

**Special School Eye Care Service****PARENT/CARER 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. They are now funding **SeeAbility** to deliver a **free** eye examination **on the school premises** which will include the supply and fitting of 2 pairs of glasses per prescription for every child who needs them.

If your child is already receiving eye care from SeeAbility, the only change you will notice is a spare pair of glasses being dispensed when required.



**SeeAbility's 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.

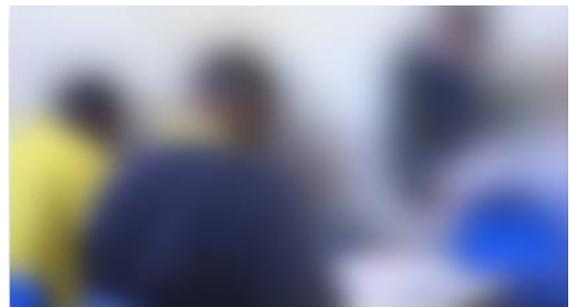
**Why is an eye test important for my child?**

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.

### Tell me more about the service and why it would benefit my child?

Please watch the 10 minute information film about the service [here](#) which includes:

- 3 parents with their child describing how it has changed their lives
- how it equips school staff to better support your child's education and development
- the benefits of delivering the service on the school premises
- what the Special School Eye Care Service Team does



### 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 before the test?

Your child's school will send you two forms before an appointment is made:

#### **Service Participation and Opt-Out**

Every child is able to receive this service but if you wish your child to Opt-Out, this form will enable you to let us know of your choice.

#### **About My Child's Eyes**

This asks for information about your child's eye health history and other relevant questions and will be used by the Eye Care Team to ensure the service is tailored to your child's specific needs. The Eye Care Team need to receive this before seeing your child.

### What happens during the eye test?

The Eye Care Team will deliver the service on the school premises and your child will be accompanied by a chaperone the whole time. You are welcome to attend your child's appointment if you wish. Your child will be helped to feel safe and comfortable during the test. There are lots of different tests for children of all abilities and we 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.

### Using eye drops (cyclopentolate) in the eye test

During the eye test, the **Optometrist** may need to put drops in your child's eyes. The drops are used to check if glasses are needed. Most children do not have any side effects, but some may find that afterwards, bright light is uncomfortable, or vision is blurry because the drops cause the pupils to get larger (dilate). For most, these side effects will wear off after a few hours but it can take up to 24 hours. The About My Child's Eyes questionnaire asks for your permission to use the drops. If you have any questions, please use the contact details below.

### 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 you and the school will receive.



If your child needs glasses, the **Dispensing Optician** will prescribe two pairs in case of breakages at no cost to you. 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 your child to other eye health professionals for further checks and may occasionally need to see your child before their annual check. We will advise you if either of these steps are necessary.

### Can my child have their eyes tested if they already wear glasses or have an existing eye or sight problem?

It is not necessary for your child to have another test if you already go to a hospital or opticians. If this is the case, please let us know through the **About My Child's Eyes** questionnaire mentioned above. If your child is already under a hospital eye department, you should continue to attend these appointments, but we can supply glasses to their prescription if you wish.

## Further questions?

SCHOOL EYE CARE SERVICE COORDINATOR	Sara Johnson
SEEABILITY EYE CARE TEAM	Noopur Patel- Optometry Manager Eye.Clinics@seeability.org

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“ 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. ”**

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*Russell Davey, Headteacher  
The Village School, London*