



# DYSLEXIA: INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

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*Children & Young People Department Educational Psychology Service  
Developed in collaboration with SBC parents*



# WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

Scottish Borders Council uses the definition of dyslexia that was developed by the Scottish Government and Dyslexia Scotland.

## **The Scottish Government Definition of Dyslexia**

“Dyslexia can be described as a continuum of difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell, which persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities.

These difficulties often do not reflect an individual’s cognitive abilities and may not be typical of performance in other areas.”

### **[www.addressingdyslexia.org](http://www.addressingdyslexia.org)**

This means that children with dyslexia may show a wide range of difficulties with some aspects of reading, writing or spelling.

All children with dyslexia are different. They have individual patterns of strengths and difficulties and need help to be tailored to their own needs and skills.

The Government definition of dyslexia explains that people with dyslexia may experience other challenges.

“The impact of dyslexia as a barrier to learning varies in degree according to the learning and teaching environment, as there are often associated difficulties such as:

- auditory and/or visual processing of language-based information
- phonological awareness
- oral language skills and reading fluency
- short-term and working memory
- sequencing and directionality
- number skills
- organisational ability

Motor skills and co-ordination may also be affected.”

<http://www.addressingdyslexia.org>

Dyslexia is a lifelong condition, but with the right help children and young people can be very successful learners who achieve well in school and in their wider lives.

# WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?



# HOW IS DYSLEXIA IDENTIFIED IN SBC SCHOOLS?

## What will happen?

Identification of dyslexia uses assessments and intervention around literacy over a period of time. This may include, for example, assessments in reading, writing or spelling, teacher observations, and screening checklists. Schools should also ask your child about their own learning, and ask you about any difficulties your child may be having.

When you or a teacher have raised concern about your child's learning a process of Staged Intervention will happen. Schools will:

- Use assessment to identify what your child needs help with
- Make some changes to how your child is taught, and provide relevant help
- Record and review how your child progresses
- Continue to change the type of help provided as your child's needs change

The school will keep a Literacy Profile. This is a detailed record of your child's needs, the support provided to your child in school, and of the impact on their progress.

Dyslexia will not be identified by a one-off test. It is identified by studying whether a child makes progress when given appropriate learning opportunities.

## How and when is a decision made about dyslexia?

If your child receives long-term support but does not make expected progress in literacy the school will involve you in making a decision about whether your child should be identified as dyslexic.

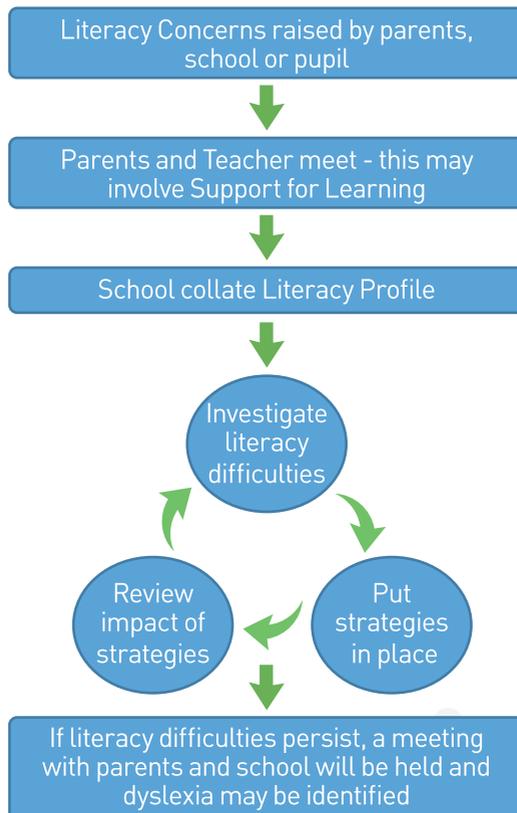
This will not usually happen until your child has experienced several years of teaching in school (i.e. usually not before Primary 3). This is because it takes time to know whether a child's difficulties will respond to appropriate support. The decision should take account of advice from all professionals involved.

Dyslexia can be identified if:

- 1) your child has difficulties in learning to read, write and/or spell and
- 2) those difficulties have remained even though your child has received appropriate teaching and help.

The school should give you a written record of the decision.

## Flowchart: Identifying Dyslexia



# WHAT WILL MY CHILD'S SCHOOL DO TO HELP?

## Building confidence

Schools are responsible for providing positive environments that help children with literacy difficulties and dyslexia to be successful. All staff are expected to understand that dyslexia and literacy difficulties can negatively affect a child's confidence, self-esteem and emotional health. All staff are expected to provide pupils with understanding, and encouragement.

## Support

Most children with dyslexia can have their needs met through good classroom teaching. The class teacher is responsible for teaching your child in the ways that help them to learn best.

The class teacher can seek advice and support from a Support for Learning Teacher. If the child needs further help, the school may ask for advice from other professionals like an Educational Psychologist, a Speech & Language Therapist or an Occupational Therapist.

Schools should tailor support to meet the specific needs of your child. Your child may respond well to some methods of support, but not to others. The school will continue to assess what actions are needed to make sure that your child's learning is supported properly. The support provided is likely to change as your child learns new skills and as the demands of school change.

Support for your child may include:

- individual and/or small-group teaching of specific skills
- reducing the amount of reading and writing they are asked to do
- not asking them to read aloud to the class
- using computers or other technologies to support their reading, writing and spelling
- having someone scribe their work for them
- letting them present information verbally

## Transitions

Schools are expected to ensure that when your child moves up a year or changes classes that their Literacy Profile is transferred to the new teachers to tell them about the help that your child needs. When your child moves from primary to secondary school all assessment information should be passed on to enable the secondary school to plan appropriate support.

## Secondary School and Exams

Secondary schools are expected to continue to review what help pupils need as the reading and writing demands of school change. They should assess in good time whether pupils may need special arrangements to be made in exams and other assessments.



# HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

## Working with school

It is important that schools and parents or carers work together to address any difficulties that children with dyslexia are experiencing in school.

## Helping your child to understand dyslexia

By helping your child to understand the difficulties that they are experiencing you can really help them to maintain their confidence. On the back page of this leaflet are listed places where you can find out more about dyslexia. These sources give recommendations about how you can explain dyslexia to your child.

## Helping your child's confidence

You can have a huge influence on your child's attitude to learning. By helping to build your child's confidence you can help them to overcome negative feelings about their difficulties and support them to keep on trying. It is very important that children who are finding reading or writing difficult receive continuing encouragement for their effort and for any successes or progress. It is also very important that they are frequently reminded of their strengths in other areas and of other activities where they have worked hard to learn skills.

## Showing interest in books

You can help your child to develop a love of language and reading by:

- helping them to find books that engage their interests
- showing an interest in exploring and reading books together
- talking together about books and films and encouraging your child to listen to audio books and stories
- showing through example how important and useful reading is in everyday activities – for example, by involving your child in reading labels when shopping, following recipes, following street signs.

## Homework

It is important that your child experiences success at homework. They may already be tired and frustrated at the end of the school day because they are finding some things in school difficult. It may be important to allow them time to relax. If you are worried that homework takes too long to complete you should discuss this with their teacher. It may be better to agree shorter homework tasks that your child will be able to complete successfully. This will help them to stay positive and motivated, and allow you to give positive praise and encouragement.

## Help from ICT

There are computer technologies which may support your child with reading, writing or spelling, or with planning and organisation of their work. School should be able to tell you about these. The back page of this leaflet lists other useful sources of information.



# WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

## National:

Education Scotland Parent Zone: [www.education.gov.scot/parentzone](http://www.education.gov.scot/parentzone)

Dyslexia Scotland: [www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)

Dyslexia Toolkit: [www.addressingdyslexia.org](http://www.addressingdyslexia.org)

## Local:

The Council's Policy "Children and young people with literacy difficulties including dyslexia" is available from:

**Scottish Borders Council:** [www.scotborders.gov.uk/dyslexiapolicy](http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/dyslexiapolicy)

## About Support for Learning:

Provide advice to parents regarding the Additional Support for Learning legislation and your rights and entitlements:

**Enquire:** [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

Explains arrangements for allowing pupils to fairly access exams and assessments:

**Scottish Qualifications Authority:** [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

## Resources:

Listening Books provides a postal and internet based audiobook service:

**National Listening Library:** [www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk)

Free educational games and typing skills programmes:

**Doorway online:** [www.doorwayonline.org.uk](http://www.doorwayonline.org.uk)

Information about recommended books and events to inspire love of reading and writing, and Information about the Read, Write, Count scheme for supporting readers in early Primary school:

**Scottish Book Trust:** [www.scottishbooktrust.com](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com)

Information about the impact of dyslexia and about technologies / ICT which can help:

**The CALL Centre:** [www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)

## Publications:

See **Dyslexia Scotland** for recommended reading including books to help you to explain dyslexia to your child: [www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk)



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