

**Sensory Service (Vision Impairment)**

**Accessibility and Remote Learning**

* Ensure all paper copies of learning resources have been adapted to the required print size etc. as recommended by this Service. Seek advice, as appropriate, from your QTVI.
* Classroom assistants who provide support to children with statements should continue to support these children - directly for those who attend school and remotely where they are at home (see ADDENDUM – Guidance for Schools & Educational Settings in Northern Ireland January 2021 From: Education Restart Programme To: All Schools, Date: 8 January 2021)
* Ensure that students with VI have taken their devices home to use to access any remote learning opportunities e.g. iPad, video magnifier, laptop, as appropriate.
* If you are signposting to online learning resources or using school produced videos and learning resources, check that these are accessible to the student with vision impairment.
* When teaching remotely, ensure there is no unnecessary noise in the background as children with vision impairment can be easily distracted. Shut the doors and windows and turn off any noisy equipment in order to reduce background noise.
* Make sure that the room where you are filming /recording has good acoustics in order to cut down on reverberation. Avoid rooms with lots of hard surfaces such as a kitchen. A smallish room with soft furnishings/ curtains or blinds is best.
* When presenting lessons virtually don’t sit with your back to a window or light source make sure that the light is on your face so the student with some vision can see you. If possible, film against a plain background and wear clothes that contrast to the background.
* If you are sharing a document on screen ensure that it is at a size that can be seen. Choose a suitable display mode, where appropriate, and increase the magnification level to allow learners visual access. Check with all learners that they can access the information. It is advisable to check privately, with the student with VI that they also can access the information. [This Sensory Service video has some useful tips](https://ennilive.sharepoint.com/sites/VI/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FVI%2FShared%20Documents%2FInformation%20%26%20videos%20for%20schools%2FVideos%20relating%20to%20%20VI%2FMaking%20Word%20docs%20accessible%20when%20screen%20sharing%2Emp4&parent=%2Fsites%2FVI%2FShared%20Documents%2FInformation%20%26%20videos%20for%20schools%2FVideos%20relating%20to%20%20VI) for making Microsoft Word visually accessible when sharing documents remotely.
* Ensure that Word documents and PowerPoint presentations are accessible. Please refer to the information about creating accessible formats on this website. [Please refer to ‘Creating Accessible Word documents and Creating Accessible PowerPoints’](https://ennilive.sharepoint.com/sites/VI/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?viewid=61d81e2c%2D328a%2D409a%2D884d%2D32d99e1449f6&id=%2Fsites%2FVI%2FShared%20Documents%2FInformation%20%26%20videos%20for%20schools%2FCreating%20Accessible%20Learning%20Resources)  in the Creating Accessible Learning Resources folder (C2k Users).
* Send learning materials e.g. worksheets, PowerPoints, etc. to the student in advance so they are able to review this before the lesson. This helps to overcome the slower processing that a student with vision impairment may experience.
* If you are using PowerPoint/visual resources/pictures etc. as part of your video lesson, make sure that you clarify which slide you are using so the student with vision impairment can follow/find on their own copy. Use an accessible template. Make sure that there is good contrast in all resources presented to a VI student, avoiding patterned materials. Give every slide a title.
* Use the built-in ‘Accessibility Checker’ when creating presentations and documents.
* Some applications have a text to speech function which might be worth exploring with students that have a severe/ profound vision impairment e.g. Immersive Reader available within Microsoft 365 is a full screen reading experience to increase readability content.
* Be aware that there is sometimes a time lag between the sound and picture on some video software applications which some students may find hard to follow.
* If you use videos or films as part of a lesson, please activate the audio description if available and make sure that the student is aware so that they can activate these. This is necessary for students with profound vision loss/ blindness.
* When using conferencing over the internet, the audio quality is much better when there is no video. As such, if you do not need the video do not use it.
* It is possible to record a virtual lesson to be accessed by students ‘on demand’, so they are able to work at their own pace or so that they can access the session later to go over learning.
* When teaching use precise verbal descriptions – what to look for, where to look, and give precise direction of where to focus their attention on the screen e.g. say, ‘on the bottom, right hand side of the screen you will see my cursor’
* Allow the student time and allow breaks, as visual processing is tiring.

Please also refer to the Department of Education’s [further guidance for schools on supporting remote learning.](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Updated%20Circular%20Remote%20Learning%20-%20January%202021%20%28002%29.pdf)