

# Transition from primary to secondary school: Audiology information pack

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**We want to help you to hear as well as possible at secondary school. Moving to a new school is an exciting time, and at the same time you will be taking more responsibility for your own hearing aids. This information pack has been provided to answer your questions.**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Secondary school:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Will my appointments be different now?**

You may have been coming to the Audiology Department all your life, or you may have started coming for appointments recently. At each appointment we take into account your age and hearing aid experience so that we can give every person the best support with their hearing. As you move from primary to secondary school we encourage you to think about things such as:

- Does your hearing seem the same or different?
- Are your hearing aids working well?
- Are you hearing well at home and at school?
- Do your earmoulds fit well?
- If you use a radio aid, is it working well?
- Do you have enough batteries at home?
- Do you have any questions, or is there anything you need to tell us?

Everyone is different, but often we only need to arrange one routine Hearing Aid Review appointment each year. Of course, if you need an extra appointment (if there are problems with your hearing aid or you need new earmoulds, for example) then we can book this. Ask an adult to let us know. Our contact details are at the end of this pack.

## **Audiology staff**

You will probably have met most of the Paediatric Audiology Team by now. These audiologists will continue to see you up to the age of 18.

## **Do I have a Teacher of the Deaf?**

Many pupils with hearing aids are visited in school by a Teacher of the Deaf. Sometimes your teacher will change when you move to a new school.

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

We will share results of your hearing tests and hearing aid settings with your Teacher of the Deaf. S/he will also let us know how you are getting on at school.

You should let someone know as soon as possible if you have any problems with your hearing or hearing aids. Your Teacher of the Deaf or the Audiology Team can help you.

### My hearing:

Do you know how to describe your hearing difficulty to other people?

It can be helpful to know how to explain this to your teachers or to other pupils, in case someone asks you. If you would like us to explain your hearing test results again (and explain why hearing aids help you) please ask an audiologist at your next appointment.

### My hearing aids:

Here are some current details about your hearing aids which might be a useful record:

Ear	Right	Left
Hearing aid make and model		
Colour		
Ear mould		
Tubing		
Battery		
Programs		
Radio aid		
Prescription		

**Please note** – as you become more confident in managing your hearing aids, we may talk with you about adding a volume control or different programs (settings) to your aids. This is sometimes very useful if your hearing tends to fluctuate (get better and worse), for example. If you would like more information, or you think this would be a good idea for you, please ask an audiologist.

## Looking after my hearing aids:

At secondary school you probably have lots of different teachers and move between many different classrooms. It is your responsibility to make sure your hearing aids and radio aid are working well for every lesson.

Here are some things to check:

### **Batteries:**

Keep spare batteries in your school bag, as they could go flat at any time.

New batteries can be collected from Audiology 1 or 2 receptions (Monday - Friday from 8.30am - 5pm) or at your local GP surgery reception during their opening hours. Remember to bring/take your battery card with you each time. Batteries can also be posted to you if you ask an adult to contact the Audiology department to request them. Teachers of the Deaf also carry supplies of batteries with them when they visit pupils in school.

***Note:** Hearing aid batteries should not be thrown away with normal household rubbish because the metals inside them pollute the environment. If you store used batteries safely at home and hand them in to us at your appointments, we will ensure that they are recycled safely. They can also be taken to a local battery recycling collection point (often in shops).*

### **Earmoulds:**

Your earmoulds might become too small as you keep growing taller. When they are too small they can slip out of your ears easily, and your hearing aids might whistle. Let an Audiologist know if you need impressions for new earmoulds.

### **Replacing the tubing:**

The tubing of your earmoulds should be replaced every 4-6 months, especially if:

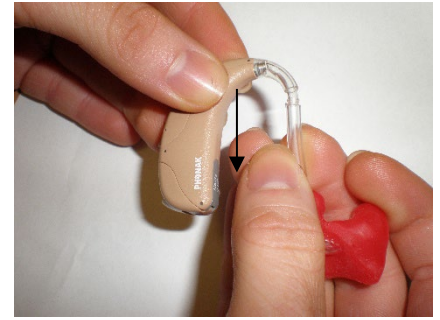
- it becomes very hard,
- it keeps falling out of the earmould,
- you have had an ear infection recently.

An Audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf can show you (and an adult) how to change the tubes yourself and we can provide spare tubing for you to keep at home. Let us know if you would like us to show you how to retube your earmoulds.

### **Cleaning your hearing aids:**

1. Earmoulds need to be kept clean. You can wipe the earmoulds every day with a dry cloth or anti-bacterial wipe (available from the chemist) before putting them in your ears. Ear wax can block the tubing of the earmould causing the sound from the hearing aid to be less clear. Let us know if you need a brush with a hook on one end to help remove any wax.
2. The earmoulds should also be washed regularly with soap (the kind you would use on your skin) and water. If you have an ear infection, your earmoulds will need to be soaked in a sterilising solution to prevent the spread of infection.

3. To wash the earmoulds you need to remove them from the hearing aids. To do this hold onto the tubing with one hand and the hearing aid in the other and ease the two bits apart, as shown. You may need to pull it fairly hard but this should not damage the hearing aid.



4. After you have washed the earmoulds, there is likely to be some water remaining in the tubing. You can use the 'puffer' in your care pack to blow any water out of the tubes.

5. To re-connect the earmoulds and hearing aids match the curve at the back of the ear-mould to the curve of the hearing aid and ease the tubing onto the elbow of the aid, as shown.



6. Moisture or condensation can build up in the tubes. If this happens you can disconnect the earmould and hearing aid and use a puffer to remove the moisture. Some people find that they have moisture present in the tubing of the earmould most of the time. If this happens to you let us know as we can use special tubing (known as stay-dry tubing) to prevent this.

### **Drying your hearing aids:**

The outer casing of a hearing aid has some water resistance, which protects the working parts of the aid from moisture. However, remember that your hearing aids should never be put in water! If your hearing aids get damp (this often happens more in the summer time or when taking part in sports) then it is important to dry them out overnight. We can provide 'dri-pots' which you put your hearing aids into each night. If hearing aids are not dried properly they could become 'intermittent' (meaning they could work well for some of the time but not all of the time).

### **How do I use the telephone with my hearing aids?**

There are a number of ways of doing this.

- The simplest method is to hold the handset in the correct position:
- towards the top of your ear, at the level of the hearing aid microphones, if you have hearing aids with earmoulds (see photo);
- in the normal position if you use a hearing aid with a thin tube and open fitting domes (with holes in them).
- You may find it helpful to practise positioning the phone while listening to a friend or family member at home, during a non-important call. We can also practise this during your appointments if you would like. Please ask.



- If your telephone's user manual shows the loop symbol (right), then you can switch your hearing aid(s) to your loop program (see page 3) and hold the handset as normal.
- If your telephone has a speakerphone (loudspeaker) you can listen whilst wearing both of your hearing aids. People often find it easier to understand speech when using both ears.
- Some telephones have a volume control to make the speaker's voice louder. These telephones are available through Connevans (see page 6).
- Sophisticated technology products can also be purchased to stream telephone calls to your hearing aids wirelessly. The products you can use will depend on your level of hearing loss and the make of your hearing aids. Please ask for advice.



**Remember!** A caller may not know that you have a hearing difficulty and people who should already know may also forget.

**Take control!** Tell the caller that you have a hearing difficulty. Ask them to speak slowly and clearly.

Technology is not only for telephone use. It can also be helpful for listening to music or video games on the computer.

## Equipment

There is a wide range of equipment that might be useful for you to use with your hearing aids, to help with hearing and communication:

- **Listening devices** work with hearing aids to improve hearing in difficult situations and to listen to the television, telephone, music and computer games. These devices include loop systems and radio aids.
- **Radio aids** are particularly useful at school and college. They can help reduce the effect of background noise by allowing you to concentrate on one person's voice.
- **Alerting devices** use light, vibration, amplified sound or a combination of all three to tell you about events happening in your home (telephone ringing, doorbell chiming, smoke detectors sounding, alarm clocks going off).
- **Subtitles and sign language.** Most programmes on Freeview have optional subtitles and some include sign language interpreters. Online videos also often have subtitles although sometimes these are automatically generated and may contain some errors.
- **Wireless technology** can help you use the telephone (including your mobile phone), listen to music/computers and listen to the television. The products you can use will depend on your level of hearing loss and the make of your hearing aids.

You can ask your audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf if you have any questions about different pieces of equipment which might be useful for you at school or at home.

Your audiologist can also put you in touch with:

### **Deaf Services Teams**

The teams provide a wide range of support to children and young people who have hearing difficulties, and their families. You can access this service if you live in West Berkshire (other areas do not currently have active teams).

### **Newbury/West Berkshire Hearing Impairment Team**

Turnhams Green Park Offices, Pincents Lane, Calcot, Reading RG31 4UH

Tel: 01635 503704. Fax: 0118 9305272. Text: 07917 013803 (no calls please)

Email: [sensoryneeds@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sensoryneeds@westberks.gov.uk)

More equipment information can be found at:

- [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)
- [www.connevans.co.uk](http://www.connevans.co.uk)
- <https://rnid.org.uk/>

### **Are my hearing aids faulty?**

Sometimes a hearing aid becomes faulty or may appear to be faulty. Here is a list of common problems and things to check. If you are unable to solve the problem yourself and your hearing aid is still not working properly it may need to be sent for repair.

#### **No sound from a hearing aid:**

- Check that the hearing aid is switched on properly.
- Try a new battery.
- The earmould tubing may be blocked by ear wax. If this is the case, you can attempt to remove it using a small brush or washing the earmould in water. If this does not work, try changing the tubing if you know how.
- The earmould tubing may be blocked by condensation. If this is the case, use a 'puffer' to dry the tubing.
- The hearing aid may be damaged or faulty. If you think this is the case, ask an adult to contact Audiology for advice.

#### **Sound from a hearing aid is not clear or sounds distorted:**

- The battery may be weak. Try replacing the battery with a new one.
- Check that the earmould is inserted properly and that it is not too small.
- The hearing aid may be damaged or faulty. If you think this is the case, ask an adult to contact Audiology for advice.

### **Sound from a hearing aid is not as loud as normal:**

- Check that the earmould is inserted properly and that it is not too small.
- The earmould tubing may be blocked by ear wax. If this is the case, you can attempt to remove it using a small brush or washing the earmould in water. If this does not work, try changing the tubing if you know how.
- The earmould tubing may be blocked by condensation. If this is the case, use a 'puffer' to dry the tubing.
- There could be a lot of wax in your ears, or you might need a new hearing test. If you think this is the case, ask an adult to contact Audiology for advice.

### **Feedback (whistling) from a hearing aid:**

- Check that the earmould is inserted properly and that it is not too small.
- If you think a new earmould is required, ask an adult to contact Audiology for advice.

### **What are my responsibilities?**

You are responsible for taking good care of your hearing aids. Adults are expected to pay for replacement hearing aids when theirs are lost or broken, so it is very important to get into good habits now.

It is also important that you attend all appointments we arrange for you. Too many appointments are wasted when people do not turn up. Please ask an adult to let us know if you need to rearrange your appointment so that we can use the time to see someone else instead. Our contact details are given below.

### **If you have any further questions, please contact:**

To change an existing appointment, ask a question or talk to an audiologist, an adult should contact:

The Audiology Department on tel: 0118 322 7238

Email: [audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net](mailto:audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net)

Website: [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/featured-services/children-young-people/children-s-hearing-services/](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/featured-services/children-young-people/children-s-hearing-services/)

**Unfortunately it is not usually possible to replace a hearing aid if you drop in without warning, so please do contact us first for advice.**

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this leaflet in other languages or formats (e.g. large print, Braille or audio), please contact the Audiology Department.**

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Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent