

Walsall Visually Impaired Team – Support for Families



The team for children and young people with visual impairment supports babies, children, young people and their families who have a diagnosed visual impairment.

We aim to raise achievement and promote the inclusion of children and young people with visual impairment throughout their childhood in all educational settings. As our schools have closed in response to slow the spread of Coronavirus, and our children are being home-schooled, we are available to provide the following support for families:

- Support and advice about how you can best support your child educationally at home
- Details of online resources and other strategies you can use at home
- Support and advice about specialist technology and equipment
- Support and advice about how you can develop your pre-school child's play and visual skills

Some General Tips

- Children generally work better in the mornings when they are less visually tired.
- Sit your child with their back to any natural light and close blinds or curtains if needed.

- Place their work/activity on a high contrast background – you can place a piece of plain fabric or coloured paper on the table top.
- Turn off the T.V and any other distractions.
- Use a black felt pen to draw around the outline of any pictures so they can see them clearly.
- Make sure your work area is free from clutter.
- Cover up any irrelevant information in books or worksheets to avoid visual confusion.
- If you have an iPad or tablet, take a snapshot of the activity so that they can stretch the screen and zoom in to see details.
- Give your child lots of rest breaks – this gives them time to relax their eyes if they have been doing a visual activity for some time.
- If your child has a visually stronger side, always ensure that you position an activity on this side.
- Keep learning activities short with frequent changes of activities to keep sessions lively.

Ensure good access by keeping glasses and equipment in good working order:

- Check glasses regularly. Encourage children and young people to take some responsibility for their glasses care. Begin by running their lenses under warm water. Then dry the lenses using the cleaning cloth that was provided with the glasses. This is usually a special, soft, lint-free cloth that is perfect for cleaning lenses.
- Remind your child to keep their glasses in the case whenever they are not in use. This is very important, so the lenses won't get scratched and dirty. It is also a good idea to include their name and phone number inside the case so they can be returned if they are ever lost.
- If your child has been prescribed a handheld magnifier (a dome or bar), then follow the care advice for glasses. When not in use get into the habit of keeping them in the box and/or pouch provided to ensure they remain free from scratches and chips.

Other Useful Contacts:

- **The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)** have a whole range of information on their website.
www.rnib.org.uk
- **Walsall society for the blind** offer a range of advice for families living with sight impairments.
www.walsallblind.org
- **Humanware** can offer support for users of Prodigy Connect and Brailnote.
www.humanware.com
- **Young Minds** is a useful guide about how to talk to your children about Coronavirus.
Youngminds.org.uk
- **Dudley and Walsall CAMHS** – Provide help and support to children and adolescents and their families with emotional, behavioural and mental health issues
- **Walsall CAMHS** – Tel 01922 607400
- **MASH** – For concerns about safeguarding /child protection
0300 555 2866 (option 2) during office hours
Emergency Response Team – 0300 555 2922 or 2836
- **Amazon.co.uk: Free Kindle eBooks: Kindle Store**
For any parents who are looking for some home schooling resources, there are a number of free books available on the Amazon Kindle Site. You do not need to buy a Kindle – there is a free app for laptops, tablets and phones.
- **Positive Eye** – links that provide families with some fun ideas, activities and inspiration during the time spent at home throughout the months of the COVID19 Epidemic.
<https://www.positiveeye.co.uk/our-services-2/bespoke-courses/activity-shares-for-families-covid19/>

How to contact us:



If you need to get in touch, please contact your child's allocated QTVI. In the event of them not being available, please try another teacher or Learning Support Practitioner (See below):

Debbie Sutton: debbie.sutton@walsall.gov.uk

Donna Mills: donna.mills@walsall.gov.uk

Lisa Barber: lisa.barber@walsall.gov.uk

Marion Brookes: marion.brookes@walsall.gov.uk

Mary-Jane Davies: mary-jane.davies@walsall.gov.uk

Nadia Begum: nadia.begum@walsall.gov.uk

Rhonda Tipper: rhonda.tipper@walsall.gov.uk

Sue Harris: sue.harris@walsall.gov.uk

Email with your name, contact phone number, your preferred time of day for a call back and details of your enquiry or support needs.