



# **Dyslexia Friendly School Policy**

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's SEN Policy.

### **What is Dyslexia?**

The British Dyslexia Association's (BDA) defined dyslexia as:

'Dyslexia is a learning difference, a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affect the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy. People with dyslexia may also have accompanying weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information. These are skills that everyone needs if they are to learn and work effectively. The BDA recognizes that: Some children have outstanding creative skills; others have strong oral skills. Dyslexia occurs despite normal teaching, and is independent of socio-economic background or intelligence. It is, however, more easily detected in those with average or above average intelligence.'

### **Principles**

As part of the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative here at Meath Green Junior School we recognise the strengths of pupils with dyslexia and aim to use them as pathways to learning. We recognise that pupils with dyslexia are likely to experience higher levels of stress than their peers and that this may impact on their learning and emotional well-being. Governors and senior management are committed to supporting pupils with dyslexia across the curriculum. Targets aimed at developing expertise in, and understanding of, dyslexia are reflected in the school's SEN development plan. All staff recognise compounding factors that may co-exist with dyslexia. They are familiar with the individual learning styles of children and adopt a range of multi-sensory teaching approaches. Ongoing training continues to update staff's skills and understanding. We have high expectations of all children and the achievement of pupils is seen as everybody's responsibility. We achieve this through encouraging partnerships with parents and engaging pupils in their own learning ('Parent Voice' and 'Pupil Voice').

### **Early Identification and Provision**

The school's policy for assessment and identification of children's special needs is set out in the SEN Policy. It is the teacher's responsibility to recognise the early signs of dyslexia and arrange for preliminary assessments, in liaison with

the SENCO and the Dyslexia Friendly Group. Parents and carers also need to be informed of the difficulties their child is encountering. Indeed, it may be their initial concerns that have alerted the teacher.

Assessment should include: ascertaining background information, pupil voice, classroom observation, assessments in areas of need (e.g. reading, spelling, phonics), assess using Dyslexia screener (Nessy Dyslexia Screener).

Action taken is guided by the school's SEN Policy, the **SEN Code of Practice**, and the available school resources. It may include some or all of the following:

- Appropriate adaptive teaching/differentiated planning by the class teacher (including use of resources to support e.g. word banks).
- Specific targeted interventions - as detailed in the Provision Map.
- Support from a Teaching Assistant, under the guidance of the class teacher.

The SENCO will offer support where appropriate with:

- Regular reviews to determine progress and evaluate effectiveness of support.
- In more complex cases, consultation or referral to an advisory teacher from the Specialist Teachers of Inclusive Practice (STIPs) or Educational Psychologist (EP).

### **Provision**

#### **Access to the mainstream Curriculum:**

- Pupils with dyslexia have access to the full, broad and balanced curriculum.
- All staff are responsible for meeting the needs of pupils with dyslexia and understand implications this has on the subject they co-ordinate.
- Staff use multi-sensory techniques to facilitate learning. Pupils access the curriculum through differentiated tasks, outcomes and resources.
- Staff produce learning materials that are dyslexia friendly.

**Staff support pupils in some, or all, of the following ways on a day-to-day basis:**

#### **General:**

- Raise pupils' self-esteem, reward what can be achieved. This is the single most important factor in achievement according to pupils themselves.

- Give limited instructions at a time. Ask pupils to repeat instructions back. Repeat instructions until pupils can repeat them back.
- Allow more time for tasks such as getting out books, getting started on the activity and then completing their work. This includes practical tasks.
- Use of routine and structure in an organized classroom.
- Use of visual timetables.
- Reading: Pupils not to read aloud, in front of others, without preparation.
- Teach unfamiliar subject words.
- Help with study skills such as skimming, scanning, selecting key words.
- Ensure activity/worksheets are typed in dyslexia friendly fonts (Comic Sans) and teachers' handwriting is legible for pupils to read.
- For pupils screened at a high risk of Dyslexia, a visual distress check is made. The pupil may require a coloured acetate reading ruler and/ or overlay. Parents are informed and made aware of the importance of an up-to-date eyesight and hearing test check-up.
- For pupils with visual distress: a coloured acetate reading ruler and/ or overlay is provided (as mentioned above); also, activity sheets and exercise books are provided with yellow or pastel coloured paper.

### **Spelling:**

- Encourage the use of a wide vocabulary and free-writing to be marked on content rather than purely on spellings.
- Correct only a few errors. Do not cover work in too many 'green' marks (adhering to the Marking Policy - 'green for growth').
- Teach the spelling of subject specific/topic words. Do not overload pupils with too many words.
- Have lists of subject specific/topic words on display in teaching classrooms.
- Allow the pupils to read their written work to the teacher if the teacher cannot read it.

### **Written work:**

- When setting long responses, use writing frames and mind maps.
- Encourage legible handwriting but do not expect it to rapidly improve.
- Written work by the pupil is not to be written out again unless it is much worse than usual.
- When writing notes, either give the pupil more time, photocopy notes from another pupil or from a 'parallel' book kept by the Teacher/ TA.

- Accept less written work.

**Assessment:**

- For pupils who have been flagged up as having dyslexic tendencies: thorough screening is made, areas of difficulty are noted, pupil voice is sought, parents are informed, provision is put in place, provision is monitored and reviewed.
- Formative assessment can be through oral responses or activity-based outcomes.
- Assess if eligible for access arrangements in tests. This may allow extra time and/ or a scribe.
- Ensure summative assessments are appropriate to their level of working in literacy and maths.

**Access Arrangements in Tests at Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) can include:**

- Extra time
- A reader
- A scribe
- Test papers printed on coloured paper
- Supervised rest breaks
- A separate room to take the test in

See the [JCQ Access Arrangements webpage](#) for more information.

National Curriculum Tests (known informally as SATs) are administered at the end of Key Stage 2 at 11 years. Permission to use some Access Arrangements, for example, extra time, must be granted by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA). Schools can decide on using other Access Arrangements such as a reader, prompt or rest breaks without applying to the STA.

The latest information can be found on the Gov.uk webpage [National curriculum assessments: Key stage 2 tests](#).

See also this link: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/educators/what-do-i-need-to-know/exam-access-arrangements>

## **Partnership with Parents and Carers**

We encourage parents and carers to share their concerns and recognise that any anxieties are very often justified. We welcome information parents have regarding their child. We share information with parents about the measures that are being taken to address the child's difficulties (the role of the teaching team, support measures in class, encouragement in use of independent strategies, intervention support). When children are also on the SEN register, we ensure that parents are involved in the target-setting process and the review of the targets set. We emphasise, although our Dyslexia screening may show a high risk of Dyslexia, this is not a dyslexia diagnosis. The screening shows the pupil has dyslexic tendencies and strategies are put in place to support the pupil.