



Visual impairment support

Guidance for supporting children with a visual impairment on school trips

About this fact sheet

This fact sheet provides general guidance on supporting the visually impaired pupil on school trips and outings. For information that is more detailed concerning individual pupils, please contact us.

Points to Remember

All schools must complete an LA Educational Visit Risk Assessment online for all school trips. Individual risk assessments may be requested for children with a visual impairment.

The visually impaired pupil may require close supervision when in an unfamiliar environment. It may be necessary to give verbal guidance when negotiating steps, stairs and kerbs, when walking on wet ground or uneven surfaces and ascending/descending from a bus/coach/train.

A sighted guide may be needed for crowded areas/crossing roads/stairs/steps.

Allowances must also be made to enable the pupil to use handrails on steps/stairs.

The pupil will need to be aware of potential hazards in the environment such as:

- Lamp posts
- Protruding bushes
- Wet and uneven surfaces
- Bus shelters
- Parked cars
- Post boxes

Take care to note lighting conditions, when moving from bright light to dim light and vice versa, pupils with a visual impairment may experience further reduced vision, necessitating the use of a sighted guide.

Whilst on a school outing the pupil may need the following:

- Mobility aid i.e. symbol cane / long cane
- A spare pair of glasses, contact lenses, with container and solution
- For artificial eyes the pupil will need access to solution and container
- Prescription sunglasses
- Peaked hat
- Low vision aids i.e. Telescopic aid, binoculars and hand magnifiers
- Prescription goggles for swimming
- Activity books, timetables etc. in appropriate print sizes

Sighted guide techniques for school trips

This technique is used to guide a child safely through an unfamiliar environment by a sighted person.

The sighted guide needs to ensure that:

- they are half a step in front of the child.
- the child grips the guide's arm either above the elbow or at the wrist or fingers (depending on the age of the child).
- the child maintains the grip throughout travel.

In small, narrow spaces or crowded areas, the guide and child may walk in single file whilst maintaining the sighted guide's grip.

More information

The visual impairment service is part of Dudley Disability Service. We are a team of qualified teachers of the visually impaired and specialist teaching assistants.

We provide advice and information to parents and teachers. We help teach and support children with a visual impairment of all ages and abilities. We also assess children's vision. In addition we support and advise on the use of specialist equipment and train in the use of low vision aids, provide Braille and enlarged or modified learning materials, provide training independence and mobility training and teach touch typing and specialist software. We will also liaise with other professionals such as social care, healthcare and RNIB.

For further information or advice, please contact us at:

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