

Identification of dyslexia in schools

Children,
Parents &
Teachers

Information for parents

In general, the identification of dyslexia for school pupils is not a one-off test. It should be a holistic and collaborative process which takes place over a period of time, drawing on a range of observational and assessment methods and it should support the pupil's next steps for learning.

A process called **Staged Intervention** will normally be put into place when a concern has been raised about the pupil. This will:

- Identify the difficulties/needs - what is happening and why.
- Make some small adaptations within the curriculum - such as personalising the pupil's learning, breaking down learning tasks and using assistive technology.
- Record and review how the pupil progresses over a period of time.
- Decide what else, if anything, needs to be done.

Staged intervention should involve the pupil, parents/carers, class teacher and learning support staff. Parents or pupils may be unaware of unobtrusive support that is put into place in the classroom. Good communication between the school and parents is crucial and will deliver the best outcomes for the pupil. [Watch a short film about the importance of this here.](#)

An assessment of dyslexia will typically look at reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, verbal ability, reasoning and short-term working memory. The assessment should help identify the pupil's strengths, development needs and what kind of support they might benefit from.

The **Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit** has a helpful description of **staged intervention** and **Pathway Identification process** which explain the steps that are normally taken to identify the needs of a pupil who may be dyslexic.

www.addressingdyslexia.org

Important – the identification and support for dyslexia varies across local authorities. This leaflet is designed to give an overview of the process. Councils will have a policy about how they support pupils with dyslexia which should be available online or on request.

Who identifies and supports dyslexia in schools?

- Class Teacher, who will refer to Support for Learning.
- Support for Learning will usually carry out screenings and possibly a more in-depth assessment. Staged Intervention, including support, will be put in place in conjunction with the Class Teacher and in liaison with parents/carers.
- An Educational Psychologist or other professionals may also be involved to offer advice and intervention to young people, parents, schools, the Education Service and any other partners in the assessment, identification and planning for pupils with dyslexia.

www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk



What should I do if I think my child has dyslexia? Speak to the Class Teacher about your concerns - you might also want to speak to the Support for Learning Department and/or Head Teacher. Take notes of agreed outcomes (or ask the school to do this and send them on to you). Keep a copy of all correspondence and ask for follow up review meetings.

How important is the 'label' of dyslexia? Dyslexia Scotland believes that the 'label' of dyslexia helps a child to understand the difficulties they are experiencing and the strengths associated with dyslexia. Schools should provide the correct support for every pupil who needs it, regardless of whether or not they have been identified as dyslexic.

What can I do if I'm not happy about the support my child is receiving? Write to the school requesting that they look again at the support they are providing your child. If, after discussions with the school, you are still not happy, you can request an assessment via your local education department. For a request to be valid, it should be provided in a permanent form (including email, printed, audio recording) and should include the reasons for the request. Dyslexia Scotland has a sample template letter to request an assessment - please contact our Helpline for a copy (details below).

Independent assessments - Dyslexia Scotland believes that the duty to provide the right support for all pupils lies with schools. However, for a variety of reasons, some people may wish to have their child assessed by an independent assessor outwith the education department.

Dyslexia Scotland holds a list of approved independent Assessors. Costs for assessments vary and it is worth discussing with the school before paying for an assessment. Schools are obliged by law to consider the results of any independent assessment but this does not mean that they have to implement what the report recommends. Dyslexia Scotland has a factsheet about independent assessments and your rights. Our Helpline can assist you with this and any other questions you have before, during or after the identification of dyslexia.

Before an assessment, make sure the child has had an eye and ear test as visual or hearing issues might be part of any difficulties. Schools might also suggest referral to Speech and Language Therapy/Paediatrics to rule out any underlying medical reasons.

After an assessment, ask for a copy of it for your records and keep it in a safe place - even after the child has moved from primary to secondary school or on to further education.

Further information

- Education Scotland offers information on supporting children and young people and staged intervention: www.educationscotland.gov.uk
- Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning www.enquire.org.uk
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484 or helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk (Monday - Thursday 10am - 4.30pm, Friday 10am - 4pm)



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Charity No: SC 000951
Registered No: SC 153321
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