

HELPING UNDERSTAND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

IDEAS AND INFORMATION FOR YOU TO USE OR PHOTOCOPY AND DISTRIBUTE TO TEACHERS

INVENTION CHALLENGE

Think of a simple activity you do every day, it could be eating, turning on the TV, making a drink, brushing your teeth or getting to school. Now imagine doing this whilst not being able to see.

Try to think of things that could help make it easier to achieve – be inventive and creative! Perhaps you could make or design something that tells you when a glass is full or come up with a sequence of sounds to convey a message. There are many options and the simpler the better. You may need some props like pipe cleaners, cardboard tubes, boxes, string and so on to help you.

We'd love to know what you have done. The local paper or radio station may be interested too!

BLINDEOLD CHALLENGE

Get into pairs and take it in turns for one of you to be blindfolded and guided by your partner. You could try doing this around some obstacles if you wish.

Discuss how it makes you feel being the guide and being guided.

Think of words to describe how you felt and write them down.

You could draw how you felt – if you keep the blindfold on whilst you draw, your partner can help guide you with this too.

This exercise helps develop teamwork and build trust – it also relies on listening and communication skills and demonstrates the importance of other senses.

ASSEMBLY NOTES

- There are over 2.5 million people in Britain who have a sight loss
- Being blind doesn't always mean having no sight at all
- Different eye conditions can affect people's sight in lots of different ways. Some people don't see anything at all, whilst some people might be able to see if there's some light. Some people may not be able to see things in the middle of the vision (loss of central vision) whilst some people may only be able to see things in the middle of their vision and nothing around the edges, like looking down a tunnel (loss or peripheral vision/ tunnel vision). Some people may only be able to see half of what you can see whilst some people may have double vision.

Any of these might make it difficult to do certain things – like crossing the road, reading or making a drink, but it doesn't mean they can't do it themselves.

There are many things that can help people with sight loss:

- Colour contrast
- Liquid level indicator for making drinks
- Tactile paving at a crossing – this feels 'bumpy' when you walk on it. This lets people with sight loss know where to cross
- At a pedestrian crossing there is a small cone underneath the box, it turns around when the green man appears – this lets deaf and blind people know when it is safe to cross
- If you see a blind person crossing the road and want to help, always ask them and your parents first. They may be quite able to do it themselves
- Some people have guide dogs to help them. Always ask permission before you stroke the guide dog. If it has a harness on this means it is working and you could distract the dog by stroking it and cause an accident
- There is usually a raised dot on the number 5 of your telephone, TV remote and mobile phone. This helps a person with sight loss to find the centre, and then they find it easier to find the other numbers
- A lot of TV channels now have an option to listen to audio description, this is where someone describes what is happening in the programme. For example, if someone is walking down the street in Coronation Street but not talking, the person who is audio describing would tell you this
- You can help a person with sight loss by not leaving your toys and bikes in the middle of the footpath – people could trip and fall over them!
- Stay healthy! To help look after your eyes you should eat fruit and vegetables, including carrots, spinach and strawberries.