

SPINA BIFIDA

Spina bifida literally means 'split spine'. A fault in the development of the spinal cord and surrounding bones (vertebrae) leaves a gap or split in the spine. The spinal cord has not formed properly, and may also be damaged.

- Open Spina Bifida (Spina Bifida cystic) the visible signs are a sac or cyst like a large blister on the back. There are two forms: Myelomeningocele the cyst not only contains tissue and cerebro-spinal fluid (CSF) but also nerves and part of the spinal cord - and Meningocele - the sac contains meninges (tissues which cover the brain and spinal cord) and CSF, but no spinal tissue.
- Closed spinal lesions - Spina Bifida Occulta (SBO) is a type of spinal dysraphism or 'closed' skin-covered form of spina bifida. There are two types Lipomyelomeningocele is a closed spinal lesion in which part of the spinal cord and nerves are tangled in a benign fatty tumour. Diastematomyelia is a condition in which the spinal cord is divided into two (lengthways), usually in the lumbar area. (The spinal cord may join up again, but if it doesn't, it is referred to as diplomyelia.)

Most babies born with Myelomeningocele have Hydrocephalus, a condition in which fluid in the head and spine (Cerebro Spinal Fluid or CSF) accumulates in the head and raises the pressure on the brain. Hydrocephalus comes from the Greek 'hydro' meaning water and 'cephalie', meaning brain.

*Children's needs are **individual** – some children may require support:*

- Aspects of personal care, e.g. toileting, dressing, feeding
- Concentration - focusing on set activities, increasing attention skills
- Differentiated activities for PE and School Sports sessions
- Fine motor skills for practical tasks, e.g. handwriting, using equipment
- Mobility possibly using aids / wheelchair to move around the classroom
- Organisation - collecting equipment, completing tasks, sequencing
- Proprioception - body and spatial awareness, e.g. not knowing where their legs are without looking, difficulties in avoiding obstacles etc.
- Sensory information - not reacting to extreme conditions e.g. heat /cold
- Sensory overload, e.g. noisy classrooms, requiring calming strategies

FURTHER INFORMATION: SHINE <https://www.shinecharity.org.uk>