**S.E.a.T.S.S.**

Specialist Education and Training Support Service (Sensory Team – Hearing Impairment)

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If you have any queries or want any advice please contact us by emailing **SEATSS@redbridge.gov.uk**

If you do not have access to email and need advice please phone us on **07780 164239**

**Conductive Hearing Impairment**

**Facts:**

* Occurs in the outer or middle ear.
* Causes include glue ear, microtia, malformation of the middle ear bones or a perforated eardrum.
* Glue ear is the most common cause – a glue-like fluid collects in the middle ear when a child has had repeated colds or infections. Often it is treatable by medication or grommet surgery.
* The hearing loss may be mild, moderate or fluctuating.
* If it is fluctuating, sometimes even on a daily basis, it can lead to poor listening skills which can be frustrating for both child and parent/teacher.
* Some children with conductive loss are given bone conduction or behind the ear hearing aids.

**Implications:**

* Listening with a conductive hearing loss is like listening to the TV with the sound turned low, or trying to listen under water.
* The child may appear dreamy, disruptive, demanding or be withdrawn and wait for the cues from others.
* They will have difficulties hearing when there is background noise and will not hear clearly in group situations.
* They may have unclear speech and delayed language, such as a limited vocabulary.
* They may find it difficult to learn phonic skills.
* The child may give the impression of being able to “hear when they want to.”

**General strategies:**

* Ensure all those interacting with the child are aware of the hearing loss and the possible intermittent nature of it.
* Ensure hearing aids are worn consistently.
* Speak clearly but don’t shout or over-enunciate.
* Ensure you have the child’s attention before starting to speak.
* Support spoken language with visual clues whenever possible, especially in the early years.
* Keep background noise to a minimum so the child can hear the key message more clearly.

**Extra strategies for school staff:**

* The child should be seated close to the teacher and to one side, so that they can see both the teacher and their classmates.
* Reiterate what other pupils say as the child may not be able to hear pupils who are not sitting nearby.
* Check the pupil has understood instructions and key points.
* Additional language support may help a child with a limited vocabulary.
* During group work allow the child’s group to work in a quieter space whenever possible.