

# Wearing glasses

information for parents and guardians



## Why does my child need glasses?

In a normal sized eye the rays of light that enter should focus onto the back of the eye (retina). This allows the brain to receive a clear picture. Some children have smaller or larger eyes than average which does not allow this to happen; this is corrected by prescribing glasses. Your child has been found to have a refractive error. This means they need to wear glasses.

Your child has: (orthoptist to delete as appropriate)

- Hypermetropia (long sighted)
- Myopia (short sighted)
- Astigmatism (rugby ball shaped).

## What are long sight, short sight and astigmatism?

### Hypermetropia – long sighted

Vision can appear blurred at near and distance unless the eyes make an extra effort to focus - this may result in one of their eyes turning inwards. The eye is too small/short resulting in light entering the eye and focusing behind the retina (back of the eye) instead of directly on it.

## Myopia – short sighted

Short sighted children have reduced vision for distance. This is caused by the eye being too large/long, so that the rays of light entering the eye focus in front of the retina instead of on the retina.

## Astigmatism (rugby ball shaped)

Vision is blurred/distorted for both near and in the distance. This can occur on its' own or in addition to being long or short sighted. The cornea (the front surface of the eye) is described as a rugby ball shape, rather than a regular round football shape.

## Anisometropia (difference between eyes)

This occurs when there is a difference in the amount of long/short sight or astigmatism in each eye, resulting in blurred vision.

## When should my child wear the glasses?

Your child should wear their glasses full time (all waking hours of the day) to ensure optimum visual development. If your child complains that they cannot see through the glasses, it is important to persevere as their eyes may still be adjusting to the glasses (this can take up to 18 weeks, known as refractive adaptation). You will help your child to get used to their new glasses by encouraging full-time wear. Allowing them to take the glasses off for rest periods is not helpful and can lead to your child needing longer to settle with the glasses. Please also ensure your child looks through the lenses rather than over the top.

## Will my child need glasses long-term?

This will depend to some extent on the age of the child, the strength of the glasses, and on whether they are also required as part of the treatment of squint or lazy eye. Your orthoptist will discuss this with you during your child's treatment but your child should wear their glasses fulltime to ensure optimum visual development.

Many parents fear that wearing glasses will make their child reliant on them. This is not true. Your child is getting used to having good vision with glasses and is becoming intolerant of the poor vision they have without their glasses

## How do I get my child's new glasses?

You will have been given a prescription voucher for glasses. You should take your child and the voucher to a Community/ High Street optometrist (optician) of your choice where you will get help to choose an appropriate frame to suit your child. It is important that you take your child with you, both when you go to choose and collect the glasses, so that the glasses can be measured and fitted accurately. The prescription/voucher gives you an allowance which in the majority of cases will cover the cost of the glasses. Depending on what frames and lens type you choose you may have to pay an additional cost. Your child will not need to get another eye examination when choosing their glasses.

## Choosing the correct fit of glasses

The fit is very important and they should be comfortable on your child's face. It is important that the frames are always well maintained. If glasses are too tight or too loose, your child will be reluctant to wear them.

The glasses should sit up well on your child's nose and they should always be looking through the centre of the lenses. Rounder shapes are particularly good to ensure your child is always looking through the correct part of their glasses.

Glasses can have special adaptations such as curly ear pieces, special nose pads and head bands to help to achieve a comfortable, snug fit.

Children's glasses often get broken or damaged. With very young children and more active older children, adjustments are often necessary and required frequently. Don't be embarrassed to keep asking your optometrist to adjust the glasses – they are very used to it!

Always return to the optometrist that supplied them to ensure appropriate fit and maintenance of the glasses.

## Does my child get spare glasses?

Each child is entitled to **one** voucher for glasses.

Vouchers for spare pairs of glasses are only supplied under exceptional circumstances.

Depending on what frames and lens type you choose you may have to pay an additional cost.

If you would like your child to have a spare pair and they do not meet the criteria you will need to cover this cost.

Vouchers are not issued for swimming/sports goggles.

## What do I do if my child's glasses get broken or damaged?

**DO NOT** wait until your next hospital appointment, properly fitting, serviceable glasses are an important part of your child's treatment.

Should the glasses get lost, damaged or the lenses get scratched, take your child and glasses back to the high street optometrist (optician) where you originally got them. They can advise on repair and costs. Often there is no cost for repair / replacement if your voucher covered the initial cost.

The important thing is to ensure that they are wearing their glasses and they are in reasonable condition and fitting well at all times. So, do not hesitate to go back to them as often as is necessary.

## My child claims to see better without the glasses or the glasses appear misty?

This is a very common complaint in the early days of wearing glasses. Your child has been struggling with reduced vision for some time, and now the brain and eyes have got to learn to work together with the help of glasses. Without glasses, your child has to make a lot of extra effort to focus and see clearly which may result in a squint (eye turning inwards).

It can take up to 18 weeks of full time glasses wear for your child to adapt to the glasses and for the vision to improve so it is very important to persevere. This is a very important stage of the treatment.

### Tips for glasses wear

- Establish routine
- Glasses first thing on in the morning and last thing off at night
- You may find that your child responds well to reward charts or other reward system.