

# ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

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Dear Families

## Ref: Specialist Therapeutic Support – Visual Stress



I am writing to inform you about one of the key new support measures for your child which we will be implementing this term.

I include here more information about the concept of visual stress and explain why it is key for us to know which of our students are affected. I also highlight the school-based screening tools the class teams are trained to apply to see what support might help those affected in their everyday class-based and home-based learning.

### What is Visual Stress?

Visual stress is the experience of unpleasant visual symptoms when reading, especially for long periods of time. Symptoms include illusions of shape, movement and colour in the text. It can also include distortions of the print, loss of clarity and general visual irritation. It can cause sore eyes, headaches and frequent loss of place when reading.

It is caused by the striped effect of black writing on white paper which causes over stimulation and excitation of the visual cortex. Visual stress, if identified, is also known as "Meares-Irlen Syndrome" or "Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome".

The condition, if diagnosed, will always be present and there is no life-long cure. However, the symptoms can be eased by the use of an overlay and this is why it is key to screen and support the child affected by it.

### What is a coloured overlay?

A coloured overlay is a transparent sheet of coloured plastic that can be placed over a page so as to colour the text. The sheet enables some people to read more fluently with less discomfort and fewer symptoms of Visual Stress.

### Your child's results

Once the class team have completed the screening, and if the syndrome appears to be present, the Class Teacher will contact you to share their findings and to discuss strategies that will be used in class and others that you may wish to consider at home.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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