



28 September 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

### **Reception Vision Screening Programme Update**

Reception vision screening normally takes place between the ages of 4 -5 years old. Due to COVID-19 lockdown and the subsequent school closures, reception vision screening was paused nationwide in March 2020. This has meant that there are children who were in reception during academic year 2019/20 who have not yet had an eye test in school. In order to test the children who have not yet been screened, we aim to restart vision screening in October 2020. This will be done as safely as possible following local and national guidance. This information sheet is to update you on our plans for vision screening going forward.

#### **Why does my child need an eye test?**

- Vision screening tests are designed to see if your child has reduced vision in one or both eyes. The aim is to detect problems early so your child can receive effective treatment.
- Vision continues to develop from birth to around 8 years of age. Children rarely complain of poor vision, particularly if it affects just one eye, so problems can easily go undetected.
- Reduced vision can have an impact on a child's learning and development and is caused by the brain receiving an unclear image from one or both eyes.
- Reasons for reduced vision could include the shape of the eye or a turn/squint in one or both eyes. Treatment options may include glasses and/or a patch worn over the eye with best vision.
- **For more information about child vision screening:** [www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes](http://www.nhs.uk/childrens-eyes)

#### **Information for parents/guardians of last year's reception children (class of 2019-2020)**

- Catch-up vision screening sessions for children now in year 1 (reception class of 2019-2020) will be arranged from October 2020 onwards.
- If you have any concerns about your child's vision prior to their eye test at school, you can contact the Orthoptic Department at the Royal Eye Infirmary in Plymouth on 01752 439319. An Orthoptist will discuss your concerns and may arrange for your child to be seen in an Orthoptic clinic for an assessment.

#### **Information for parents/guardians of this year's reception children (class of 2020-2021)**

- Children who started reception in September 2020 will start to have their vision screening in November 2020/as soon as the catch-up vision screening for the 2019-2020 cohort is finished

(whichever is sooner). Children who have just started school need time to settle into their routine therefore vision screening would start in October/November under normal circumstances.

- Opt-out notification letters for parents will be posted to your child's home address for all reception aged children for 2020-2021 in September/October 2020. If you have any concerns about your child having an eye test in school, they can contact the Vision Screening team to discuss this. Contact details will be included within this notification letter.

#### How are we reducing risk to keep everyone safe during vision screening sessions?

- ✓ All staff involved in vision screening will follow local and national guidance on infection control.
- ✓ Risk assessments will be completed prior to attending schools to ensure all steps are taken to minimise risk.

Sent on behalf of Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust

**The Orthoptic Team**