

Child vision screening for 4 to 5 year olds

Information for teachers in local authorities using opt out consent

This information will help you answer questions from children, parents or carers about child vision screening in school.

Aims of screening

The aim of child vision screening is to detect significantly reduced vision. Young children rarely complain about having reduced vision. If only one eye is affected it is even less likely to be noticed by the child, parents, carers or teachers. The tests are carried out within school by trained vision screeners. Parents or carers are informed that the test will be taking place.

Vision screening in this local authority uses opt-out consent. This means that parents or carers only need to respond to the screening invitation if they do not want their child to receive screening. If their child has vision screening, the parents or carers will receive a letter with the result.

The screening test

Screeners will test the children in a quiet room within the school. Each eye is tested separately, by covering the other eye with a patch or glasses with one lens blanked out. The child is then asked to either name or match letters on a card held 3 metres away. Children do not need to know their letters to complete the screening.

Testing a child typically takes no longer than 10 minutes.

Possible results

The test will show if reduced vision is suggested or not.

If reduced vision is suggested, children will be referred for further tests. These could be carried out by a local optician, by someone in a children's community eye service or within the hospital eye service.

If a child is absent on day of screening or will not co-operate the screening test, they will be tested on another occasion where possible. If they are still unable to be tested, they will be referred for diagnostic testing. If necessary, parents or carers will be contacted by letter to make an appointment for an eye test at their local optician. This includes children who were absent on 2 occasions and missed screening.

If reduced vision is not suggested, parents or carers will be informed in writing. This letter will also highlight that like all screening tests, vision screening is not 100% perfect but should find most problems. A child's vision will change over time and vision screening may not pick up less common eye problems.