



BATOD Acoustics Position Statement

The British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD) is the UK's only professional association dedicated to Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs).

The Association advocates for the interests of QToDs and the deaf babies, children, and young people they support, engaging with governments and key agencies at both national and regional levels. BATOD provides sustained professional support through a comprehensive programme of continuing professional development (CPD), alongside national and regional meetings. These initiatives ensure that members have access to up-to-date information, high-quality resources, and best-practice guidance. In this document the term 'deaf' denotes all levels and types of deafness.

Context

This position statement has been developed through a national consultation of QToDs, educational audiologists, acousticians, specialist practitioners, and other professionals working directly with deaf children and young people (CYP). The recommendations reflect professional experience, real life evidence, observed outcomes in practice, and widely shared professional judgement about effective acoustic environments in educational contexts.

The document sets out the acoustic standards and associated operational guidance intended to support inclusive education for deaf CYP. It is written to be robust enough for reference by acousticians, local authorities, nurseries, schools and college staff, school planners and all who have an interest in the acoustic environment for deaf CYP. The revision replaces all earlier versions and has been written following the national survey carried out by BATOD during 2025.

The document recognises that access to spoken language is determined by the interaction between room acoustics, background noise, teaching practice, and assistive listening technology.



Section A: Acoustic Standards (Tiered and Evidenced)

1. Unoccupied Ambient Noise Level (Background Noise Level – BNL)

Standard:

Unoccupied ambient noise levels shall not exceed 35 dB(A), measured in accordance with BB93 methodologies.

Particular attention must be given to low-frequency noise components arising from mechanical ventilation, heating, ICT equipment, and external machinery, as low-frequency noise contributes disproportionately to listening fatigue and upward spread of masking.

2. Reverberation Time (RT) and Speech Clarity

Standard:

Reverberation time shall not exceed 0.4 seconds, measured across the frequency range 125 Hz to 4000 Hz.

3. Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) – Occupied Conditions

Standard:

A minimum signal-to-noise ratio of +20 dB shall be achieved at the listener's ear level for deaf learners and others with special hearing, or communication needs (SHCN as referenced in BB93).

Section B: Operational and Management Standards (Supporting)

4. Accessibility, Review, and Monitoring

Schools shall undertake an annual acoustic self-evaluation as part of their accessibility planning and review cycle. This process is intended to identify deterioration in acoustic performance (e.g. failed door seals, increased mechanical noise) and to trigger timely intervention, not to replace formal acoustic assessment.



BATOD will provide a *Traffic Light Classroom Acoustic Audit tool* to support this process, enabling QToDs/ educational audiologists and staff who are responsible for overseeing inclusion and SEND/ALN/ASN/SEN to quickly triage classrooms using observable physical features and listening experience without requiring specialist instrumentation for every review. This does not replace expert assessment from a suitably qualified professional.

5. Training and Awareness

QToDs and educational audiologists can provide targeted training covering:

- interpretation of acoustic reports,
- educational implications of RT, SNR, and background noise data,
- identification of thresholds requiring further assessment.

All teaching staff should receive proportionate training in noise-aware classroom practice, including:

- management of occupant noise,
- correct use of remote microphone systems,
- maintenance of visual access to speech.

This training should be framed as supporting learning, inclusion, and vocal health rather than compliance alone.

Appendix: BATOD Traffic Light Classroom Acoustic Audit (Purpose and Status)

The *Traffic Light Classroom Acoustic Audit* is intended as a structured triage tool to support early identification of classrooms that present barriers to access. It does not replace formal acoustic measurement but provides a defensible mechanism for prioritising mitigation, referral, and capital investment where required.

An online version of the *Traffic Light Classroom Acoustic Audit tool* is available via this [link](#).

Created: February 2026

Revision due: February 2027