication and interaction
- Sensory and physical



Targeted SEN support might include:

- A specialist teacher from the VI team to carry out an assessment and advise on curriculum adaptations and technology.
- The QTVI to provide a programme of support.
- Supporting your child to learn life skills.
- Specialist equipment as required.
- School trips that are planned to take into consideration your child's needs.
- Planned arrangements for assessments.
- A habilitation specialist may need to complete a risk assessment and environmental audit to recommend adjustments.



Education, Health and Care Plans

Before a school can apply for a statutory assessment of your child's needs they must do all they can to support your child and must be able to show that they have taken "sufficient relevant and purposeful action".

You and your child will be the focus of the assessment process. The assessment will provide valuable information to help decide the most appropriate support for your child, and may result in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).

If your child has an EHC Plan:

- Staff will be trained to appropriate levels.
- The support for your child will be detailed in the EHC Plan and your child will have an individual learning programme.
- Teaching and learning styles and resources will be modified to meet your child's needs.
- We will undertake careful planning when your child is moving to the next stage of education (transition).
- Habilitation programmes covering mobility and independent living skills will be provided.
- There will be planned specialist arrangements for exams.
- Your child will have access to use equipment where required.
- We will work with your child to develop social and emotional skills alongside educational attainment.
- We will undertake an annual statutory review in addition to termly reviews.

Additional Support

The Local Offer

Information for parents and carers on a broad range of SEN and disability issues and support can be found on the Local Offer website. SEN planning tools can also be found in the 'for providers' section of the website.

www.countydurhamfamilies.info/localoffer

Telephone 03000 26 99 95

Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

Durham SENDIASS supports parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children and young people with SEND. All services provided are confidential and impartial.

Email sendiass@durham.gov.uk

Telephone 03000 267 003

Making Changes Together

Making Changes Together (MCT) is a group for parents and carers of children with SEND. MCT work with professionals in County Durham to improve services for children and young people with SEND.

www.mctdurham.co.uk

Telephone 0191 587 3541

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