

They feel no different to anyone else - they just do things differently! Assistance from teachers/assistants to access the curriculum alongside peers will be necessary, without it being obvious to other students. They desperately want to be one of the group and not treated differently. They are **enabled** by excellent memory, other senses, use of technology, ability to adapt and to efficiently use the sight that they have. Don't let them trick you into thinking that they see more than they actually can. Encourage self advocacy, independence and resilience.

**Going outside – Those with OCA will burn severely within minutes without sun protection!**

- Always wear hat and sunglasses. Reapply sunscreen at the **START of Lunchtime** (face, ears, neck, arms, hands and legs). Sometimes children may need reminding!
- Wear long sleeves if in the sun for any length of time without shade (see the PE below).
- They generally do not see fine detail (for objects more than a metre away), have poor depth perception, and do not easily focus on moving objects. Therefore they may not see changes in surface, steps, judge distance or track moving objects (other children, balls etc).

**In the classroom**

- Seat them with their back to the window or source of bright light, making sure you do not have the light source behind you (or they will only see your shadow).
- Ask them to describe what they see (not “can you see that?”)
- Verbalise what is going on in the room (to all students) so that they can follow what is happening. (eg. “Mrs Smith has just come into the room” etc.)
- Use students’ names as you ask / answer questions, so that they know who is talking.
- Give directional instructions (near the window) rather than “over there”.

**Board work**

- Seat the student at the front of the class near the board, with other students.
- Use solid black pens on white boards (high contrast), ensuring there is no glare on board.
- Blackboards should be cleaned of chalk scum regularly. Use white chalk.
- Use bold open print (with space between letters or numbers), enlarged for the student.
- Reduce clutter on the board and keep diagrams simple.
- Read aloud as you write on the board and describe diagrams.

**Technology**

- Provide board work on the iPad (link it to smart board).
- Provide audio books where available.
- Allow him to use his CCTV to view smaller print (eg readers) or objects.

**Printed material**

- Provide handouts in font without serifs, enlarged so that the student can read it easily.
- Pictures/photos should be high contrast. Diagrams simple and high contrast. All min A4 size.
- Some children find cream or buff paper have less glare.
- Provide rest breaks with alternative work to rest the eyes when necessary.

**Demonstrations**

- Ensure the student is close enough to see

- If technology is available, provide a video of the demonstration before the lesson.
- Allow them to have a look at the equipment and layout before the demonstration.

### Physical Education and Sport classes

- One of the primary considerations when classes are outdoors is sun and **glare protection**. Ensure that their PE uniform includes **large brimmed or legionnaire style hat** and **sunglasses**. Glare not only reduces vision significantly, but also causes severe pain. If they have Oculocutaneous Albinism (white skin and hair), **Sunscreen** (even on cooler or cloudy winter days) must be used on exposed skin, with long sleeves (preferably dark colour to prevent glare) and long pants. Placement of the class, teacher and student on the field to reduce sun and glare exposure for the student is important. On days of excessive UV levels they may require a reduced time on the field or an alternate activity (there are good phone apps letting you know the daily levels).
- When first starting school they usually cope with most basic physical skills with support (high contrast equipment and markings, non busy background, staged learning, placed with peers using slower speeds for ball games). As they do not see fine detail, many prep children will not have identified the difference between running, jumping, hopping and skipping, and may have to be taught these skills. Although they have difficulty tracking moving objects, many play mainstream larger ball sports such as Soccer, Football, Basketball or Netball with supportive peers in junior teams. As ball games become faster and skills more sophisticated, with strategic play that requires sighting fast moving players, they often find it difficult to keep up and drop out. When team mates can be trained in methods of inclusion (calling positional play, bounce passes, using them for place kicks or throw ins, close tagging players etc) many continue in these sports into adulthood. This early training, builds fitness and movement skills and most importantly the opportunity to socialise with peers and be part of a group. It is therefore important that they are encouraged to participate in a range of activities, and not discouraged or excluded on the basis of low vision.
- In upper Primary or Secondary many successfully continue in mainstream sports or physical activities which rely less on tracking fast movement and more on feel or personal endeavour like martial arts, gymnastics, athletics, swimming, bowling, fitness training or dancing. Others will become involved in the vision-impaired sports. It is therefore important that they are exposed to a broad range of activities for as long as possible, if necessary finding ways to adapt class activities so that they are actively involved and not sent to the Library etc. The inclusion of a range of suitable activities in secondary mainstream PE (as mentioned above), will allow them to continue in the curriculum with their peers.

### For more information

- See the document “Physical Education – participation for the child with albinism”.
- Physical Education Teachers can contact the SVRC (or the State equivalent) for more information on teaching strategies to support and include those with low vision.