

*Created by the Bi-Borough Sensory Support Team to support children and young people and their families in our service.*

SPRING  
TERM

March 2020

While we normally like to start our newsletters on a more positive topic, we can't deny the fact that the Corona Virus (or Covid 19) is on the top of everyone's mind.

Corona Virus has particularly affected our wonderful areas of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea and we feel we need to take this opportunity to let you know ways you can support your child or children, especially for your children who may have a vision impairment or hearing loss. We hope to give you information about the exciting things we have been doing this term, but we also hope this to be a practical guide for how we will be supporting you and your child during the government-mandated school closures.

While schools are shut, we will be continuing to provide support to schools and families, via video-conferencing, telephone calls and other forms of contact. If you haven't heard from us yet, it is because we are busy preparing. However, rest assured we will be contacting you shortly. If you have any questions in the meantime, feel free to contact your child's VI (Vision Impairment) Teacher or QTOD (Teacher of the Deaf). Our contact details can be found in this newsletter.

Your borough has a dedicated page of resources and ideas to support your child during this time. Please visit their Covid 19/Corona Virus pages on the Local Offer website:

RBKC  
Coronavirus  
SEND Page:

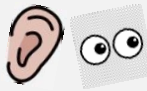
<https://tinyurl.com/yx5fj2nt>



Westminster Coronavirus  
SEND page:

<https://tinyurl.com/wvnpvh>





## Talking to Children about Coronavirus / Covid-19

**Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus** It's really important that children hear the real facts.

**Deaf / hard-of hearing children** are less able to overhear conversation so may have picked up on only some of the information. It is often helpful for deaf / hard-of-hearing children if the message is supported by pictures, props or role play. For example, if you are talking to younger children about the importance of washing their hands, you could use black pepper in water to represent germs and then show them how washing their hands with soap and water will wash all the pepper away.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/coronavirus-teachers-pepper-trick-perfectly-21696351>

Children with **vision impairments** may miss visual demonstrations of how to wash hands effectively and how to safely contain a sneeze or a cough. They will benefit from clear explanations of what they can do to protect themselves and others.



- **Be developmentally appropriate**

*Answer children's questions honestly but don't overwhelm them with too much information. Try not to use lots of tricky words and explain any new words that you do use.*

- **Pre-empt change**

*Let children know that some of their regular activities may be cancelled – it is better for them to be prepared than to have changes to routine come as a complete shock....*



## **The age of the internet and technology**

How we access learning and information is changing fast, and the last few weeks has made it even more important to find out accurate advice quickly.

In terms of your child's hearing and vision needs in the next weeks or months, we want to assure you we are looking at options and investigating ideas to support you from a distance during normal term time, like we would have done in person during school terms.

On the following page, we've put together some ideas to start you off to use the time well, if you are at home for the next few weeks.



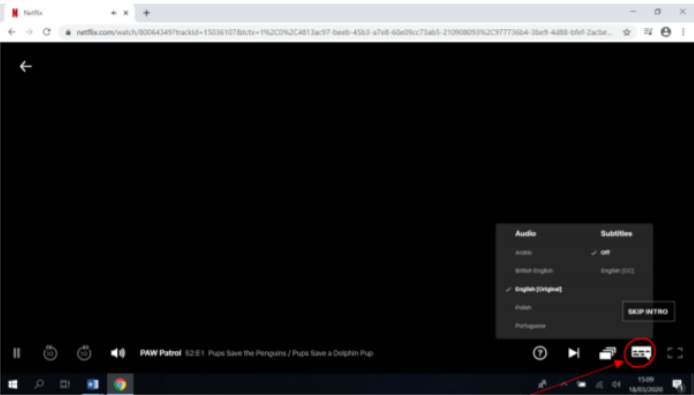
# Making Learning Accessible

If teachers or schools require students to watch videos, subtitles should be turned on. On the following page, we show you how to turn the subtitles on different internet video sites.



**Netflix**

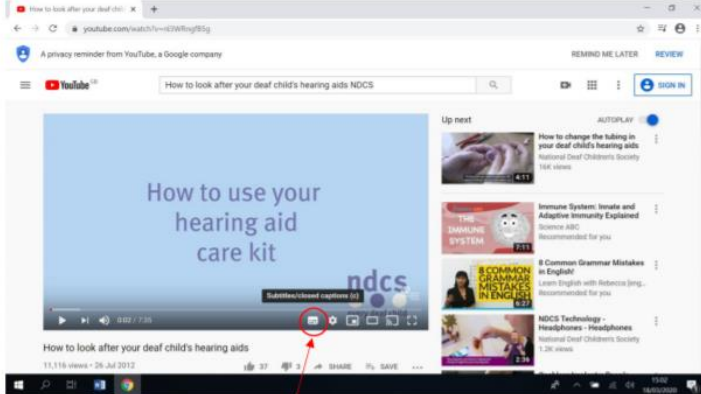
Link to their website instructions:  
<https://help.netflix.com/en/node/372>



Step 1: Hover the cursor over this icon

Step 2: Click your mouse button to activate subtitles (*also known as closed captions*)

**YouTube**

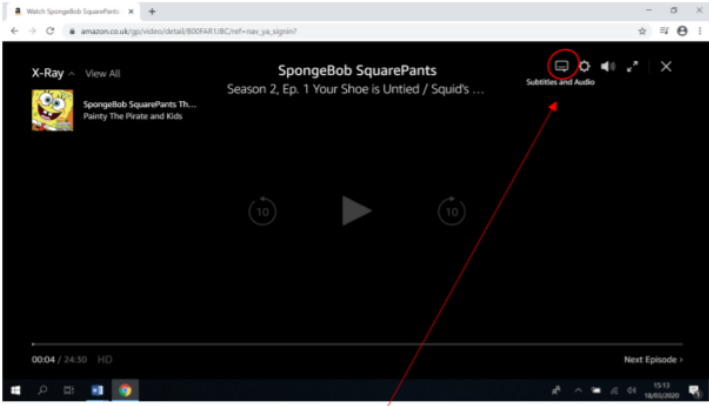


Step 1: Hover the cursor over this icon

Step 2: Click your mouse button to activate subtitles (*also known as closed captions*)

**\*\*Please check the accuracy of the subtitles before watching videos on you tube\*\***

**Amazon Prime Video**

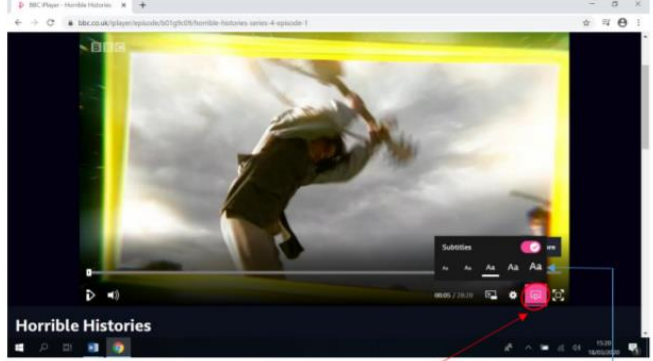


Step 1: Hover the cursor over this icon

Step 2: Click your mouse button to activate subtitles (*also known as closed captions*)

**BBC iPlayer**

Link to their website instructions:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/help/questions/accessibility/subtitles>



Step 1: Hover the cursor over this icon

Step 2: Click your mouse button to activate subtitles

Step 3: You can change the font size by clicking on the size you want.

**\*Also remember to have your child use his or her hearing equipment\***

## Some apps your children may enjoy

- **Seeing AI** (free) – reads out text, face/ colour/ light recognition
- **Claro MagX** (free) – magnifying app, inverts colours etc.
- **Aumi** for £2.99: mood tracking, exercise monitoring
- **Sensory Sound Box** for £2.99 – cause and effect touch skills
- **Action Words** for £0.99: learn new action words
- **Sensory Magma** – calming visual app
- **My PlayHome** for £3.99: interactive doll house (language development/ auditory memory)
- **Word Wizard** (to practise spellings) £8.99
- **Maths: Times Tables Rock Stars, Squeebles** (£2.99/ £.3.99 or £22.99 for 10-app bundle), **Maths Shed** for £2.99
- **CAL Download** to use with Calibre audio book library (£20 one-off subscription) for vision impairment, dyslexia
- **Smiling Mind** (mindfulness, meditation for children)
- **Special Words/ Stories/ Numbers** for £19.99 each – for children with Down Syndrome
- **Bugs and Buttons** for £2.99 for younger learners (counting, critical thinking, sorting, memory... games)
- **Touch the Sound** for £0.99 – recognise familiar sounds and match them to the picture
- **Sound Touch Lite** (free) – recognise real animal sounds and/or photographs of the animals



### Websites

- **Baby Beats**- an early support resource using sound and music to help your baby learn to listen and communicate  
[www.advancedbionics.com](http://www.advancedbionics.com) (download the free Baby Beats app)
- **Improve your BSL**- [www.signbsl.com](http://www.signbsl.com)
- Visit the only dedicated website for **deaf teens** (ages 12-18)  
[www.buzz.org.uk](http://www.buzz.org.uk)

*\*\* The NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society) has a page dedicated to information about the Coronavirus for children and families:*

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-and-support-for-deaf-children-information-for-families/>

## Learning a new skill may help pass some time....

How about learning to **touch-type**? There are free online programmes (for tablets and laptops) that are also suitable for children with special educational needs and disabilities, such as



- <http://doorwayonline.org.uk/> Text Type 3 – designed for students with vision impairments
- [www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing) – for young children, fun and rewarding
- [www.sense-lang.org](http://www.sense-lang.org) – you can type up the news etc.
- <https://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/typing/singlehanded/> – one-handed typing
- <https://www.typingclub.com/one-hand-typing> – one-handed typing



And you could learn some **keyboard shortcuts** to make using a laptop or a Bluetooth keyboard with tablet quicker and more effective, esp. if you have trouble seeing the mouse cursor. You could start with:

<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	C	<b>Copy</b>
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	V	Paste
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	X	Cut
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	S	Save
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	A	Highlight all
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	P	Print
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	F	Find/ Replace
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	B	<b>Bold</b> (no highlighting required, cursor on word)
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	U	<u>Underlined</u>
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	I	<i>Italic</i>
<b>Ctrl/Command</b>	Z	Undo
<b>Shift</b>	Arrow	Highlight 1 letter at a time

## Looking after your hearing aids at home



The better care you take of hearing aids, the longer they will remain in proper working order. Understanding how to clean and maintain hearing aids is very important in order to get the maximum benefit from them.

Please use the link below to watch how to carry out daily checks for hearing aids. There is also advice on trouble shooting and resolving minor problems.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl3WRngfB5g&list=PL7B1043ABAEC9A100&index=2>



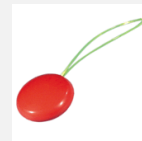
Stetoclip



Puffer



Battery Tester



Tubing Threader

For other equipment please see these YouTube videos:

- [www.youtube.com/user/AdvancedBionics](https://www.youtube.com/user/AdvancedBionics) information to do some home learning on how your cochlear implant works -if you use AB processors. Look for the “Simply explained” series
- [www.youtube.com/user/CochlearEMEA](https://www.youtube.com/user/CochlearEMEA) for those using Cochlear Products – videos to help you change batteries or pair your processor with accessories if you have at home
- [www.youtube.com/user/OticonPeopleFirst](https://www.youtube.com/user/OticonPeopleFirst) particularly helpful for those wearing BoneAnchored or Bone conduction aids on softbands or permanent ones

Please contact your Teacher of the Deaf if you require further explanation or advice or require any of the tools mentioned in the video to maintain good working hearing aids.



## What we've been up to this term

### Upbeat Tuesdays

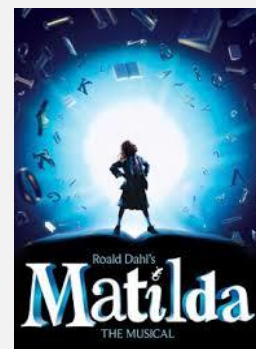


The bi-borough sensory support service had a wonderful launch workshop for their 'Upbeat Tuesdays' after-school music club at Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School. Professional musician Eloise Garland, who is deaf herself, lead a group of children and young people who receive hearing or vision support on a musical journey through composer Grieg's 'Hall of the Mountain King'. At the end of the workshop, Ben, 7, welcomed the audience to a short performance where he played Peer Gynt being chased by percussion-wielding trolls! We did not have enough children/young people to run regular workshops but would love to hear about other ideas you may have for after-school clubs or workshops for a future venture. Please let us know

### Matilda!

A few of our lucky students went to see a special production of Matilda in the West End, adapted to be inclusive for children with VI. Oscar, one of our students, wrote this about the trip:

"When we arrived we had a workshop and we played games and did some drama. Next we had a touch tour. The best thing I touched was the fake refreshments because they looked as if they were real. The show followed the story that I listened to previously on audio very well. I liked the voices of the characters. The funny thing was that the head teacher, Ms Trunchbull, was played by a man. I loved the music because the characters were singing very well."





## Parent/carer Vision Impairment focus group

Our new focus group for parents and carers of children and young people with vision impairments has got off to a great start! The first meeting in January was well-attended by parents/carers and qualified teachers of young people with vision impairments (QTVIs) across seven London boroughs. We spoke about the role of the QTVI, how to use tablet technology effectively and discussed a variety of subjects that were important to the attendees, such as issues around Education Health and Care Plans and family support. Both of these areas will be further explored in the next meeting, which we are looking forward to on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Civic Reception, Kensington Town Hall. Please contact Christina [Christina.Matawa@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Christina.Matawa@rbkc.gov.uk) 07966 992 035 if you would like to join us.

**\*We are currently looking into ways we may be able to hold this valuable parent/carer forum remotely. Christina will be in contact closer to the time or contact her if you have not yet expressed interest.**

**Parent / Carer Focus Group**  
**Vision Support Service**

- Meet other parents and carers from different boroughs
- Meet QTVIs and young people with vision impairments
- One focus per meeting depending on interest, incl. transition to higher education/ work, habilitation, use of IT, social/ emotional needs, EHCP process etc.
- Q&A and Have A Say

Termly

Please email [Christina.Matawa@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Christina.Matawa@rbkc.gov.uk) if interested

Or call her on 07966 992 035

Meetings are held at the Civic Reception, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX

And finally....

Making contact with your child's specialist teacher:

We are working throughout school term time, even amongst the school closures. Should you require any support, please don't hesitate to contact us. We will be sending out further information soon. Please keep an eye out!



Kathryn Gilgallon  
Team Lead, QTOD

K.gilgallon@qe2cp.  
westminster.sch.uk



Julia Driver  
QTOD

j.driver@qe2cp.wes  
tminster.sch.uk



Heather McClean  
QTOD

h.mcclean  
@qe2cp.westminster  
.sch.uk



Maurice Sparrow  
QTVI

m.sparrow  
@qe2cp.westminster  
.sch.uk



Anette Dahyaraj  
QTVI

Qe2referral  
@qe2cp.westminster  
.sch.uk

Westminster  
Team



Miriam Smith  
QTOD

Miriam.smith  
@rbkc.gov.uk



Jeannine Malherbe  
QTOD

jeannine.malherbe  
@rbkc.gov.uk



Christina Matawa  
QTVI

christina.matawa  
@rbkc.gov.uk

RBKC Team

**Wishing every one of our families good health and we look forward to seeing you soon!**

## Kids' Corner

As requested by families, our fun Kid's Corner!



Ideas to keep busy when social distancing (when you don't get too close to others, even if you're not ill by staying at home)

- Build a fort
- Set up a treasure hunt for a family member to go on
- Watch an animal at the San Diego Zoo <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams>
- Watch sea life at the Monterey Bay Aquarium <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
- Have lunch with a school friend safely by using Facetime or Whatsapp chat (ask your parents for help)

