

Additional Covid Considerations for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

1. Students may not be able to see hallway/classroom markers/indicators such as arrows for routes of travel etc. that may have been added for covid. Every situation will be different; please work with the student and consultant of the blind and visually impaired to adapt these indicators as needed
 - a. Ex. increase contrast, add tactile markers
2. Please be aware that students who are blind or visually impaired often have more/larger equipment and materials compared to their peers. They may not be able to transport these items from class to class. Consider working with the student and consultant to come up with a plan that works for the student and teacher as well as following COVID regulations.
3. Please be mindful that some students will not be able to tell how physically distant they are from others - this could be due to depth perception challenges or acuity challenges. Consider working with the student, parents, and consultant to come up with a plan to support physical distancing.
4. Remember that a student's cane comes into contact with everything and that the student will fold it down multiple times throughout the day. Consideration should be given to sanitizing canes systematically throughout the day. Consideration should be given for students to be washing or sanitizing their hands after opening and closing their cane.
 - a. Especially prior to eating and entering the building
5. If a student has a cane, care should be taken to where the cane is stored when not in use to ensure that other students are not in contact with it.
6. It is not possible to sanitize anything in braille or tactile items (ex.charts, maps, etc.) as they are paper-based and need to be paper-based. Consider using a cohort mentality for who can touch those items - student, transcriber, teacher?
7. Students who are visually impaired will often need manipulatives in order to understand certain concepts (ex. Abacus, magnets/cookie sheets, etc.) A plan should be in place for cleaning these items systematically.
8. A student with low vision/blindness has no choice but to touch things more than the average student. For example, they may trail along a wall with their hand to count doorways or need to feel around for an item on a table. They will have more contact with surfaces than their peers. Consider increasing hand sanitization/washing and teaching them to keep their hands away from their face.

9. As students are most likely not using cubbies or lockers additional considerations may be needed as to where their personal items and classroom materials are kept. For example, students with low vision/blindness often find it difficult to travel while carrying things in both hands as they might use one hand to check depth or for Orientation and Mobility purposes. This is especially important for cane users who already have one hand being used for their cane.
10. If the teacher or EA is wearing a face shield, be aware that these face shields can cause considerable glare which can compromise the child's vision even further.
11. Masks can cause glasses to fog up regularly. Some possible things to try would be to add an additional piece of fabric as a nose piece so that the main part of the mask can sit slightly lower. If the student has more than one pair of glasses, smaller frames tend to fog up less.
12. If working with a child with CVI try to avoid masks with patterns - solid dark fabric would be best (black, navy, brown, etc.)