

Supporting the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment

Top Access Tips: Managing the Classroom Environment for a young person accessing by non-sighted methods

1. Environment/Storage

- ◆ Keep a predictable and consistent classroom environment
- ◆ Provide an easily accessible location for the young person to work in. E.g. desk near to the door or to power supply, whilst ensuring the location doesn't isolate the child/young person.
- ◆ Resources, drawers and displays labelled with Braille or objects of reference or tactile marker
- ◆ Provide additional space at child's desk for equipment, Braille papers
- ◆ Storage space for folders/equipment in classroom

2. Language

- ◆ Speak child/young person's name first to gain attention, ensure he/she is looking towards you before you begin to speak, particularly when they have their hand up to answer a question
- ◆ Ensure all verbal instructions are accurate and give a set of actions for the young person to follow
- ◆ Describe situations, objects and scenes using accurate language. Use child/young person's existing knowledge and build the picture, scene or understanding of the concept from this point.

3. Access to distance vision tasks

- ◆ Accompany each action (e.g. during a demonstration) with clear dialogue
- ◆ Verbalise as you point to and refer to words and graphics on the board
- ◆ Verbalise as you write text on the board
- ◆ Provide hard copy of Braille presented on the board

Depending on the individual child/young person access may further be enabled in the following ways:

- ◆ Provide an electronic copy of text to young person via laptop or iPad

- ◆ Email copy of work for access via technology device
- ◆ Connect the young person's laptop to the interactive board presentation, adjust settings on laptop to enable speech access
- ◆ Provide tactile diagrams of those presented on the board

4. Access to experiments and demonstrations:

- ◆ Give the young person the real object(s) to explore tactilely
- ◆ Allow time to explore the steps of an experiment before the lesson commences, explain and 'walk through' any specific processes or parts of the experiment

5. Access to close work tasks

- ◆ Access to reading and writing activities, will be dependent on assistive technology chosen to support the young person but may include
- ◆ Perkins Braille Machine, Braille Note for text production, email, internet, for written subjects, e.g. English, History, Geography.
- ◆ Hard copy of Braille for some subjects e.g. Maths and Science. (Duxbury translation software to produce larger amounts of Braille)
- ◆ iPad to enable access to ebooks
- ◆ Supernova speech access for PC access
- ◆ Pen friend - audio labeller, scientific calculator with speech

6. Fatigue and maintaining access

Tactile and auditory access is fatiguing and can take longer. Consider the learning objective or task to be completed. Are there any adaptations/reductions that can be made to:

- ◆ Amount of content?
- ◆ Number of questions to be answered?
- ◆ Task to be completed, whilst still ensuring learning outcome is reached?

7. Understanding the task

- ◆ If appropriate, assist the YP to 'tactilely 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

8. Marking and making comments on the Young person's work

- ◆ Make written comments and translate to Braille
- ◆ Read comments to young person
- ◆ Add comments using the Penfriend—Audio Labeller
- ◆ Email comments to access using speech on Braille Note or laptop

9. Organisational Skills

- ◆ Create folder for each subject on laptop, save work in a consistent way, e.g. young person to carry one **Organisation Folder** divided into numbered/subject labelled sections, contents page numbered to match section dividers.
- ◆ Use 'bump ons,' to support quick re-location of information in text
- ◆ Add numbers next to 'bump on'
- ◆ Keep an electronic numbered record of the annotations