



**Bedfordshire  
Community  
Health Services**



# Patching Treatment and Amblyopia A guide for teachers

## Bedfordshire Children's Eye Services



Bedfordshire adult and children's community health services are provided in partnership by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) and Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) NHS Trust

## **The development of vision**

The development of vision takes place very rapidly in a child's early years. This process of visual development involves not just the eyes but also the visual pathways within the brain. For a child to develop good vision, the retina of each eye must see a clear image and the optic nerve relays this information to the visual areas of the brain. This constant stimulation of the brain is vital for good eyesight to develop.

## **What is Amblyopia?**

Reduced vision develops in one eye because the brain ignores the visual responses from one eye. This usually occurs because the child has:

- a squint/turn in one eye OR
- long or short sight which is more severe in one eye OR
- drooping of one upper eyelid OR
- a cataract OR
- a combination of these problems

When a child's sight is affected in this way, they are often described as having a lazy eye. The proper name for this condition is Amblyopia.

## **What is patching treatment for?**

Unless action is taken to force the use of the affected (Amblyopic) eye, there will be permanent visual loss for the child. The usual treatment is patching, where the stronger/better eye is covered for part of the day so that the weaker eye is stimulated.

If the child will not tolerate patching, we can use eye drops in the good eye to blur the vision. This will also cause the pupil (black part) of the good eye to be dilated.

What should the child do when having occlusion treatment/patching?

The child should continue with their usual school activities. However, they may benefit from sitting close to the TV/board. The child may be a little slower when reading or writing, so may need more time and encouragement to complete their work. However, as their eyesight improves, they will find these tasks easier.

### **How can school staff help?**

The help of teachers and other school staff is vital when a child is having patching treatment.

### **What to do to help:**

- give the child lots of encouragement
- try to minimise any teasing
- explain to the child and their classmates why the treatment is important
- reward good behaviour/compliance
- try to make it fun – using star charts, etc
- inform the parents/carer if the child is falling behind in their school work.  
They can then contact the Orthoptist at the eye clinic for advice

**Additional information which you may find useful can be found here: [www.squintclinic.com](http://www.squintclinic.com)**

For further information about this service contact:

**Community Eye Service**

Enhanced Service Centre  
Bedford Health Village  
3 Kimbolton Road  
Bedford, MK40 2NT

**Community Eye Service**

Liverpool Road Health Centre  
9 Mersey Place  
Liverpool Road  
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