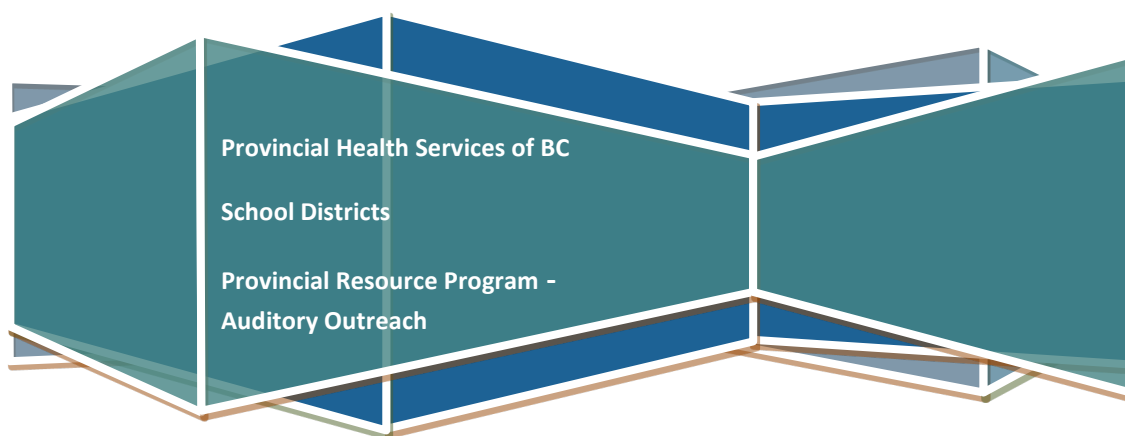


# **Regional Agreement For the Delivery of Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth With Cochlear Implants**





## Background

This document is a companion document to the Regional Agreements for delivering Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth, updated in June 2024. The regional agreements deal with providing, fitting and supporting Assistive Listening Technology for students with hearing aids. The area involving fitting remote microphone (RM) systems for students with cochlear implants was not included in the original document and is addressed in this companion document.

Fitting and supporting students with cochlear implants is a specialized division of audiology, the competencies for which are not present with all audiologists. Within British Columbia, the Cochlear Implant Team of the BC Children's Hospital (herein referred to as "BCCH-CI") is considered to be the expert in audiological and equipment issues for pediatric cochlear implant recipients. However, there are students with cochlear implants throughout the province where audiology services are also provided by public health audiologists in the Regional Health Authorities. Collaboration between BCCH-CI, the public health audiologists of the Regional Health Authorities, school district personnel, and the Provincial Resource Program-Auditory Outreach (herein referred to as "PRP-AO") is critical for effective service delivery. Inherent within this collaboration is the recognition that families need seamless support. All key personnel need to be kept informed of service plans and delivery for students within the school district, Regional Health Authority and BCCH-CI caseload.

This document lays out the framework for the proposed roles and responsibilities in assessing the need for assistive listening equipment for students, fitting RM systems, and providing support to students who have a cochlear implant or implants.

## Delivering Assistive Listening Technology to K-12 Students with Cochlear Implants

BCCH-CI, Regional Health Authorities, and school districts agree to accept the following regarding delivering assistive listening technology to students with cochlear implants through the PRP-AO for school aged children and youth who attend public schools, as well as those attending Group 1 & Group 2 independent schools and First Nations schools. Participating independent schools will follow the same procedures as the public schools within their health region. The purpose of PRP-AO's program is to provide personal RM equipment loans, with the ultimate goal of improving student's access to education.

## Regional Agreement Between Interior Health Authority, Board(s) of Education and Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach

### A. Consultation

Consultation between the BCCH Cochlear Implant Team, school/district staff and Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach staff is critical to student success. It is expected that the Public Health manager responsible for the regional audiology program and the school district administrator responsible for student services will establish and maintain a communication process to address current and emerging operational matters regarding assistive listening technology in schools. The Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach, as a tertiary service provider to school age children and youth, is available for consultation to both Public Health clinics and schools/districts regarding the needs of this population.

In addition to equipment loans and services as outlined above, the Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach offers audiology, speech language pathology, and teacher of the Deaf and hard of hearing expertise and outreach consultation for students with cochlear implants. Our team supports the development of local capacity, through consultation with school staff and parents, assistance with assessments, and assistance with the establishment of goals for individual education plans. Auditory Outreach professionals use evidence-based practice, current research and

clinical knowledge of the unique skills and learning needs of individuals with cochlear implants to support these students and their teams.

## **B. Dispute Resolution**

In any cooperative endeavour involving multiple ministries, regional health authorities, and local boards of education, issues will inevitably arise. In addressing any issues that arise between Auditory Outreach and the School District or Audiology team, the principle of expeditiously resolving them at the lowest (i.e. most local) level possible will be respected. The process for resolving issues between ministries/agencies will, in order, involve:

1. BCCH CI audiology clinic staff, local school/district staff and Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach staff.
2. The Public Health manager responsible for BCCH audiology services, the school/district administrator responsible for student services and the manager of the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach Principal.
3. The Public Health Director responsible for BCCH audiology services, the Superintendent of the local School District and the Superintendent of the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach host district.

Rarely will issues need to be raised beyond the third level mentioned above, but, where this occurs, the concern will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministries for resolution.

## **C. Responsibilities**

Delivering assistive listening technology services to students with cochlear implants requires a coordinated inter-ministerial approach. The direct delivery of educational services and resources required for those services, as specified in the *School Act*, is the responsibility of the local boards of education funded by the Ministry of Education.

Delivery standards for the health authorities and the local boards of education under agreement(s) with the Ministry of Education are provided in the Protocol in the section entitled “Obligations of Each Ministry.”

The various activities deemed necessary for providing assistive listening technology (RM) systems for students with cochlear implants are outlined below:

### **Step 1: Child Readiness and Sound Booth Verification**

The BCCH-CI Team audiology clinic will:

- Determine student readiness for each individual ear and make recommendations for personal assistive devices
- Provide a copy of audiological information and reports to the school team and AO-PRP
- Consult with school district staff, Auditory Outreach audiologist and/or public health audiologists regarding the benefit of assistive listening technology (personal RM)
- Work collaboratively with PRP-AO audiology team to develop evidence-based protocols required for the fitting, verification, validation, and support for FM with CI; including printed resources that will support implementation of the protocols
- Where there is mutual agreement that personal RM should be used by the student, the BCCH-CI audiologist will determine the most appropriate system for the student from a list of equipment available through the PRP-AO
- Complete sound booth verification at BCCH using the child’s personal cochlear implant system and a clinic loaner RM system of the same make and model, to determine that cochlear implant parameters have been set adequately and the child received appropriate RM benefit when tested in a controlled environment.

### **Step 2: Request for Equipment**

- The BCCH-CI audiologist will complete appropriate sections of the equipment request following discussion with the Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and/ or PRP-AO and public health audiologist
- Coordinate shared responsibility with the TDHH/ school team to obtain parent/ guardian consent (Permission to Share form) and forward necessary documentation through the TDHH to the school administrator responsible for student services in the school district

- The administrator responsible for student services will complete and sign the Request for Support form, acknowledging financial liability for loss or damage of equipment
- TDHH or school team or BCCH CI team to send completed forms with supporting documentation to the PRP-AO, along with a signed PRP-AO Parent's Consent form and recent audiology report
- TDHH/ School team will send a copy of the completed request form to the Health Unit and BCCH-CI
- The PRP-AO will, on receipt of the completed request form, send the equipment to the PRP-AO audiologist and notify the school district when the equipment was shipped

### **Step 3: Initial Fitting and Classroom Validation**

- Upon receipt of the equipment, the PRP-AO audiologist will connect the RM system to a cochlear implant processor of the same make and model as the child's and conduct a listening check to ensure the equipment is functioning prior to classroom use
- The PRP-AO audiologist will contact the designated school district and/or public health clinic to determine support required for validation
- The PRP-AO audiologist will arrange for delivery of the equipment to a site agreed upon by the school district. Training and/or written material will be provided for individuals working with the student to ensure they are aware of the individual needs of the student. The responsibility of training would be assumed by the PRP-AO in consultation with the TDHH
- Upon delivery of equipment to the school, the TDHH or the PRP-AO audiologist, will complete a listening check and walk through the student's classroom and school environments to determine a clear and consistent interference-free signal. Based on the outcome of this activity, modifications classroom environments may be recommended
- A functional evaluation of the student's RM system connected to his/her CI system should be completed in a timely manner to determine the student receives appropriate benefit using their CI and RM system within their school environment.

### **Step 4: Monitoring**

- The designated school professional (e.g. TDHH, learning assistance teacher, educational assistant) will assess the benefit of the equipment for the student on a regular, frequent and on-going basis.

### **Step 5: Administration and On-going Equipment Maintenance**

- When the student has been fitted with assistive listening technology (RM system), a designated individual in the school district will: (Please note that the school district designated individual is usually the TDHH.)
  - a. Ensure the administrator of the school is aware the student is in receipt of an RM system,
  - b. Inform the classroom teachers(s) and other staff about how the RM system works and potential problems that might occur
  - c. Ensure security measures are in place to protect the equipment
  - d. Have an individual selected by the school administrator who will be responsible for on-going maintenance and equipment checks.
- When the TDHH determines RM equipment is in need of repair, they will contact AO-PRP to troubleshoot and if necessary, equipment will be shipped to the PRP-AO. Neither clinics, nor school district staff, will engage in equipment repairs, as it may void equipment warranties.
- When RM equipment is no longer required by the student, the equipment will be shipped to the PRP-AO for reissue as soon as possible.

The Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach will:

- Build, select and maintain a resource library of research supported assistive listening equipment to support students who are deaf and hard of hearing to provide improved access to educational opportunities.
- Compile and maintain a database with records of equipment stock, student loans and their audiological information.
- Provide education opportunities, training (e.g., webinars, in-services) and online resources (e.g., EasySheets, instructional videos) regarding assistive listening equipment. Regular communication between Auditory Outreach (i.e., newsletters & website posts) will inform community Audiologists, Teachers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and other members of the school teams of upcoming educational opportunities.

D. Information Sharing

Information sharing between boards of education, public health authorities and the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach will be in accordance with the *School Act* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* legislation. To facilitate information sharing, Public Health clinics will seek parent/guardian signed consent to share audiological assessment and evaluation information with both the school/district and the Provincial Resource Program - Auditory Outreach.

E. Agreement Review

This agreement will be automatically reviewed every five years. Parties to this agreement may request a review at any time.

Regional Agreement For the Delivery of Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth	Interior Health Region
--	---------------------------

Approved and agreed on this date: \_\_\_\_\_.

On behalf of the BCCH Cochlear Implant Audiology Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Interior Health Authority \_\_\_\_\_  
*Interior Health Manager/ Director*

On behalf of Provincial Resource Program – Auditory Outreach \_\_\_\_\_  
*Auditory Outreach Principal, School District #47, qathet*

## Procedural Responsibilities

### For Delivering Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth

## Cochlear Implants

BCCH Cochlear Implant Team	Forms/ Communication	School District	Forms/ Communication	PRP - Auditory Outreach	Forms/ Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out audiological assessment and diagnostic services</li> <li>Get parental approval for audiogram release and report to the school district and PRP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Authority Information Form Release</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Collaboration</b> between health unit audiologist and school district personnel regarding classroom environment and support available in school, which may influence the decision regarding the most appropriate assistive listening equipment required to maximize learning.</li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine most appropriate equipment from PRP list of available equipment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information with audiologist or technician regarding school and classroom environments</li> <li>Identify competencies needed to support equipment</li> <li>Specify who will provide any required in-service</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide list of available equipment to all public health audiology clinics, school districts and group 1 and group 2 independent schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loan library Equipment List</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completes and obtains parent/ guardian signature on PRP Permission to Share form (shared responsibility)</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Permission to Share form via website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides Permission to Share form</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicate equipment being requested and sign the request form, signaling responsibility for appropriate equipment selection for the student</li> <li>Send request form, along with audiological information and Permission to Share form to school district for school district administrator signature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CI Equipment Request form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete and Sign request form agreeing to accept financial liability for lost/damaged equipment (district administrator)</li> <li>Completes and obtains parent/ guardian signature on PRP Permission to Share form (if audiology clinic hasn't done so)</li> <li>Requests in-person or virtual consultation from AO-PRP Audiologist, SLP or TDHH</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide RM request for support form via website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CI Request for Support form</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forward signed forms along with audiological information to PRP</li> <li>Send copy of RM request form to public health audiology clinic and e-mail when sent to PRP</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive complete Equipment request form and supporting documentation</li> <li>Communicate with audiologist if equipment is not available or clarification required</li> <li>Discuss options with audiologist and TDHH responsible for the student in the district, if required</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update student's confidential file</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update student's confidential file</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send equipment to AO-PRP Audiologist along with equipment service report or packing slip</li> <li>E-mail audiologist and SD, equipment has been shipped or if delays anticipated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Service form</li> </ul>

## Procedural Responsibilities

### For Delivering Assistive Listening Technology to School Aged Children and Youth (continued)

## Cochlear Implants

BCCH CI Audiology Clinic	Forms/ Communication	School District	Forms/ Communication	PRP- Auditory Outreach	Forms/ Communication
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange for equipment to be sent to student's TDHH and provide training and/or written material for the use of the equipment and troubleshooting</li> <li>Provide shipment tracking info if required</li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and/or written material for the use of the equipment and troubleshooting is provided to the classroom teacher, TDHH and/ or school team members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote Microphone Validation Report</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update student's confidential file</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive equipment at a designated location</li> <li>Participate in RM system validation delivered by AO-PRP Audiologist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep note of serial numbered equipment on loan/ Packing Slip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide annual printout of district equipment currently on loan, or by request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training and/or written material to school staff</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report loss or damage promptly to PRP</li> <li>When serial numbered equipment is lost or intentionally damaged beyond repair, the School District is expected to cover the cost of replacement</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment Loss Form</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure school principal is aware of the equipment and that security measures are in place</li> <li>Ensure equipment is listed in the school inventory for insurance purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District protocol for equipment security</li> </ul>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide ongoing maintenance and equipment checks (e.g. regular listening check, purchase of batteries for the equipment and cords as required – School District responsibility to purchase items.)</li> <li>Validate and document the benefit to student (e.g. functional listening evaluation, teacher questionnaires, etc.) and seek audiologist's advice if problems, concerns arise</li> </ul>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return malfunctioning or unused equipment to PRP for repair or replacement with documentation and complete forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify PRP and clinic by email equipment was sent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive malfunctioning equipment and process repair or replacement.</li> <li>Courier repaired or replaced equipment within 3 business days to health unit audiologist or school district as requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Service Form</li> <li>Equipment Return form</li> </ul>



## Procedural Responsibilities Year End Inventory Management

## Cochlear Implants

Health Unit Audiology Clinic	School District	PRP- Auditory Outreach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct listening check of equipment at end of year</li> <li>Store equipment securely at school district for summer</li> <li>Send malfunctioning equipment to PRP for repair or replacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Technical Service repairs</li> <li>Provide Equipment Exchange form</li> <li>Notify school team and/or health unit when returned equipment is received</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ship repaired equipment or replacements to school district, as requested, prior to school startup.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive repaired equipment from PRP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove equipment from inventory that is not functioning optimally and/or has an unusually high rate of repair</li> </ul>

