**Parent or Carer Invitation Letter Template**

[Service Provider Name]

[Service Provider Address]

[Date]

Dear *Parent or Carer*

**Re: ear check service offer for children and young people aged under 25 years of age, attending residential special schools and colleges.**

We are writing to invite your child or young person to have an ear check, which will take place at (***Insert name of School/College)****.*

A new ear check service is being offered to children and young people attending residential special schools to identify whether they have any ear health problems and check for any indication of hearing loss. By having an ear check, we can identify any possible hearing loss or ear infection early and refer for any further investigation or treatment that may be needed.

Ear checks are important because ear infections and/or hearing loss can develop during childhood. Healthy ears support children’s health and wellbeing, as well as their education, learning, language development and communication and their quality of life.

The quick and simple ear check will be undertaken by a person trained to conduct ear checks for children and young people with special educational needs. We are aware that children attending residential special schools may have additional needs and we would like to reassure you that reasonable adjustments will be considered to support your child during the ear check.

If you would like to be present during the ear check, please indicate this on the consent form.

Once the ear check is completed, we will inform you of the outcome.

If you need more information or if there is anything that you consider we should know about your child in relation to the hearing checks, please do contact: Email **[Insert Named Lead contact details for service and school here]**

Yours faithfully,

[Sender’s e-signature]

[Sender’s name]

[Sender’s job title]

**Consent Form:**

☐ I consent to my child/young person having an ear check.

☐ I consent to information about my child’s ear check being shared with relevant NHS departments to support their care.

☐ I wish to attend the ear check with my child.

☐ My child is old enough and able to consent for themselves, with additional information and explanation.

☐ I do not consent to my child having an ear check.

☐ My child has a known hearing loss, is under the care of audiology or an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist or has a programmable ventriculo- peritoneal (PVP) shunt and is therefore not eligible to take part in this programme.

**Child/Young Person Name:**Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date of Birth:** Click or tap to enter a date.

**Parent/Carer or Legal Guardian Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Parent/Carer or Legal Guardian Address:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Parent/Carer or Legal Guardian Signature:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Young person Signature (where able to provide consent)** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Today’s Date:** Click or tap to enter a date.

Please return this completed to: [Address and/or email address to send back to].

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Why is a hearing check being offered to my child or young person?**

The NHS made a commitment to ensure that children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both in special residential schools have access to eyesight, hearing and dental checks. Children and young people attending residential schools are often placed some distance from home, and may be more likely to be vulnerable or experience greater difficulties and increased stress and anxiety when accessing mainstream services.

The NHS is addressing this and is now able to offer your child the opportunity for a hearing check to help identify any problems they might have with their hearing or ear health.

1. **What is involved in a Hearing Check?**

Three checks may be used to assess the health of your child’s ears. The checks are safe, simple and easy to do, and the results are reliable.

1. **Otoacoustic emissions (OAE)** Measures the response of the ear to sound. In the test a soft foam or rubber tip is placed in your child’s ear. A soft sound is played, and the ear’s response will automatically be measured. This is similar to newborn babies hearing screening.
2. **Otoscopy: This is** looking into the ear with a light and helps us to see if there are any problems that might affect ear health or hearing. In some cases, a picture may be taken and sent to a specialist to review.
3. **Tympanometry (pressure test)**: this check looks at how well the eardrum is moving. The eardrum needs to be flexible to allow sound to pass through it. Sometimes children’s ears can get blocked, which stops the ear drum moving freely and which may impact their hearing.

There is no need for your child to make any active response during the check.

All results will be reviewed by an audiologist, and we will let you know the outcome of the check and if any further assessment or follow up may be recommended.

1. **Are all children and young people attending residential special schools eligible for the hearing check?**

All children and young people attending a residential school, aged between 4-24 years of age will be offered a hearing check. However, children who have a known hearing loss, or are under the care of Audiology or Ears, Nose and Throat (ENT) departments, on a regular follow up pathway will not be offered an ear check. If you feel their hearing has changed, please contact your GP, Audiology department, or Ear Nose and Throat department responsible for your child’s care.

Children and young people who have a programmable ventriculo-peritoneal (PVP) shunt, cannot undergo an ear check. If there is concern about their hearing then you should ask your GP to refer your child or young person to audiology directly.

1. **What happens if the hearing check result for my child does not give a clear response?**

There are a number of reasons why a hearing check may not give a clear response. It may be that your child did not feel well that day. They may also have had a temporary hearing problem caused by a cold or a build-up of wax.

A further ear check will be offered where possible, or if appropriate a referral to the most relevant practitioner, such as your GP or an audiologist, will be recommended. Your follow up letter from school will explain the next steps.

1. **What happens if we are unable to check my child’s hearing?**

For some children and young people, the ear check may not be able to be completed. In this instance, if there is no existing concern about their hearing, then they will not be referred for additional testing. If there is concern, and the check cannot be completed at school, then, as with any child or young person where there is concern about their hearing, they should be referred for further assessment to their GP or audiology department.