

## **Strategies, resources and general information to support access to learning at home for young people who live with a multisensory impairment**

*Specific advice relating to your child’s individual sensory profile can be found in previous records of visit from their PSS Advisory Teachers for Multisensory Impairment, Vision Impairment and Hearing Impairment. Many schools will also have individual education plans and learner profiles which describe how your child is usually supported to learn.*

*Your child’s Advisory Teachers remain contactable via email and phone. It may be possible to arrange ‘virtual visits’ via phone, video call or online video meeting depending on Advisory Teachers’ individual situations and possible redeployment of services.*

### **General tips for supporting a young person with MSI to learn:**

- Try to create a ‘sensory friendly’ environment with as little background noise as possible, and clear lighting. Make sure your child is not facing a window, and use a task light to illuminate activities if this helps them.
- Routines and consistency are helpful for learners with MSI so they know what is going to happen and what they are expected to do. Objects and visual symbols can be used to communicate and keep track of routines.
- Some learners with MSI benefit from activities to ‘wake up’ their senses before working. The following website lists some good ideas for these, and for movement breaks (proprioceptive input, which often helps focus):  
<https://inclusiveteach.com/2020/03/20/150-sensory-learning-ideas/>
- Learners with MSI often require longer to gather and process information. Build this in to tasks, and try to avoid asking them to focus on more than one sensory channel at a time (for example, avoid asking them to look and listen at the same time, or listen while carrying on with a task)
- Learners with MSI often benefit from regular sensory and/or movement breaks during tasks, when they can rest their eyes and ears, and if they are a tactile learner their hands; and re-balance their senses so that they can work together effectively. Break activities up into small ‘chunks’, interspersed with rest or movement breaks.
- Make sure your child is sitting or positioned comfortably and with good postural support (e.g. a chair with a back and arms, their feet firmly on the floor or a foot rest) before starting an activity. This will help them to focus on their task.
- Repetition of activities often helps learners with MSI to develop new understanding.

*Some of the following resources and events have been made available specifically in response to the Covid-19 crisis. Some are pledged to be available for the duration of school closures, some have a shorter time limit (e.g. one month). All may be withdrawn at the provider’s discretion.*

## Support for learning activities:

- **Touch Typing:** *see separate resource sheet.*  
Encourage continuation with touch-typing practice at least 3 (but preferably 5) times per week. See enclosed sheet detailing teaching strategies and also some free on-line typing tutor programs. If you would prefer your child to follow the program used at school (usually English Type Junior or Senior) this is available to purchase as a download at around £30. [www.englishtype.com](http://www.englishtype.com).
- **Paths to Literacy:** [www.pathstoliteracy.org](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org)  
Advice and strategies for designing Literacy activities for learners who have VI/MSI.
- **RNIB bookshare:** [www.rnibbookshare.org](http://www.rnibbookshare.org)  
This online resource enables pupils to access large print books and resources free of charge. If you do not have your son/daughter's log-in for this the please get in touch as we can set this up for you very easily. Suitable for large print and braille users.
- **RNIB Library:** [www.rnib.org.uk/library](http://www.rnib.org.uk/library)  
Contact/join RNIB library to borrow hard copy large print books.
- **The National Accessible Library:** [www.accessiblelibrary.org.uk](http://www.accessiblelibrary.org.uk)  
Free online library for readers with vision impairment. Books are available in a variety of electronic formats – including Word, plain text and braille. It is often quite useful for secondary school students and finding key reading texts for English Literature. It is also useful for Junior school young people who have taken off in their reading (eg beyond scheme reading books). Like Bookshare, books can also be downloaded to a Braille Note reading device.
- **Audible free children's books:** <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>  
Audiobook versions of popular children's stories.
- **NDCS Phonics advice:** [www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/education-and-learning/primary-years/phonics-and-your-deaf-child/](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/education-and-learning/primary-years/phonics-and-your-deaf-child/)  
Advice for teaching phonics to children with hearing loss.
- **ITV Signed Stories:** <https://www.signedstories.com/>  
Bank of simple stories told using BSL.
- **Clicker and Docs Plus:** [www.cricksoft.com](http://www.cricksoft.com)  
If your child has access to either of these assistive typing programs at school then you can request access at home – there is no charge for this - Clicker 8 and DocsPlus for use at home: Crick Software have advised that they can set up access directly for either schools or parents.



- **Voice Dream Reader App** (for Ipad): [www.voicedream.com](http://www.voicedream.com) or via the App Store, £14.99

This app provides text-to-speech and accessible reading formats by copying and pasting text or uploading documents/webpages/books into the app.

- **Large print and tactile measuring equipment** (protractors, rulers etc), pens and stationery available for purchase from [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)



- **Talking scientific calculator app:** available from App Store, £4.99

Good features to support students with reduced vision.

- **Access Art:** [www.accessart.org.uk/art-resources-for-home/](http://www.accessart.org.uk/art-resources-for-home/)

Various accessible and multisensory art activities and projects for all ages.

- **Vocaleyes:** <https://vocaleyes.co.uk/audio/>

Library of audio described performances, tours of cultural sites and museums, and interviews.

- **Home exercise via Metro Blind Sport:** <https://www.metroblindsport.org/>

Links to free home exercise activities, including an audio described exercise class.

- **Home Learning Packs:** [www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/parents](http://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/parents) ;  
<https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/homelearning>

Both Twinkl and Scholastic have published free activities and learning packs for pupils in mainstream school settings across age ranges. Some of these resources can be modified or accessed electronically to suit your child's sensory needs.

## Events:

- **David Walliams elevenses** (free story time read by the author):  
<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>
- **Frank Barnes School:** <https://vimeo.com/user110101185>  
Daily children's stories in British Sign Language.
- **P.E. with Joe:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyCLOpd4VxBvQafyve889qVcPxYEjdSTI>  
Daily PE lessons delivered by a fitness coach Joe Wicks, for all ages. 9am.

## Websites, helplines and support groups:

- **Deafblind UK:** <https://deafblind.org.uk/coronavirus/>  
Specialist support for people with MSI and their families, including information related to Covid-19 and a helpline: 0800 132 320

- **Sense:** <https://www.sense.org.uk/get-support/information-and-advice/>  
Advice and information for people with MSI and/or complex communication difficulties and their families.
- **National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS):** <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/covid-19-coronavirus-support-for-deaf-children/>  
Information and support for the families of deaf children, including regular updates related to Covid-19 and how to get BSL support to access NHS services.  
Advice line: 0808 800 8880; SMS text service: 0786 00 22 888
- **British Sign Online:** [www.british-sign.co.uk/learn-online-british-sign-language-course/](http://www.british-sign.co.uk/learn-online-british-sign-language-course/)  
Initial BSL online course, with flexible fees during Covid-19 crisis.
- **Look UK:** [www.look-uk.org](http://www.look-uk.org)  
Regular webinars for parents to support tutoring for pupils with vision impairments at home.
- **Nystagmus Network:** [www.nystagmusnetwork.org](http://www.nystagmusnetwork.org):  
There is an updated parent pack available to download.
- **RNIB helpline:** 0303 123 9999  
This will put families in touch with support and advice as necessary. There will also be information on their ‘Talking Books’ service.
- **VICTA parent portal:** [www.victaparents.org.uk](http://www.victaparents.org.uk)  
Information for parents covering topics such as Early Years , Assistive technology along with general advice and guidance.

## Assistive Technology

- **Windows accessibility guide:** *enclosed*.
  - Windows 10 has Narrator function -reads back anything on screen including text in pdfs as well as Word.
  - On-screen magnifier.
  - Mouse pointer size and control options.
- **Ipads and other tablets:**
  - If using an Ipad or other tablet set up accessibility features. Guides are available online via brands websites.
  - The iPad has ability to read back text on screen: *Settings - Accessibility - spoken content*. Reader View is also available for websites.
  - Cameras can be used to capture, magnify and explore images.

- **Word:**
  - Immersive reader for on-line accounts: [www.schoolsict.co.uk](http://www.schoolsict.co.uk)
  - Speech option to read back work – available on quick access tool bar.
- **SuperNova:** <https://yourdolphin.com/en-gb/news?id=480>  
3 months free access to SuperNova screen magnifier, screen reader and speech.
- **VICTA grants** are available on application for technology equipment to support access to learning at home. [www.victa.org.uk](http://www.victa.org.uk)
- **Humanware:** technology support for Connect 12 and BrailleNote Touch  
New **HumanWare Buddy App** is now available to download from the IOS App store and should be available in the Google PlayStore within the next 7 days. Full details on the App and how to use it, can be found on the following link [HW Buddy App](#) This App will be an invaluable resource for young people to get the most out of their technology. In addition to the App, the Humanware technical support team are available to provide support by telephone on 01933 415800 or email [eu.support@humanware.com](mailto:eu.support@humanware.com)