

# Hearing Impairment Information for Schools



## Possible indications of hearing loss

You may notice:

- ✓ Poor or delayed speech and language.
- ✓ Initial or final consonants omitted or unclear.
- ✓ Difficulty or delay in acquiring phonic skills.
- ✓ The pupil may appear to hear when 1:1 in a quiet room, but struggle when in background noise, or when not close to the speaker.
- ✓ The pupil watches face and lip-patterns intently.
- ✓ The pupil misunderstands instructions or tends to take the lead from peers.

## Types of Hearing Loss

**Conductive** hearing loss is usually temporary and may fluctuate. One in three pupils will have experienced fluctuating hearing loss. Glue ear, the most common form of conductive hearing loss, may be worse during winter months. It is usually not necessary for children with glue ear to be seen by ST HI.

**Sensorineural** hearing loss is permanent. One in one thousand pupils has permanent deafness. It can be mild, moderate, severe, or profound and one or both ears may be affected. Sensorineural hearing loss can impact on the ability to hear speech and environmental sounds.

**Mixed** hearing loss is a combination of a conductive and a sensorineural hearing loss.

## **What should I do if I think a pupil in my class has a hearing loss?**

- ✓ Gather information:  
Observe the pupil's responses to speech in a range of listening situations. Note any differences in the pupil's responses when:
  - working 1:1;
  - working in a group.
  - listening in background noise.
  - from a distance.
  - voices are quiet.
  - unable to see your face or lip-patterns.
- ✓ Ask parents or carers if they have noticed that their child has difficulty hearing.
- ✓ If there are concerns, it may be appropriate to suggest that the parent or carer arranges an appointment with their GP.

## **Where hearing difficulties are suspected, the following strategies may be helpful**

- ✓ Seat the pupil close to the front of the group or class, ensuring they always have a clear view of your face and lip-patterns.
- ✓ Make sure the classroom is well lit with light on the speaker's face to facilitate lip reading.
- ✓ Gain the pupil's attention and ensure eye contact is gained before giving instructions or information.
- ✓ In class discussions, alert the child as to who is speaking.
- ✓ Condense and repeat oral contributions of other children.
- ✓ Use visual aids to support learning.
- ✓ Sit opposite or at right angles to the pupil during 1:1 or small group work.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for pre-teaching and revisiting key, subject specific vocabulary. Check understanding by asking, "What is it you have to do?" or, "What did I just say?" Never ask, "Did you hear me?"
- ✓ Minimise background noise. Close doors and windows, cover large shiny tables with a cloth, hang curtains or blinds.

## **Specialist Teachers for Hearing Impairment (ST HI)**

ST HI work with children and young people (CYP) who have been diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss which is either moderate, severe, or profound. They provide support and advice to families, settings, and schools.

ST HI work across Kent. They have mandatory qualifications as teachers of the deaf, and some have additional qualifications in Audiology or in Early Years.

Hearing loss can affect every aspect of a pupil's learning, and may lead to delayed speech and language, underachievement, behavioural and social difficulties.

### **Contact Details**

#### **STLS HI Contact Details**

Telephone advice can be provided by the Co-ordinators for Hearing Impairment

East Kent—Jo Clarke: 07825 380152  
[jclarke@valence.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jclarke@valence.kent.sch.uk)

West Kent—Sue Holder: 07825 013351  
[sholder@valence.kent.sch.uk](mailto:sholder@valence.kent.sch.uk)

General information and advice are available from the National Deaf Children's Society helpline:

0808 800 8880 or the website [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

#### **East Kent Children's Hearing Services**

**Telephone:** 01227 866487

**Text:** 07917 328056

**Email:** [ekh-tr.EastKentChildrensHearingService@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.EastKentChildrensHearingService@nhs.net)

#### **West Kent Children's Hearing Service**

**Telephone:** 0300 1232670

**Email:** [kentchft.childhearing@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.childhearing@nhs.net)