

Near Normal Vision & Mild Vision Impairment

What is vision impairment?

Many children and young people (C&YP) wear glasses/contact lenses to correct a refractive error, and for most, these will bring their vision to within “normal” or “near normal” limits.

A student has a vision impairment when glasses do not bring their level of vision within “normal” or “near normal” limits, or where there is a significant visual field loss or a cerebral vision impairment.

A student with vision impairment may or may not wear glasses, depending on the cause of the vision loss.

Visual Acuity

Visual acuity is the term used to describe the smallest detail a person can see when looking straight at a stationary, high contrast (e.g. black on white) target in good lighting. It is often measured using the Snellen scale. A Snellen test usually consists of a number of rows of letters that get smaller as you read down the chart. On the Snellen scale, standard visual acuity is 6 / 6. If you can only read the top line of the chart this is 6 / 60 visual acuity. This means you can see at 6 metres what someone with standard vision could see from 60 metres away. Generally the larger the second number is, the more reduced the sight.

Levels of Vision

The severity of a vision impairment can be categorised into mild, moderate, severe or profound depending on the level of vision.

- Near Normal – presenting within the 6/7.5 – 6/12 visual acuity range
- Mild – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/12
- Moderate – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/18
- Severe – presenting visual acuity worse than 6/60
- Profound – presenting visual acuity worse than 3/60

Printable examples

The images in the pages linked below give an indication of the detail and size of images a child with a given visual acuity should be able to see easily from a distance of 0.3m (30cm), 0.5m, 1m, 2m and 3m. They also show the smallest/most detailed images a child with visual acuity at that level should be able to see at the same distances.

[Pictures 6/12:](#)

[Pictures 6/18:](#)

[Letters 6/18](#)

Strategies to support C&YP with mild vision impairment

The needs of children and young people with a mild visual impairment can be met through quality, inclusive teaching and simple strategies used in the classroom.

If the child has mild vision impairment and nystagmus please also refer to our nystagmus advice sheet.

Remember to ensure that information about the child's vision is shared with new teachers before the beginning of each academic year.

In the majority of cases, these children and young people do not require specialist interventions from a Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI).

If glasses are worn they should be worn all the time including at playtimes and for P.E.

Glasses should be clean and children should be encouraged to take responsibility for cleaning them frequently throughout the day.

Classroom environment

- Lighting in both corridors and classrooms is important. Good lighting free from glare is important
- Staff should position themselves so that the student is not looking towards a bright light source. For example, teachers should not stand in front of a window when addressing the class, as this may result in them appearing as a silhouette but also means that the student is looking towards light that may cause them discomfort and further reduce their vision
- Position the student away from direct sunlight with either their back to the windows or seated at the opposite side of the classroom from the windows to avoid glare. Use blinds or curtains when necessary
- School corridors and passageways in classrooms should remain free of clutter with coats and bags lifted from the floor.

Seating position:

- Positioning of the student in class is important to enable them to maximise non-verbal cues, gestures, facial expressions and demonstrations by the teacher
- Ensure child with VI sits close to the teaching focus
- When well positioned will be able to access normal materials in class
- C&YP with **near normal vision** 6 /7.5 – 6/12 will benefit from having a seat reasonably near the front of the classroom and are unlikely to experience visual access issues in school

- A student with 6/12 vision will need to be half as close to the visual information in order to see the same level of detail as someone with 6/6 'standard' vision. A student with 6/12 vision will need to be seated within 3 metres of the board to see the same level of detail as someone with 6/6 'normal' vision sees from the back of the classroom at 6 metres from the board
- Provide C&YP with **mild vision impairment** (within the visual acuity range 6/15 – 6/18) with a preferential seating position within the classroom. A student with 6/18 vision will need to be seated within 2 metres of the board to see the same level of detail as someone with 6/6 'normal' vision sees from the back of the classroom at 6 metres from the board.

ICT

- Ensure there is good contrast on whiteboard or consider seating the child at a separate monitor
- Ensure optimum positioning for computer screen. Check seat height is suits the child for screen height. Move monitor closer to child. Make use of accessibility options, if appropriate
- C&YP with vision within these ranges, and without other disabilities, will generally will be able to be able to access the curriculum without the need for assistive technology

Printed Materials/ Boards

- Provide good contrast, high quality print materials for all children. Black print on white provides best contrast. Note that, repeated photocopying can affect contrast and clarity
- Worksheets, illustrations and diagrams are best for all when clear and uncluttered

- C&YP with mild vision impairment are unlikely to require adapted / enlarged materials. They can typically read the regular print size used within schools at a comfortable reading distance
- Allow children to have the book at an angle and distance which is comfortable for them try to avoid asking them to share
- Writing implements should give a clear dark line. 2B pencils or black felt tip pens are useful
- Teacher comments should be written in black pen and be legible and large enough for child to read
- Teachers should avoid using poor quality pens and light coloured pens e.g. green, red on whiteboards as these do not provide good contrast

Trips

- For school trips, contact the venue in advance and advise them that a person with a vision impairment is attending and will require preferential positioning e.g. theatre, concert, etc.