



Identification of dyslexia in schools

The identification of dyslexia for school pupils is not a one-off 'test'. It is 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 your child's next steps for learning.

A process called Staged Intervention will normally be put into place when a concern has been raised about a child or young person. 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, if anything, needs to be done.

Staged intervention should involve the child/young person, you as their parents/carers, their class teacher and learning support staff. As a parent or carer, you might not be aware of some unobtrusive support that has been put in place to support your child. Good communication between you and your child's school is crucial to deliver the best outcome.

Identification of dyslexia will typically look at reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, verbal ability, reasoning and short-term working memory. This should help identify the child/young person's strengths, development needs and what kind of support they might benefit from.

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 their own policy about how they identify and support children and young people with dyslexia which should be available online or on request.

What should I do if I think my child is dyslexic?

Speak to the Class Teacher and/or Head Teacher about your concerns. 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.

What can I do if I'm not happy about the support my child is receiving?

Contact the school requesting that they look again at the support they are providing your child and, if possible, make suggestions of things that would help.

If, after discussions with the school, you are still not happy, there are further steps you can take. Please contact Dyslexia Scotland's Helpline to discuss these options.

Independent assessments

Dyslexia Scotland believes that the duty to provide the right support for all pupils lies with schools. The Scottish legislative framework for education also supports this. However, for a variety of reasons, some people may wish to have their child assessed by an independent qualified assessor.

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 around the identification of dyslexia.

Before an assessment

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

After an assessment, ask for a copy 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. This also applies to any relevant documentation from schools.

How important is the 'label' of dyslexia?

Dyslexia Scotland believes that the 'label' of dyslexia is a positive one and helps a child understand the difficulties they may be experiencing and discover more about their strengths. Schools are obliged provide the right support for every child who needs it, regardless of whether or not they have been identified as dyslexic.