

HCP 0 – 19 Public Health Nursing Service
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Date - January 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: Child Vision Screening (ages 4 to 5 years)

Routine eye screening is no longer carried out in your child's school, this means you will need to make an appointment at your local opticians to have your child's eyes tested.

Children often cope very well with some eye problems which need to be identified and treated early to avoid lifelong visual loss. For this reason, it is important that even children with apparently normal vision should be tested. The screening assessment ensures that your child has good vision in both eyes, and that their vision is developing normally. It is performed at this age so that any reduced vision or difference in vision between each eye can be picked up before the visual system is fully developed and any treatment necessary can be started.

Why eye checks are important

Your child's eyes may be examined soon after they start school. This is called vision screening and it checks for reduced vision in one or both eyes. The aim is to detect any problems early so that treatment can be given if needed.

The sooner any eye problem is found, the sooner you and your child will be able to get any treatment and support needed.

Children may not realise they have a vision problem so, without routine tests, there's a risk a problem may not be spotted. This may affect their development and education.

Speak to a GP or go to an optician if you have any concerns about your child's vision at any stage.

Signs of a possible eye problem can include:

- the eyes not pointing in the same direction
- problems reading – for example, they may need to hold books close to their face and they may lose their place regularly
- complaining of headaches or eye strain
- problems with hand-eye co-ordination – for example, they may struggle to play ball games
- being unusually clumsy
- regularly rubbing their eyes
- sitting too close to the TV

The Eye Test

Don't worry about the costs, as all NHS sight tests are free for children under the age of 16.

The eye test is entirely safe and non-invasive. Most children enjoy it.

The orthoptist will assess your child's vision using a letter matching game or a picture naming game and answering simple questions.

They may look at small pictures, follow a light or look at a 3D picture.

These tests are child friendly, and your child does not need to know their letters.

The orthoptist will carry out tests specifically designed to detect eye problems.

If your child falls in any of the groups below then you **do not need to do anything**. You should ignore this letter if your child -

- has already had a vision test at school
Or
- is currently under the care of an ophthalmologist / orthoptist / optometrist at your local hospital eye clinic
Or
- is currently under the care of a local optometrist (optician) or had a recent sight test

If none of the above applies, please arrange with your local optometry practice (optician) for your child to have a free NHS sight test.

Please telephone the optician practice to book an appointment. You may have to wait a few weeks before an appointment can be offered. **You will not have to pay for the sight test. Don't worry about the costs, as all NHS sight tests are free for children under the age of 16.**

We recommend your child has this sight test in case she/he has a problem which requires treatment. Young children rarely complain about having reduced vision. If only one eye is affected it is even less likely to be noticed by the child, parents or anyone else. A sight test will identify any problems. The optometrist (optician) will be able to explain the results and any next steps with you during the sight test.

If you need any support in making an appointment with the opticians, please let us know by contacting the service on – 03333583328 or email shropcom.adminleonardst@nhs.net

For further information, please visit www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes

Yours faithfully

Healthy Child Programme 0-19 Service

Public Health Nursing – Telford and Wrekin