

Special School Eye Care Service

SCHOOL SERVICE INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

NHS England, who oversee the NHS, have committed to transforming eye care and vision for children and young people in special schools in England by delivering a **free**, eye examination **on the school premises** which will include the supply and fitting of 2 pairs of glasses for every child who needs them. **Please watch this short [service information film](#).**



Research has shown that children with a learning disability and/or autism are 28x more likely to experience challenges with sight and eye health.

Despite this greater need, most children have to attend a hospital eye department for routine services and over 40% have no history of eye care provision.

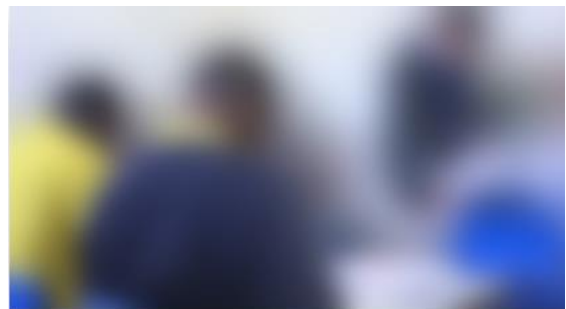
WHY IS AN EYE TEST IMPORTANT?

Some children may not know they have a sight problem or may not be able to tell people about a change in their vision.

Uncorrected vision can lead to lack of participation in activities or difficulty walking because the environment looks blurred.

Therefore, it's recommended that all children have their eyes tested every year, or more often if needed, to identify the condition of their sight.

No child is too disabled to have their eyes tested as you don't have to be able to read or speak to have an eye test. An eye test is an eye health check as well as checking if glasses are needed.



WHO CARRIES OUT THE EYE TESTS?

The Eye Care Team is made up of clinicians who have received additional training to deliver sight tests and dispense glasses to children with learning disabilities and/or autism. In most cases, the service will be delivered by an optometrist and dispensing optician but other clinicians may also contribute:

- **Optometrists** will examine the child's eyes to check they are healthy and see whether glasses would be beneficial

- **Dispensing Opticians** will take the facial measurements and facial characteristics of the children who need glasses to make sure they fit properly and are comfortable to wear
- **Orthoptists** diagnose and treat defects in eye movement and problems with how the eyes work together
- **Ophthalmologists** specialise in the diagnoses and treatment of serious eye conditions and would usually be seen in a hospital.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE EYE TEST?

The Eye Care Team will deliver the service on the school premises and the child will be accompanied by a chaperone from the school the whole time. Parents/Carers are welcome to attend their child's appointment if they wish. The child will be helped to feel safe and comfortable during the test. There are lots of different tests for children of all abilities and the Eye Care Team will check:

- how well their eyes focus and whether they need to wear glasses
- how well they see
- how well their eyes work together and move
- the health of their eyes.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE EYE TEST?

The Eye Care Team will write a report written in plain English about what has been found shortly after the test which the parent/carers and the school will receive.



If the student needs glasses, the **Dispensing Optician** will prescribe two pairs in case of breakages at no cost. Often, specialist glasses are required which the Eye Care Team will have knowledge of and be able to provide.

Depending on the outcome of the appointment, the Team may need to refer the child to other eye health professionals for further checks and may occasionally need to see them before their annual check. Schools and parents will be advised if either of these steps are necessary.

“ This [the service] is part of our ‘one-stop shop’ approach...For parents, this is an improvement where they were previously having to take [their] child down to the opticians, the opticians not understanding how to diagnose [their] child, and know that something was wrong, but then not being able to do anything about it.

We've seen a remarkable transformation of how our pupils learn – but also, go and talk to the parents! They're absolutely blown away by the fact that their children now have glasses. ”

Russell Davey, Headteacher, The Village School, London

For further information, please contact either:

Lisa Donaldson, Optometrist & Head of Eye Health, SeeAbility	Eye.Clinics@seeability.org
Noopur Patel, Optometry Practice Mgr, SeeAbility	Eye.Clinics@seeability.org