



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

Access to Braille skills development, Braille reading/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 morning in small groups. Primary pupils are also allocated an additional 1:1 weekly session with a Braille Tutor.
- In Secondary those needing Braille tuition receive individual lessons (45/50 minutes) as part of their weekly 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 pupil.
- Braille is delivered using various schemes specifically designed to introduce the Code in a structured format. The scheme used will depend 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 (and later allocated) a 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.

### **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 classroom support staff will be expected to complete in-house training and encouraged to complete the UEB Online Certificate.
- Residential staff are encouraged to learn Braille
- All staff are regularly kept up to date with any changes in Braille

### **Involving parents**

The Braille Tutor will liaise with parents regarding their pupil's Braille as and when appropriate.

### **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