

Birtley House
Independent School



DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY POLICY

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Next Review: October 2027

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POLICY STATEMENT

At Birtley House School we are proud to be a Dyslexia Friendly school. We believe that dyslexia friendly methods benefit ALL children, not just those with a diagnosis of dyslexia. Evidence suggests that more children are able to benefit when these methods are adopted as a whole school approach. We also recognise that a child's self-esteem and confidence goes hand in hand with successful learning. Our children are aware of the different barriers that people may face and how different strategies can help to overcome these. Positive role models are made known to the children and their achievements are celebrated.

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?

"Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling" Rose report, 2009.

"Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities" British Psychological Society definition.

Dyslexia tendencies occur in people of all backgrounds and of all abilities. It is estimated that about 10% of the population may be affected, with 4% of these having severe difficulties.

Children with dyslexia may experience difficulties with:

- Short term memory
- Long term memory
- Processing and retrieving words and information
- Phonological awareness
- Sequencing or rote learning
- Auditory memory
- Spatial awareness
- Direction – left and right
- Organisation
- Fine Motor Skills

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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. In liaison with the SENCOs, 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. *See Appendix 1 for Checklist for identification of possible dyslexic traits.*

Action taken is guided by the school's SEN Policy. It may include all or some of the following:

- Appropriate differentiated planning by the class teacher
- Specified targeted interventions- these will be detailed in the Provision Map
- Support from a Teaching Assistant, under the guidance of the class teacher
- Support from the SENCOs where appropriate
- Regular reviews to determine progress and evaluate effectiveness of support
- Consultation with or referral to an Advisory Teacher for SpLD / Dyslexia

LEARNING STYLES

Many children (and adults) have a preferred learning style that they rely more strongly upon.

Learning styles are divided into:

- **Auditory:** where the learner relies more heavily on what they hear
- **Visual:** where the learner relies more heavily on what they see
- **Kinaesthetic:** where the learner relies more heavily on what they do practically

In school, we strive to ensure that children are provided with multi-sensory ways of learning, so that they can draw on their strengths and develop capability in areas of weakness.

PROVISION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Access to the 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 have an understanding of the implications this may have
- 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

No two dyslexic children are the same and the difficulties they experience may vary greatly. Therefore, our teaching styles must reflect children's differing needs and many strategies are a benefit to all. These can include:

- Multi-sensory Learning, e.g. writing words and sentences with tactile materials, completing physical activities to practice spellings
- Assistive technology and tools, e.g. spell checkers, word processors, sound recorders
- General strategies to develop working memory, e.g. ensure information given is clear, shorter sequences of instructions, handouts of what is on the IWB, repetition/ overlearning where necessary

- Working memory strategies for reading, e.g. building up words when blending, chunking information, using highlighters to identify important information, scaffolded learning
- Strategies to support verbal processing, e.g. thinking time, extra time for tasks, prompts to keep on task

In order to increase the confidence and enjoyment of learning for a dyslexic child, we employ a whole range of methods. Some of these methods include:

- Use of reading books that are at an appropriate interest level, whilst being at the correct reading level for the individual child
- Organising reading buddies
- Printing off information for the dyslexic child, rather than expect them to copy/search for information from the whiteboard
- Use of precision teaching to help improve sound and word recognition
- Use of speed reading techniques to improve reading fluency and word recognition

DYSLEXIA FRIENDLY CLASSROOMS

We aim to maintain our whole school as a dyslexia friendly environment.

In order to achieve this, our classrooms:

- are arranged so that during lessons, dyslexic children sit in an appropriate place
- have clearly labelled resources, which use pictures and symbols as well as words
- use coloured/ tinted backgrounds on the interactive whiteboards
- use coloured/ tinted paper
- have a range of dyslexia friendly resources ready to hand, such as: rainbow arcs, word lists, spelling and handwriting prompts etc.
- are appropriately lit and well-ventilated to provide a comfortable learning environment
- have interactive displays, which can include talking postcards, word lists and topic vocabulary, photographs and pictures
- are tidy and well-organised
- use dyslexia friendly fonts
- have ICT equipment available to support learners
- have visual timetables

RESOURCES

The school is building a resource bank of materials suited to teaching pupils with dyslexia:

- Precision teaching
- Magnetic spelling and word building sets
- Clicker 7

- Coloured overlays
- Lexia
- Phonics Play
- Read Write Inc
- Pencil grips
- PhonicBooks

ASSESSMENT

Teachers and staff are constantly tracking and monitoring pupil progress. When marking work, teachers and staff are mindful of managing the needs and self-esteem of Dyslexic children. They may only make a limited number of corrections on a piece of work. Where appropriate, staff will try to give verbal feedback as well as written feedback. Where a child has known difficulties or Dyslexic tendencies, then teachers will exercise sensitivity in their marking of spellings particularly. Correction of spellings will be focussed primarily upon high frequency words and particular letter strings.

HELPING YOUR CHILD AT HOME

For a child with dyslexic tendencies, repetition and over-learning can be key. For children who find it difficult to remember letter patterns, practical activities can help children to retain spellings. Often, children can find that it's easier to learn in small bite sized sessions or 'drip feeding', rather than sitting for any great length of time.

Some books that parents may find helpful include:

"So you think you've got problems?" by Rosalind Birkett

"Dyslexia- how would I cope?" by Michael Ryden

"Reading Difficulties and Dyslexia Booklist" lists books which are easy to read but with interesting content published by the Book Trust.

"Dyslexia-friendly Books" is a list produced by Lovereading4kids

"Digby the Dyslexic Dinosaur" written by children at Stafford Dyslexia Centre

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS & CARERS

Parental support is key to helping a child to overcome any dyslexic barriers. We encourage parents and carers to share any concerns and strategies to help their child at home can be given. We ensure that parents are involved in the target-setting process and the review of targets set.

We aim to work together to understand how children can become successful learners and to support each child's needs.

REVIEWING THE POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

Appendix 1-**Checklist for Identification of Possible Dyslexic Traits**

Focus	Some of the typical indicators or behaviours in pupils at risk of dyslexia
Strengths	
	Imaginative
	Good at thinking and reasoning skills
	Able to see the "big picture"
	Good at problem solving
	Good at general knowledge
	Good understanding of texts that have been read to him/her
	Curious
	Sophisticated receptive language
	Good visual-spatial skills
Difficulties	
General	Slow to process instructions/difficulty with following instructions
	Problems with sequencing, e.g. getting dressed
	Poor concentration
	Does not retain concepts from one lesson to the next
	Problems with fine or gross motor skills
	Difficulty with visual or auditory memory skills
	Poor sense of direction and confuse left and right
	Family history of similar difficulties
	Need for time to produce an oral response when questioned
	Difficulty in remembering sequential information, e.g. alphabet, times tables, days of the week
	Poor short term working memory
	Difficulty copying from the board
	Low self-esteem
	Behavioural difficulties
Writing	Content does not reflect ability:
	Good at thinking of ideas, but reluctant to write

	Uses simple ideas and vocabulary that do not reflect verbal ability
	Written work often not completed
	Prefers to use alternative forms of recording ideas
	Difficulties in structuring written work:
	Problems with grammar, e.g. tenses or words muddled
	Problems sequencing ideas, e.g. events are not logically sequenced
	Several ideas are all expressed in one, lengthy sentence
	Inaccurate punctuation
	Poor handwriting:
	Reserves some letters when writing, e.g. b/d, p/q, m/w
	Poor orientation and placement of letters
	Writing arranged erratically on the page
	No spaces between words
	Slow writing speed
	Problems copying accurately from the board
	Messy, laboured handwriting
	Inaccurate spelling:
	Omits letters within words
	Errors in discriminating individual sounds, e.g. middle sound
	Letters in words in the wrong order
	Bizarre spelling
Reading	Problems choosing a book at a suitable reading level
	Does not read for pleasure
	Reluctant to read out loud
	May describe visual discomfort when text reading
	Inaccurate reading:
	Poor recognition of high frequency words
	Confuses words that are visually similar (e.g. was/saw)
	Omits words when reading
	Poor tracking along words and lines when reading
	Does not recognise a word that has previously been read accurately
	Cannot identify keywords in the question/text

	Difficulty with phonological awareness especially at the phoneme level
	Lack of reading fluency:
	Sounding out each word
	Needs time to process visual information
	Lack of expression
	Slow reading speed
	Does not understand what is being read:
	Not reading for meaning and using context as a strategy
	Cannot predict what is going to happen next
	Cannot summarise what has happened
	Needs to read several times to understand meaning
Mathematics	Problems remembering times tables
	Difficulty with mental maths
	Confusion of visually similar numbers (e.g. 6/9)
	Forgets maths concepts if not practised regularly
	Misreads signs
	Misreads written instructions
Concept of time	Confusion about timetable for the day
	Problems adapting to changes in routine
	May not be able to say what day it is
Organisation	Problems finding what they need to start a task
	Difficulties executing tasks in the right order
	Often forgets to bring necessary items
Behaviour and motivation	Often off-task
	Reluctant to contribute in lessons
	Copies from other children