

Achromatopsia

What is achromatopsia?

- Achromatopsia is a condition characterised by a partial or total absence of colour vision
- Achromatopsia is different from the more common forms of colour vision deficiency (also called colour blindness), in which people can see colour but have difficulty distinguishing between certain colours, such as red and green
- People with complete achromatopsia cannot see any colours; they see only black, white, and shades of grey
- Incomplete achromatopsia is a milder form of the condition that allows some colour discrimination
- The condition is stationary which means it does not get any worse as the child grows up
- Other names for the condition are; achromatism, rod monochromatism, and total colour blindness.

What are the effects of achromatopsia?

- Significantly reduced sharpness of vision (low visual acuity)
- Nystagmus (wobbly eyes) .For more information on nystagmus please read the Nystagmus advice sheet on our website
- [Photophobia](#) (light sensitivity)
- Hemeralopia which is 'day blindness' or the inability to see clearly in bright light
- Hyperopia (longsightedness) or high myopia (severe short sightedness) – glasses are prescribed to correct the refractive error

What can help?

- Wear glasses if prescribed and keep them clean
- Wear a peaked cap and/or dark glasses to help control glare

- Ensure correct positioning i.e. close to the activity or item being looked at and with light source behind
- Use blinds to control sunlight and glare and teachers should avoid standing in front of windows when speaking to class
- Take account of the difficulties with recognising and identifying colours and provide an alternative means of identifying colour e.g. labelling, shading. It can be helpful to photocopy a worksheet or textbook page into black and white and check whether you can complete the tasks without access to colour or need to add a secondary means of identifying the colour areas/objects
- Worksheets and photocopies should be clear with good contrast between print and paper
- Write using a 2B pencil, a black felt tip pen or black biro to provide best contrast
- Use good quality black or dark blue markers on whiteboards. Avoid using green. Red or other light colours as many in a class will have difficulty seeing these.

A Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired (QTVI) will assess the child's functional vision within the school environment and provide advice to the school on strategies for curriculum access and independent learning.