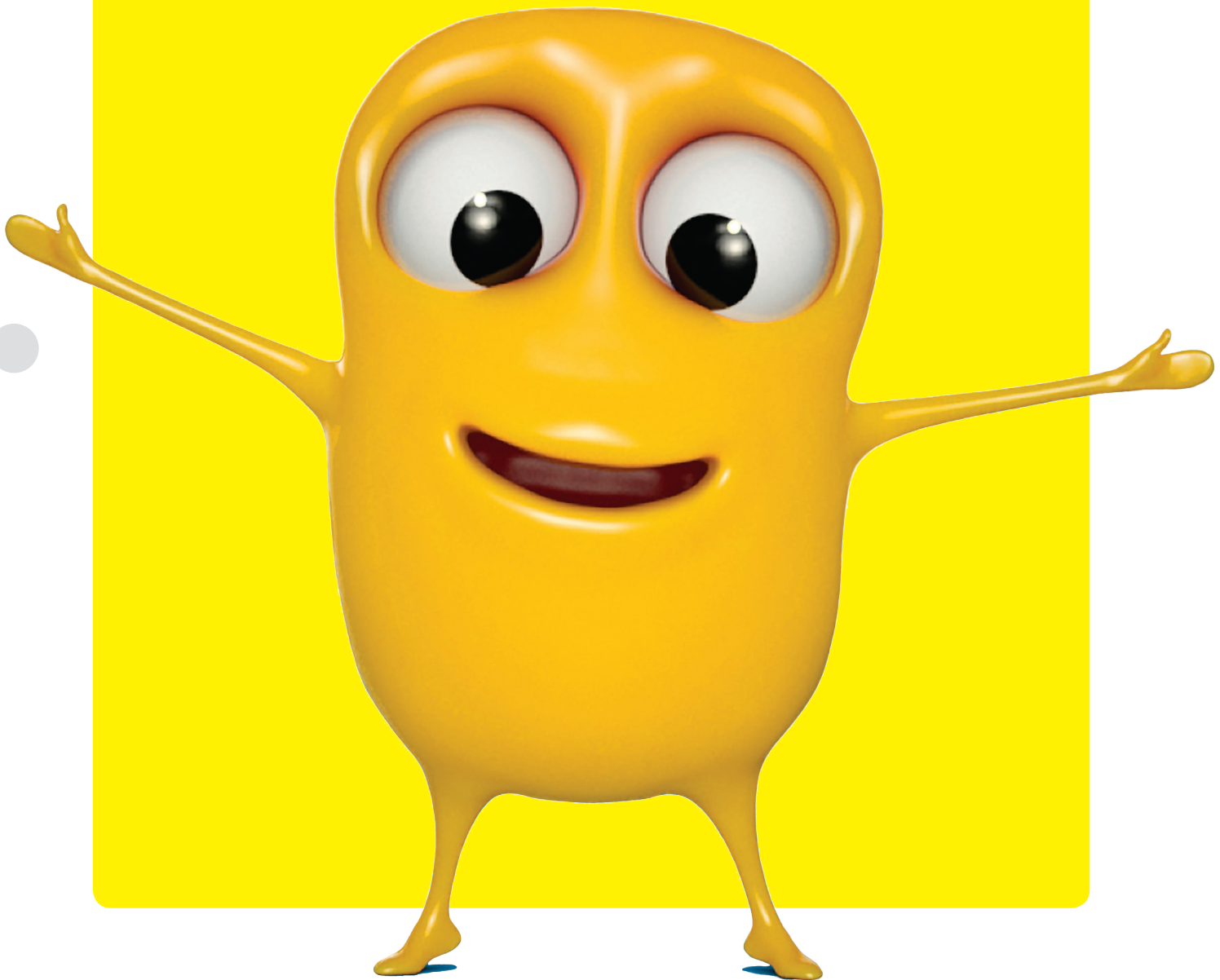


Tips for visually impaired students on school trips



Why adapt school trips for visually impaired (VI) students?

This 90-second video youtu.be/O7j4_aP8dWA demonstrates how much learning is visual and how much audio description is required to make content accessible. With a few adaptations, VI students can participate fully.

General tips

- Always speak to students about what would best help them and how their needs might change over time. They are the experts of their own sight condition and can help you work out the best solution.
- Download **General tips for teaching visually impaired students** from www.macularsociety.org/teaching for introductory information including lighting; emotional support; formatting documents; assistive technology; techniques such as hand-over-hand guiding and further sources of information that have been used to create these resources.

Strategies for adapting school trips

Under the Equality Act, you and the site share responsibility for making “reasonable adjustment”. Most problems can be overcome by preparation, planning and risk assessment.

- On the pre-visit, consider accessibility issues: are there any obstacles such as steps, low ceilings or narrow doorways? Do any steps have handrails?
- Allow time for the student to process information.
- Allocate a one-to-one buddy.
- Students may be anxious in a strange or unfamiliar environment, so:
 - o explain what you are about to encounter, touch or feel
 - o describe any distinctive smells which can help the student make long-term memories
 - o warn the student about any challenging parts of the trip, for example: “We are about to walk up a flight of 100 steps.”
 - o avoid overloading the visually impaired student by giving too much information too soon.
- Prompt students to lower their voices before entering quiet settings such as museums, churches or stately homes.

After the trip

- Ask the student, staff and buddy for feedback – what worked? What didn't work?

- Provide opportunities for students to feed back, using the assistive technology methods below if appropriate.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) gives students with sight loss more information. Teachers should consider making presentations and other materials available in large print or as a sound file. Also consider:

- Does the site have accessible tools on their website? Can the VI student use the school's accessibility tools instead?
- Text speech readers such as NVDA enable the student to study the trip location beforehand and can reduce their anxiety.

<https://www.nvaccess.org/download/>

- Google Maps or Microsoft Maps have speaking options to help direct students around a town or well-known site.
- Talking pens with programmable dots allow students to access maps and instructions for the trip beforehand.

<http://www.talkingpen.co.uk/pen-technology>

- Virtual reality has the potential to offer a personal, more direct experience to VI and sighted students. This is a new exciting area of development – over the next few years,

expect to see more wearable devices being used in education – such as specially adapted shoes which vibrate when you reach a destination. This article has more:

<http://staff.www.ltu.se/~kalevi/References/Virtual%20reality%20technology%20for%20blind%20and%20visual%20impaired%20people.pdf>

In this series:

- **General tips** for teaching visually impaired (VI) students
- Tips for teaching **art** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **design technology** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **geography** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **history** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **ICT** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **literacy** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **mathematics** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **music** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **science** to VI students
- Tips for teaching **sport** to VI students
- Tips for VI students on **school trips**

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