

STLS Sensory Service

Mild Visual Impairment

Here are some strategies to help schools meet the needs of children with mild visual impairment (VI). The needs of children and young people with a mild visual impairment can be met through Quality First Teaching and simple strategies used in the classroom. In the majority of cases these children and young people do not require specialist interventions from a Qualified Teacher for Visual Impairment. The information in the universal section of the Mainstream Core Standards for VI will also be useful.

General Strategies

- Talk through work which is on the board or which is being demonstrated.
- Use precise language in order to give a clear verbal description wherever possible.
- Provide as many opportunities as possible for concrete learning through direct experience.
- Allow plenty of time for the visually impaired child to handle and explore everyday objects and to talk through their experiences.
- Make sure they fully understand the concepts they are trying to learn.
- Allow more time for the visually impaired child to complete tasks. It may sometimes be necessary to give them fewer tasks than their peers.
- If glasses are worn they should be worn all the time including at playtimes and for P.E.

Position in The Room

When you are talking to the class or a group which includes a visually impaired child:

- Position yourself so that you can be seen easily, preferably against a contrasting background and away from glare. Try not to stand silhouetted against a window.
- Try to establish eye contact with visually impaired child, although sometimes this is very difficult. If necessary encourage them to turn towards your voice.
- Ensure child with VI sits close to the teaching focus.
- When well positioned will be able to access normal materials in class and examinations.

Writing

- Writing implements need to give a clear dark line. 2B pencils or black felt tip pens are useful.
- Paper needs to be non-reflective.
- Any lines used, for instance underlays, should be clear and dark.
- Illustrations and diagrams need to be clear and uncluttered.
- Worksheets and photocopies need to be clear with good contrast between print and paper, again not on shiny paper.
- Print rather than cursive script may be needed.
- Child's handwriting may be larger than normal.
- Teacher comments should be written in black pen large enough for the pupil to read.

Reading

- Some children will need clear, large print books.
- Avoid books with poorly produced print illustrations.
- Allow children to have the book at an angle and distance which is comfortable for them. Special stands for books are available.
- Try to avoid asking visually impaired children to share a book.
- In teaching reading stress language rather than visual cues.
- These children will need training in search and scan techniques.

Social Skills and Mobility

- Make sure visually impaired child knows their way around the school and around the classroom.
- "Go with Jane ..." is more tactful than "Take Jane ...".
- Anticipate new situations especially if they involve trips out of school, such as visits to museums or geography field work.
- Encourage confidence and social awareness by social skills training.
- Encourage visually impaired child to be as independent as possible in organising and taking care of their own belongings.
- Ensure PE is fully inclusive

ICT

- Ensure there is good contrast on whiteboard or consider sitting child with VI at a separate monitor.
- Use high visibility stickers on a standard keyboard.
- Make use of accessibility options.

