

Meeting The Needs of Deaf Learners

(Deaf is used to describe all levels/types of deafness)



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Critical Knowledge

Every diagnosed deaf learner in Scotland has a legal right to input from an allocated Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (ToDCYP). They should provide key information to school staff including the following:

- Level/type of deafness and the implications of this for the learner/s
- Benefits and limitations of hearing aids/cochlear implants
- Communication preferences of the deaf learner/s
- How to source and make best use of assistive listening devices (personal and whole class)
- Alternative assessment arrangements required

The allocated ToDCYP should also be able to provide 'deaf awareness' training for staff and learners in your school.

Creating a 'Deaf Friendly' Learning Environment

- Keep doors and windows closed to shut out noise
- Sunlight creates shadows. Close blind to block this out
- Ensure good lighting. Do not dim during 'quiet' activities
- Ensure deaf learner/s seating maximises access to teacher's voice and facial expressions/lip patterns of everyone in the class
- Use soft furnishing (cushions, rugs, drapes) to reduce sound reverberations
- Position furniture strategically to act as sound barriers and absorb sound
- Turn off noisy equipment when not in use (projectors, heaters etc..)
- Avoid playing music while learners are working
- Put padding (ie bubble wrap) in the bottom of tubs, trays etc on desks to reduce background noise
- Use mats during practical desk top activities
- Put padding on the bottom of table and chair legs
- If learning is outdoors, consider positioning and noise levels

'Deaf Friendly' Strategies

- Talk clearly and at a normal pace. Slowing down will distort what you are saying.
- Stand in the optimum place (within 3ft of the deaf learner) for whole class delivery. Do not walk around when talking
- Use high quality visuals
- Activate subtitles as a rule when using recorded materials
- Carefully plan group activities to limit noise level as much as possible
- Optimise the use of specialist equipment provided
- Point/gesture to indicate who is talking
- Repeat back clearly the answers that other young people have given to ensure the deaf learner has heard
- Always face the deaf learner when talking (do not write on the board and talk at the same time)
- Avoid covering your mouth when talking
- Utilise digital technology as appropriate (captions, electronic notetakers)

Improved acoustics = Improved Speech Intelligibility.

Creating these learning conditions will benefit most, if not all in your class.



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