



# Virtual School Sensory Support

## Returning to School Audiology and Covid 19 - Advice for schools

This document has been created in preparation for some children returning to school in June 2020. It will be updated as the situation evolves, and more information comes to light. We are mindful that certain measures necessary during the pandemic may impact access to the curriculum for pupils who are deaf, and we wish to support them and you with mitigating this.

Please could all staff working with a child or young person who is deaf and has audiology equipment, such as hearing aids, read this.

- Please ensure that any child in your school who wears hearing aid(s) or speech processor(s) sits at the front of the classroom, in the best position to be able to hear you, and to lip read you and their peers. Lip reading is often an essential element of communication for children and young people who are deaf. Our understanding is that staff will not be wearing masks.
- For younger children, if their hearing aids become dislodged, consider if you are willing and able to replace them (washing your hands before and afterwards and wearing protective gloves if preferred). Due to distancing rules, this may not be possible, if so, please consider an arrangement where you can contact the parents/carers to ask if they can come to the school site to help.
- We have asked families to insert fresh batteries into hearing aids on Monday mornings, to minimise the risk of battery failure/the need to change batteries at school.
- If a child is left without their amplification during the day, be mindful of the safety implications as they are unlikely to hear/understand fully what is being said to them, particularly if the speaker is at a distance of more than 2 metres.
- If you have a pupil who is deaf who has a radio aid system, we have established that use of the **Roger Touchscreen** and **ConnectClip** devices could be viable, should schools and families be comfortable with this, as they can be cleaned within the current guidelines. If there are concerns about cleaning the fabric lanyard for the Roger Touchscreen, then the lanyard can be removed and stored (carefully using the release button on the back of the device) and the transmitter can be used in desk mode (placed flat on a surface close to the teacher, or on the pupil's desk for group work). Presently we have apprehensions about the use of the **Inspiro** radio aid systems, as they are more challenging to clean adequately and do not have a desk mode.



Roger Touchscreen



ConnectClip



Inspiro

- If you have a pupil with a radio aid system, the manufacturer's guidance on cleaning will be shared with you.
- If a pupil usually has the benefit of a radio aid system, but use of their system is not currently feasible, deaf friendly communication will be even more critical than usual.
- If you have a soundfield system, we would suggest that only one class teacher uses/touches the microphone and speaker at present. These will also need to be cleaned.

*For further support and guidance please contact your Teacher of the Deaf.*