

EA Sensory Service – Vision Impairment

Albinism

What is albinism?

- It is an inherited condition
- It is caused due to a lack of pigment in the body called melanin
- The two main types of albinism are:
 - Oculocutaneous albinism (OCA) - affects the eyes, skin and hair
 - Ocular albinism - affects only the eyes.

What are the effects of albinism?

- Some will see quite well while others may have a significant vision impairment
- Generally, the less melanin pigment in the eye, the worse the vision
- Albinism is a stable condition so the level of vision is unlikely to deteriorate
- Nystagmus (wobbly eyes) and [photophobia](#) (light sensitivity) are associated conditions. For more information on nystagmus please read the Nystagmus advice sheet on our website.

What can help?

- Wear glasses if prescribed and keep them clean
- Wear a peaked cap and/or dark glasses to help control glare
- Children with OCA should use appropriate skin protection, sunscreen and shaded areas particularly during summer
- 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
- 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
- Write teacher comments in black pen large enough for the student to read
- Allow student to have the book at an angle and distance which is comfortable for them. Special stands for books and sloping desktops are available
- Students with vision impairment require their own copy of books and worksheets. Do not ask them to share
- Check with the specialist teacher (QTVI) about the most appropriate size of font for the pupil. Avoid books with poorly produced print illustrations
- A Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired (QTVI) from the EA Sensory Service will assess the child's functional vision within the school environment and provide advice to the school on specific strategies for curriculum access and independent learning.

Useful contacts

EA Sensory Service

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[EA Sensory Service Website](#)

[Albinism Fellowship UK and Ireland](#)

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