

## **Policy on Provision for Students with a Visual Impairment**

Our Motto: Aim High, Learn Together, Feel Proud

### **General Aims:**

- To provide a stimulating, friendly, supportive and independence enabling environment where students with a visual impairment feel safe, happy and secure and enjoy coming to school.
- To prepare the students for maximising their educational potential through the setting achievable goals while retaining high expectations.
- For the students to enjoy full mainstream inclusion with appropriate differentiated support to ensure access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life including access to clubs and participation on school council and school trips. This can also involve the use of specialist technology and/or equipment to ensure access to all curriculum areas.
- To provide access to the expanded curriculum personalised to their needs eg. Braille, mobility, independence, social and life skills.

### **Towards Full Inclusion:**

The aim of full inclusion in the mainstream class will be achieved through preparing the student for transition into the class and by preparing the whole school population through ongoing Visual Impairment awareness training. This will begin prior to placement. The VI Provision staff will support the teaching staff through direct teaching support in class and through regular joint planning meetings. The students will only be withdrawn for expanded core curriculum subjects such as Braille/keyboard skills, mobility, life skills and only in situations where to do so in class would be counter-productive for the child. The students will be encouraged to be advocates for their visual needs and to use their pupil voice to inform both staff and students about what is best for them. Staff will also be trained to enable self-advocacy in all curriculum areas when the student might need support.

Westbrook Primary has policies covering all aspects of school life. Where necessary, policies have been adapted to include the needs of the students with Visual Impairments. There may occasionally be times when reasonable adjustments will be necessary. Some of the policies that have been adapted are; Assessment, Environment, Displays, Marking, Hand-Writing, Health and Safety and also Home Learning. There are also Entry/Exit guidelines.

## **Marking Adaptations for students with VI**

Marking and feedback can be given in the medium that best suits the student. This can be from a choice of typed answers where the student works on a laptop/PC/ipad, written in clear print using a choice of thicker felt tip pens in green or black, in Braille, with smelly stickers and with verbal feedback for students with no vision. The student will be consulted on the best option for their vision.

## **Handwriting**

Where possible the students with a visual impairment will follow the school policy on handwriting. However in some circumstances this may not be suitable. Braille users will learn a combination of Braille and touch typing. Students with certain visual impairments may learn a combination of handwriting and touch typing. Students may also choose their preferred writing tool from a choice of writing pens of varying thickness.

## **Displays**

All external/corridor and displays internal to the area of the school each student with a VI is based in, will cater for the visual access needs of those students. Displays will be of high contrasting colours with black colour as backing paper. There will be no patterned backing paper to reduce visual clutter. Typed text will be a minimum font size of 24, preferably in Aerial bold. When there is a student who uses Braille, the display will have Braille in each bottom corner of the display with attached print version. There may also be sound buttons located in the bottom corners of the display.

## **Home Learning**

Any adaptations to homework for students with a visual impairment will be planned in conjunction with the VI team and the class teacher. When the child is learning Braille for example, the quantity of homework may be reduced as it may take more time. This will be adapted to suit each student while maintaining high expectations.

## **Environment**

The environment of the new build has been designed with the needs of the students with VI in mind. The corridors are designed to be clutter free, the classes are designed to keep all bags and coats tidied away. Children and all staff will receive regular VI awareness training including training on the dangers of trip hazards from chairs, bags etc. There will be a whole school focus on always walking on the left in corridors for ease of flow for student traffic and to assist students who need to trail.

## **Health and Safety**

Educational Visits and risk assessments; Where possible a member of the VI team will be present on an educational visit. When this is not possible, the student will always be near an adult who will be known to the student. If necessary and in unfamiliar surrounds the adult may use the sighted guide technique where the child holds their elbow/wrist for guidance. They may also do this with a responsible and experienced peer under adult supervision.

All risk assessments and pre-planning for educational visits will incorporate the needs of the students with a visual impairment as necessary. The teacher in charge of the VI will be involved in training on this for all staff.

### **Assessment**

All assessment materials will be provided in the students preferred medium. All formal assessments will follow the rules set out in [www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2) and [rnib.org.uk/examaccess](http://rnib.org.uk/examaccess)

### **Monitoring and review**

The coordination and planning of the VI unit are the responsibility of the VI leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in VI and providing a strategic lead and direction for this area;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses and indicates areas for further improvement.

A named Governor is also responsible for liaising with the VI leader to ensure this policy is monitored and reviewed.

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and Unit leader as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and review.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

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**Guiding Principles for Entry Criteria for Placement at Westbrook Primary VI Provision for students with a Visual Impairment**

*Admissions Criteria and Referral Procedure for a pupil being considered for placement at the Westbrook VI Provision will include:*

One of the child's primary needs must be visual impairment. This can include:

- A severe visual impairment or total blindness.
- A degenerative visual condition.
- Registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted/visually impaired)
- The child will be of primary age and will have broadly average cognitive, social and communication skills.

*Exit Criteria*

There may be occasions when Westbrook is no longer the best Provision for the student. This may include the following but is not an exhaustive list:

- If the child's visual impairment becomes a secondary need to other special educational needs e.g. physical, behavioural, communication or if the placement is no longer appropriate for the child's age, aptitude or primary needs.
- This may be recommended by the SEN panel at Annual Review and will involve the class teachers, QTVI teachers and any other professionals involved with the child. This will also include the views of both parents and child.
- If the placement is no longer compatible with the efficient education of the other students with whom the child is being educated.
- If the placement of the child no longer constitutes an efficient use of resources.
- If the child's vision improves to no longer being sufficient for registration as Sight Impaired (as in some rare cases with medical intervention)
- If the child is assessed to be able to succeed academically and socially with a similar level of independence as his/her peers in their local school.