

Supporting the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment

Top Access Tips: Managing the Classroom Environment

1. Lighting

- ◆ Good even lighting
- ◆ Avoid Glare
- ◆ Control light e.g. adjust blinds/curtains, move child's location in classroom according to lighting conditions

2. Environment/Storage

- ◆ Keep a predictable and consistent classroom environment
- ◆ Clearly labelled resources, drawers and displays
- ◆ Provide additional space at child's desk for equipment, large print papers
- ◆ Storage space for folders/equipment in classroom

3. Displays

- ◆ Text to be read, at reading height
- ◆ Clear and large is a good maxim
- ◆ Clear contrasting colours for text, display mounts

4. Teacher's position in class

- ◆ Stand away from the window (standing with back to the window creates shadow)
- ◆ Stand at a proximity to enable child the best view of you, find out what this distance is from the Teacher of VI

5. Language

- ◆ Speak child's name first to gain attention, ensure he/she is looking at you before you begin to speak, particularly when they have their hand up to answer a question

- ◆ Ensure all verbal instructions are precise

6. Seating to access distance vision tasks

- ◆ Child to sit close to the action, at a distance that enables the best view
- ◆ Position the child in most suitable place to access whiteboard, smart board, demonstration, carpet activity , may need to sit in different places for different activities

7. Whiteboards

- ◆ Black rather than coloured pens provide better contrast on whiteboards
- ◆ Clean class and individual whiteboards regularly.

8. Understanding the task

- ◆ If appropriate, assist the child to 'visually access' the task first
- ◆ Provide a verbal overview of the learning materials
- ◆ Reinforce learning, allow time to explore any pictures and objects **and time to revisit** if necessary

9. Printed materials

- ◆ Adapt to child's print specification and individual needs
- ◆ It is good practice for the child NOT to share any text

10. Marking and making comments on the child's work

- ◆ Use a black pen and write in large print
- ◆ Numerous comments should be done as numbered footnotes
- ◆ Print spellings at the end of the piece of work for the child to read

Advice Point

Visual Fatigue: "Seeing" requires a good deal of effort and concentration, which may affect motivation, due to the visual fatigue experienced after prolonged periods of close work.

Their eye condition may fluctuate meaning they 'see' better some days than others, impacting on their access to the curriculum.