

Sensory Service

Information and Guidance for Teachers of Students with a Hearing Impairment

This is general advice which is intended to help you to consider how you can support students with hearing impairment in your school and classroom. Please contact the Sensory Service for any specific queries you may have.

1. Communication with Children and Parents

The wellbeing of children returning to school is of great importance. Children with a hearing impairment may have more specific concerns than other children with regards to any changes. They will also have the same general concerns as their peers. Open conversations regarding these concerns will be necessary. Parents may also need reassurance and support from teachers.

2. Consult with your Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QTOD)

The Sensory Service QTODs provide specific advice and support for students with hearing impairment within your school. It is extremely important to refer to the previous reports and advice provided to the school by the QTOD to ensure that any new routines or plans within school are appropriate for the student with hearing impairment. You can contact your QTOD to ask for support and advice and to check that plans are safe and appropriate.

3. New Routines

As changes are planned for moving around school, entering and exiting, and how classrooms are set out, it is important that teachers communicate these changes regularly to students with hearing impairment. It is important to check that students with hearing impairment have heard and understood any new routines.

4. Use of Specialist Equipment – Radio Aids

Continue to use the student's specialist equipment. If the student is confident to handle and set up the equipment, this will limit the number of people who need to touch the equipment.

A separate document is available which provides detailed guidance on handling and disinfecting radio aids - [Disinfecting Radio Aids Guidance for Schools](#)

The most effective protection when handling equipment is regular handwashing.

For further advice please contact the Sensory Service via phone: 028 25 661 258 or email: sensoryservice@eani.org.uk

Hand gel should be available so that a teacher can easily clean their hands each time they handle the radio aid.

Wipes should be available so that a radio aid can be cleaned before and after it is used. Note that this must be done carefully, following guidance provided by manufacturers, to avoid damage to the device. Please refer to the Sensory Service document - [Disinfecting Radio Aids Guidance for Schools](#)

Where practical, arrange for an adult, usually the teacher, to take responsibility for handling the radio aid and holding it towards another person if/when others are speaking.

Some radio aids have a conference or 'pointing' functionality enabled. For older children, ask them to take responsibility for positioning their radio aid that has this functionality device in a way that it can pick up the teacher's voice clearly, as well as peers in any group discussions. However, this relies on the teacher staying close to where the radio aid is. It also assumes that the deaf young person is a confident user of the radio aid and can be relied on to move the radio aid to where it needs to be.

It is always important to repeat or paraphrase what other pupils have said in any classroom discussions and to allow deaf pupils time to turn around and face the pupil speaking.

5. Trouble-shooting technology

Ask parents to carry out basic checks before the school day and to ensure that batteries are working.

Depending on their age, encourage children to be as independent as possible in using their hearing technology.

Where it is necessary for school staff to troubleshoot any issues during the day, ensure that the usual hygiene requirements are in place – i.e. regular handwashing before and after handling the equipment.

Information on trouble-shooting technology is available on the EA website:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/sensory-service>
[Hearing Aid Checks](#)

[Sensory Service Radio Aids Roger Inspiro](#)

[Sensory Service Radio Aids Roger Touchscreen](#)

Please contact your QTOD with any specific queries.

6. Temporary learning spaces and changes to classroom layouts

Identify which rooms have optimal learning conditions e.g. acoustics and lighting and ensure that groups or bubbles that have a student with hearing impairment are prioritised for such

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rooms. If necessary, seek advice on the acoustic environment of any temporary learning space from your QTOD.

Please note, portable soundfield systems will not work well in any temporary learning spaces that already have poor acoustics and may make the situation worse.

Ensure that children's listening, language and communication needs are taken into account when considering seating position, potential sources of background noise and how information is delivered and presented in any temporary learning spaces. Seek advice from your QTOD.

If the student uses a radio aid, ensure that this is used effectively.

It is important to repeat or paraphrase what other pupils have said in any classroom discussions and to allow deaf pupils time to turn around and face the pupil speaking.

7. Keeping Doors Open

Government advice suggests that classrooms should be adequately ventilated and that doors be propped open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation. It is important to consider if this would introduce increased noise levels to a child with hearing impairment within your class.

8. Accessibility of remote learning

If a blended learning approach is required:

- Seek advice from the Sensory Service on differentiation of home learning materials.
- Ensure close liaison with families, as appropriate, so that they are able to support their child's learning as much as possible.
- Ensure that children can take equipment home to use to access any remote learning opportunities.

9. Please refer to the Sensory Service document - [Advice for schools to support access to online learning for hearing impaired students.](#)

10. Face Masks and Coverings

The wearing of a face covering has serious implications for a hearing impaired child or young person and can greatly impact their equality of access to learning.

Challenges include:

- Inability to lipread
- Voice of the speaker is muffled and clarity of the speech is reduced
- Increased chances to mishear and or/misunderstand
- Feeling of isolation

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Research has shown that the wearing of a face covering reduces the level of speech by between 3dB and 12dB. For a child with a hearing loss this may mean that your voice is completely inaudible to them- this can be catastrophic for them in a learning environment.

If a face covering must be worn, use one with a clear plastic panel to aid lipreading. However, these have limitations and do not provide clear communication for deaf children and young people.

[NDCS Face Masks with Clear Panels](#)

Additional information:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/sensory-service>

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