



Inclusion Newsletter

15th October 2021

Hello and welcome to the first Inclusion Newsletter of this year. My name is Mrs Huggett and I am the Inclusion Manager at Riverside, which means I am the main point of contact for parents of children with any additional needs. For those of you who are new to the school, this Inclusion Newsletter is sent out once a term to keep you up-to-date with developments either in school, Medway or nationally, related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It also often provides information and advice related to specific areas of need, detailing the support we provide in school and how you can help your child at home.

It is important to remember that the term “Inclusion” is not only used to refer to the way in which we support children with SEND. Being an inclusive school is about ensuring that all children have equality of opportunity and are given the best possible education, so that they can achieve their potential and be well prepared for adulthood. It might involve such things as providing enrichment and challenge activities for Gifted and Talented children, supporting children who do not speak English as their first language, or helping children who are experiencing a period of emotional distress to manage in school. It is also about promoting acceptance of diversity and enabling those with disabilities to access the same opportunities as everyone else. Our two special provisions, for children who have been issued with Education, Health and Care Plans for either Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Visual Impairment (VI), enable children with a very high level of need to work successfully alongside their mainstream peers. You can find out more about VI overleaf.

Thank you to those parents who attended the information session with Jennie from ‘Small Steps’ earlier this month. She spoke about the various types of support they can offer to parents of children with (or awaiting diagnosis of) ASD and ADHD. If you missed the session but would like to find out more, you can visit their website at <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/medway-small-steps-service/> or ask either me or our Home School Support Worker, Mrs Wood.

Please remember, if you ever have any suggestions, queries or concerns about anything to do with inclusion and SEND, then do call or come and see me at the school.

Mrs Z Huggett
Inclusion Manager



Visual Impairment



Many people have some type of visual problem at some point in their lives. They are usually either short-sighted (unable to see things clearly at a distance) or long-sighted (unable to see things clearly close up). These issues may be present from childhood or may develop with age, but they are usually easily treated with corrective glasses or contact lenses.

However, when one or more parts of the eye or brain that are needed to process images become diseased or damaged, severe or total loss of vision can occur. In these cases, vision can't be fully restored even with medical treatment, surgery or corrective lenses. **Visual impairment** is a term experts use to describe any such kind of vision loss, whether it's someone who cannot see at all or someone who is partially sighted.

Some people are completely blind, and are unable to see anything at all, or even perceive light. Many others have what's called 'legal blindness'. They haven't totally lost their sight, but have significantly reduced vision, needing to be 20 metres or less from an object to see it as well as someone with perfect vision could from 200 metres away. At Riverside, there are children with all of these types of visual impairment.

We are very proud of our special provision for children with Visual Impairment.

Our building is adapted to support VI mobility and we have a range of classroom resources and technology to help visually impaired children with their learning. We also have specialist VI trained staff, who are able to adapt and modify learning materials, including using Braille and other tactile resources where necessary.



Helpful Tips

If your child has an uncorrected vision problem, it can have a huge impact on their ability to learn in the classroom. It can also be the cause of physical symptoms such as headaches or clumsiness. Opticians will be able to identify any issues with your child's sight, and can also spot early signs of eye conditions that could be potentially more serious if left untreated. Eye tests are free for children under the age of 16, and corrective lenses (where needed) are also highly subsidised, so please do ensure your child has regular eye tests with a reputable optician at least once every two years, but preferably annually.

Useful Websites:

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/parents>

<https://www.specsavers.co.uk/childrens-eyecare>