

# Upper Primary Teacher – Introduction to accommodations for the student with albinism



*By S. George, Secondary teacher.*

Children with low vision feel no different to anyone else - they just do things differently! They are enabled by excellent memory, other senses, use of technology, ability to adapt and to efficiently use the sight that they have. Encourage self-advocacy, independence and resilience.

## Issues of Low Vision

- Lack of clarity – they will only see detail when 1 to 2 metres away, including facial expressions.
- Further reduced vision when facing the light source (sun/windows). Will cause pain in the eyes.
- Lack of depth perception – judging how close something is, or to see changes in surface level.
- Slow to focus – difficulty tracking moving objects or when they are moving.
- Eye fatigue with extended periods of reading or close work, especially at the end of the day.

## In the classroom

- Seat them with their back to the window or light source, ensure you are facing the light.
- Ask them to describe what they see (not “can you see that?”).
- Use students’ names as you ask or answer their questions, so that they know who is talking.
- Give directional instructions (next to the window), rather than “over there” or pointing.
- Use blinds to block out glare from outside, but ensure sufficient light to see clearly.
- Allow them to have a look at any new equipment or layout before the class.
- Seat them with other students close to presentations, or provide a copy to their device.
- Use solid black pens on boards (high contrast), read aloud as you write, describe diagrams.
- Use font without serifs, enlarged or provide a copy to their electronic device to be enlarged.
- Pictures/photos/diagrams should be high contrast, without too much detail, at least A4 size.
- Provide rest breaks with alternative work to rest the eyes when necessary (eg listening books).

## Adaptive Technology for Low Vision

- Encourage independence in the choice of this equipment – they will know which equipment suits an activity or assists them to see effectively (dome, desk magnifier, iPad, computer etc).
- The student should be responsible for the safe usage and storage of equipment, including charging devices and the reporting of any hardware or software issues.
- Where possible link the student’s iPad or computer to any electronic presentations or videos.

## Working with the Classroom Assistant

- They are there to support the child, checking that they can see all work, have the correct assistive technology and software, and have safe practice and movement in practical classes.
- Discourage the assistant from sitting with the child (unless working 1:1 for a short time).

## Going outside (Recess, Lunch etc)

- Allow access to shade and ensure they wear hat and sunglasses to protect the eyes from glare.
- They should apply sunscreen at start of lunch – they will burn severely within minutes without sun protection at any time of the year! Keep a box at the door for hat, sunglasses, sunscreen.

## PE/Sport lessons

- Use the child’s name to attract their attention and ensure they see / understand instructions.
- Let them take part in demonstrations to see the equipment layout or movement patterns.
- Use high contrast coloured balls or equipment, with coloured bibs for tag or team games.
- They may not see fine detail, have poor depth perception, or not easily focus on moving objects. They may not see changes in surface, steps, judge distance or track moving objects.
- Find a way for them to participate in all activities, keeping their back to the sun if possible.