



Policy Document Title:	Braille Policy
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## **Philosophy**

Access to Braille skills development, Braille reading and writing tools and Braille materials is a fundamental right of all children who are blind or have a severe visual impairment. It is integral to maximising opportunities for their participation in all aspects of life.

## **Introduction**

Braille and print are alternative, but equal, routes to literacy. Successful literacy results in an enjoyment of the written word, the ability of the reader to gain information from written source material and the ability to make written records for a variety of purposes.

## **Aim:**

The aim of St Vincent's is to facilitate the learning of Braille as an alternative means of communication for pupils with a visual impairment, if it is appropriate to their intellectual and/or physical ability.

## **Learning and Teaching:**

### **Deciding the most important medium**

On admission to St Vincent's, If a pupil's EHCP states they are a Braille user or learning Braille, appropriate provision will be put in place to accommodate their needs.

Pupils may be transferred to Braille from print for the following reasons:

- They can no longer read print
- Print has to be enlarged to such an extent that fluency is severely impaired or it is very tiring
- There is a poor visual prognosis

A decision will be made after discussion with relevant professionals, the pupil and parents/carers.

It is important to be aware that if a pupil's vision has deteriorated very quickly there may not be acceptance of 'being blind' or emotional readiness for learning Braille. In such cases a pupil might need considerable counselling and time to be able to accept the need to learn Braille.

### **Working in both Braille and print**

Some younger pupils whose sight is deteriorating, or is likely to deteriorate, may be taught both print and Braille if they are able to cope with the added burden of work this entails. Whenever possible pupils who have print skills will be encouraged to maintain them.

### **Pupils who are making very little progress with Braille**

For some pupils the decision may be taken to cease Braille instruction when it is felt that there has been little or no progress over a considerable period. Again this decision will be made only after consultation with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals. Other methods and technology for accessing literacy will be used.

### **Organisation**

- All new learners will be taught UEB (Unified English Braille).
- At Primary level Braille is taught during 1 x 45 minute literacy lessons each day in small groups and is often reinforced through one-to-one enrichment sessions and throughout the cross curricular timetable.
- In Secondary those needing Braille tuition receive individual lessons (45/50 minutes) as part of their timetable. In some cases this may be 2-3 lessons per week.
- All individual Braille sessions are delivered by qualified teachers/tutors following a personalised learning plan for each individual pupil.
- Braille is delivered using various schemes specifically designed to introduce the Code in a structured format, depending on the pupil's age and ability (See Appendix 1)
- When a pupil has retained a reasonable knowledge of the Braille Code and is considered responsible enough to look after equipment, they may be introduced to the BrailleNote. Individual tuition is provided prior to the pupil being given the equipment to use independently. However, training may also be ongoing if necessary.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment is a continuous process, in which progress is made, or difficulties encountered in each lesson inform the content of the next lesson. Progress is recorded on a record sheet in the pupil's file. Pupils are assessed annually to monitor progress and a report is written for the Annual Review. Progress is also recorded using Classroom Monitor.

## **Staff Training**

- All new teaching staff will learn Braille as part of their MQTVI Certificate which they will be expected to begin within two years of joining St Vincent's.
- All new classroom support staff will be required to complete an on-line certificated course in UEB within three months of joining the staff.
- Residential staff are encouraged to learn Braille
- All staff are regularly kept up to date with any changes in Braille

## **Involving parents**

Parents will be encouraged to become familiar with Braille by:-

- Being invited to attend Braille workshops
- Being encouraged to complete an on-line UEB Braille course.

## **Resources**

- All pupils are provided with their relevant code of Braille which is UEB.
- Reading Schemes in UEB are purchased as soon as they become available.
- All classrooms are provided with the appropriate number of Perkins Braille machines.
- All signage is labelled in Braille as are any notices.

## **Appendix 1**

### List of Braille Reading Schemes

- Hands On
- Abi
- Take Off
- Fingerprints