

Advice for Educational Settings regarding Children
and Young People with **Hearing Impairment** returning to school

Aim of our Advice:

- **To support educational settings to identify and plan how best to support children and young people with Hearing Impairment as they return to school. For more specific advice please contact your Teacher of the Deaf directly.**

Our advice would be to treat the return to the educational setting in the same way that you would plan for any other transition e.g. giving parents as much information as possible about what school may be like and ask them to talk it through with the child so they have clear understanding of what the setting might be like when they return.

**Communication, Learning
and Interaction - Challenges**

- Range of Hearing devices: Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants work optimally within a range of 1-2 metres in good quiet conditions.
- Use of FM/Radio Aid: **Please refer to Health and Safety Advice sheet to make informed decision around use of FM.** If the FM System is to be used, please ensure that staff have training to be able to use this equipment confidently and competently.
- Distance from the sound source: recent advice for social distancing e.g. sitting 2m apart and outdoor learning and play is likely to make access to speech and language more difficult. This is particularly challenging if the FM System is not being used.
- Fatigue: Social distancing requirements mean routines will change. Hearing impaired children rely on routines to reduce their listening load. The combined effect of struggling to hear over distance and learning new routines will lead to fatigue above the norm. Fatigue will be greater for children not using an FM System.

Advice and Strategies

- Check that family/carers have ensured that hearing aids and FM/Radio Aids are working optimally. **Please refer to Health and Safety Advice sheet regarding the handling and use of equipment.**
- Careful choice of seating, ideally at the front and to the side to enable the best view of the teacher to access lip patterns and facial expressions.
- Clear view of the teacher's face and peers e.g. not in shadow and facing the hearing impaired child when speaking.
- Use children's names when giving instructions or asking questions so the child knows who is speaking.
- Signpost and reiterate contributions of peers to enable access to class discussions and support inclusion.
- Keep background noise to a minimum, e.g. seat the child away from open doors and windows and noisy equipment.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Access to speaker's faces</u>: Hearing Impaired children need to see, as well as hear to communicate well. Without clear access to speakers' faces they will miss vital information provided by facial expression and lip patterns. • <u>Background Noise</u>: children and young people with a hearing impairment will find listening to others in background noise more difficult, for example when sitting by an open window, noisy electrical equipment e.g. projector or fan heater, or environmental noises e.g. lawn mower or traffic. This is particularly challenging if the FM System is not being used. • <u>Interaction with peers</u>: children with a hearing impairment will be particularly disadvantaged in playground situations due to distancing and noise levels. Hearing Impaired children naturally move close to their friends and peers to communicate because this helps them hear and understand better. • <u>Social and Emotional</u>: children and young people returning after this period of absence may be anxious and find it difficult to adjust to a possible new environment e.g. new seating area, new room or new members of staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote quiet conditions for discussions for optimal listening. • Provide visual prompts to reinforce curriculum content and language e.g. writing on the board, key word lists, illustrations, PowerPoint displays. • Please use subtitles as school policy for all audio and visual resources. • Repeat key learning points and instructions and check regularly that the Hearing Impaired child has understood by using open questioning. • Where possible, Hearing Impaired children should return to a familiar classroom as this will already have been assessed for sound quality and will also have many of the visual and practical materials used to support the child's learning. • Changes to routines need to be explained clearly. A visual timetable could be introduced to support children's understanding of the changed routines, including new routines such as frequent handwashing times. • When unplanned changes occur, an adult will need to check the Hearing Impaired child has understood there is a change of plan, what that change is. • Please consider a buddy system where a supportive friend or named adult (as appropriate) ensures the hearing impaired pupil has heard safety instructions, alarms, bells etc. |
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