



St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School

Visual Stress Policy Document

February 2024

Mission Statement

'Nurturing Hearts and Minds'

God's love is at the heart of all that we do at St Gabriel's
Catholic Primary School.

Hearts and Minds are nurtured in a stimulating and safe environment. We believe that every child is unique and we nurture each child through a creative and rounded curriculum to reach their full potential. Talents are celebrated and differences are respected within a strong, supportive Catholic community.

At St Gabriel's, children learn to love, respect and care for each other and God's entire world. Our school is a place where children are filled with a love of life and learning.

What is visual stress?

Some people experience visual discomfort or disturbance when they read. Common symptoms that may significantly impair reading ability, or make reading very tiring, include:

- Headaches and eyestrain associated with reading and/or other near work
 - Text appearing blurred or going in and out of focus
 - Text appearing double or alternating between single and double
 - Difficulty keeping place in text
 - Difficulty tracking across lines of text
 - Discomfort with brightness of the page or contrast between text and background
 - Text that appears to shimmer or flicker
- (Taken from the British Dyslexia Association Website)

How do we identify visual stress?

Any child showing significant difficulties with reading and/or writing, or whom describes any of the difficulties listed above, may be assessed in school for use of a coloured overlay. Our dyslexia lead carries out these assessments, whereby the number of words read per minute in a text is recorded and then compared to the number of words read when using different colours of overlay. This is recorded as a percentage increase of words read per minute, also taking into consideration the child's reading stance and accuracy in reading. Additionally, we listen to the child's voice during the assessment and if the percentage increase of words read with a particular overlay isn't significant but the child expresses a preference in line with the difficulties listed above, e.g. 'the words don't move around anymore' or 'the words aren't blurry anymore' then a coloured overlay may still be issued.

Use of a coloured overlay is monitored by class teachers and a recommendation can be made to reassess. All children issued are reassessed

on a rolling 24-month basis.

Next steps

Whilst we recognise that coloured overlays can hugely benefit the reading of some children, if children have visual difficulties, then it is essential that these are diagnosed and managed correctly by qualified, registered professionals. For this reason, when a coloured overlay is issued (or when a result is inconclusive) a letter is sent home recommending parents book an appointment with a specialist Behavioural Optician.

Links with dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difference, a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affects the learning process in reading, spelling and writing. Dyslexic learners may also have accompanying weaknesses in short-term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information. Visual stress can also be a symptom of dyslexia but does not necessarily indicate that a child has dyslexia. Please see Dyslexia Policy for further information.

Signed:
S Baker

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