

Reasonable Adjustments for Deaf Children and Young People (CYP)

Education providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that deaf CYP are not at a substantial disadvantage when compared with their peers (Equality Act 2010). Schools should not wait until a CYP falls behind before additional support is provided. There is a huge amount of evidence to show that deaf CYP under-achieve unless schools are proactive in providing a fully inclusive environment. The list below suggests the *most common* reasonable adjustments which schools can make. Making reasonable adjustments will increase independence and reduce dependence.

- Ensure that the CYP can easily see and hear both the teacher and the rest of the class. Sit the CYP near the front and to one side so that he/she can easily turn to see other CYPs when they are speaking.
- Allow the CYP to see your face and expression. Good lighting is important. Avoid talking with your back to a window. Position the CYP with their back to the window so the light illuminates the teacher's face.
- Good listening conditions are very important. Be aware of the amount of background noise and try to reduce unnecessary noise e.g. by closing the door and windows to outside noise, turning off music that isn't part of the lesson etc. Avoid seating the CYP next to noisy equipment such as computers, heaters, fans etc.
- Speak naturally; try not to turn away whilst speaking. Avoid moving around the classroom when giving class instructions. Make sure that you are close to the CYP as hearing aids work best over a short distance (less than 2m).
- Use visual as well as verbal referrals to the topic discussed e.g. pictures, keywords on board, pictures or written notes that the CYP can follow
- Remember that during class discussions the CYP may not hear clearly the voices of the other CYPs in the class. You can help by repeating or rephrasing what other CYPs say.
- When the CYP is listening to the television or information presented through the whiteboard, he/she may not hear the teacher's comments made simultaneously. Pause the presentation before giving any verbal information. It may also help to give a bit of background information before starting the presentation.
- Write all homework and tasks on the board, well before the end of the lesson.
- Depending on their age, a CYP might need support to check that their aids are working. At least one named person should be available in school that is trained to undertake basic hearing aid checks and help a CYP to insert their hearing aids if necessary.

References

Equality Act (2010)

NDCS Fact sheet, The Equality Act and Your Deaf Child's Education in England, Scotland and Wales