



## Astigmatism and glasses information for parents and carers

### How do you know my child needs glasses?

The need for glasses is assessed by the optometrist. Your child will have drops instilled into each eye to make the pupils bigger. The pupils act as the window of the eye. The optometrist will shine a light into the eye and watch the movement of this line of light at the back of the eye. By neutralising this movement with lenses, the optometrist can calculate the necessary prescription.

### My child has astigmatism. What does this mean?

Astigmatism occurs if the cornea (the front window of the eye) is more curved in one direction than the other. The front of the eye is rugby ball-shaped rather than football-shaped. This causes the image to be distorted.

### Why wearing glasses is so important

It is very important that glasses are worn full-time. Glasses give a clear focused image to the cells of the retina and the brain and so the visual system develops normally. If glasses are not worn the cells of visual system will not develop normally because they do not receive a clear stimulus. Once the visual system has finished developing (around the age of 6-7) any further improvement of vision is unlikely to occur and the level of vision your child has at this age is the vision they will have for the rest of their life (providing they do not get any eye disease in adulthood).

### Are the glasses needed for near or distance?

It is a common myth that glasses are needed only for distance or only for near. In childhood this is not the case. Glasses will be needed for all distances and full-time wear unless you are otherwise directed by your orthoptist, or optometrist.

### **If my child wears the glasses well, will they be able to see clearly without them eventually?**

Glasses only give clear vision whilst they are being worn. They will not make the eyes stronger so that vision is clear even without glasses and this is because glasses cannot change the shape of the eye, they can only manipulate the light entering the eye whilst the glasses are being worn.

### **My child won't wear their glasses!**

Initially, your child may be reluctant to wear the glasses. Encourage them, praise and compliment them, when they are wearing them and persevere.

### **My child is complaining that they can see better without their glasses than with them**

For the first couple of days your child may complain that their vision is a 'blurred', this is normal. You may need to encourage your child to persevere with the glasses until they 'relax' into them and adjust to the prescription.

### **My child's glasses are often broken. What shall I do?**

Your child's prescription is valid for 2 years so any breakages or losses will be covered by this prescription and will be fixed or replaced by the optician who made the glasses.

### **What type of frame should I get for my child?**

It is very important that the glasses fit properly. Your child needs to be looking through the centre of the lens. They should not slip down the nose so the child can look over the top. The arms should not be too loose. You may find yourself going back to the optician regularly to maintain a good fit of the glasses.

### Orthoptic department contact numbers

#### Clinic contact numbers:

##### Appointments:

Heartlands    0121 424 0545  
Solihull       0121 424 4463  
Good Hope     0121 424 9651

##### Nurses answer phone:

0121 424 1536  
0121 424 4456  
0121 424 9667

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