

Vision Support Team Information sheets

Advice to staff who have a child with an eye patch in their class

If a child appears in your class wearing a patch it will be because their parents or guardians have been advised that the vision in the unpatched eye is significantly worse than that in the patched eye. Most commonly this is related to a squint (medically known as strabismus), but not always.

The good eye is patched to prevent the brain from switching off the signals from the weaker eye in a condition known as Amblyopia.

A child may be patched for varying amounts of time and the exact regime will be decided by the eye clinic on an individual basis. However, it is thought that the longer the child wears a patch during the day the more quickly the vision in the un-patched, weaker eye will improve. Also, the younger the child is when they are patched the quicker the vision will improve. Sometimes however, even patching cannot improve the vision in the weaker eye, but it is important to try.

Points to Remember

- ▶ The child will be unable to use the vision in the patched eye whilst s/he is wearing a patch. S/he might bump into things on this side and will not be aware of people or objects approaching from this side. They may be startled if approached suddenly.
- ▶ The vision in the unpatched eye may be very poor, particularly at first. They may need their work to be enlarged or made bolder, and possibly simplified so they can access the work
- ▶ They should sit close to the visual centre of the lesson, (near the teacher, near the board etc.)
- ▶ There are health and safety implications while the child is patched as their sense of depth perception will be confused. For example: they may have difficulty going up and down steps, judging distance, using PE equipment and judging speed.
- ▶ The child may find new or crowded situations disorientating.



The balance between educational access and visual stimulation

Medical recommendation is that for patching to be successful, the child needs visually demanding tasks to force the eye to work. At the same time, it is important that access to education is maintained.

The child may require enlarged reading books and worksheets to maintain their access to numeracy and literacy but should also be offered fun and interesting visually demanding tasks as well. For example: copying patterns on peg boards; stringing small beads; dot to dot puzzles; spot the difference puzzles; mazes; colouring in small pictures and patterns; searching through complex pictures e.g. I spy books, 'Where's Wally'; small construction toys such as Lego, K'nex, Mechano.

If you are still concerned about your child and require more information, then please contact the

Vision Support Team Manager
on **0116 305 9400**