



Dyslexia Toolkit

An information guide for supporting dyslexic learners at Peebles High School.

This guide is for young people, parents/carers and staff.

Dyslexia can be described as a different way of understanding and doing things. It has nothing to do with intelligence, some of the most successful people in the world are dyslexic and at least 1 in every 10 people has an identification of dyslexia. Dyslexic learners can be very creative and practical. They can be good at visual thinking, coming up with new ideas and communicating with other people. With the right strategies in place, dyslexic learners can achieve their potential.

Peebles High School (PHS) is committed to improving the experience of dyslexic learners and this toolkit has been written by PHS staff, parents/carers and young people, to support our learners to achieve their potential.

PHS works in partnership with the Dyslexic Collective - a community group which raises money to supply PHS with practical items to help make learning more accessible for young people with dyslexia. The Dyslexic Collective have supplied both hardware and software to help our dyslexic learners access their education. The Dyslexic Collective have collaborated with school staff and young people in the development of a school policy (see link below) as well as this toolkit to help parents/carers and young people through their secondary education journey.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sb/public/peebleshighschool/uploads/sites/3558/2024/09/25163128/Dyslexia-Policy.docx>

Table of Contents

1. How are literacy difficulties (including dyslexia) identified?	p 4-5
2. Support strategies and tools for:	
• young people	p 6-7
• parents/carers	p 7
• teachers	p 8-9
3. ICT/iPad tools to support accessing and engaging with the curriculum and assessments	P 10
4. Assessment and SQA exam support arrangements	p 11-12
5. Study skills	p 13
6. Where to get support	p 14

1. How are literacy difficulties (including dyslexia) identified?

A young person has literacy difficulties when they struggle with reading, writing, communicating ideas and listening to understand and work with information. Some may be good readers but find processing the information they read challenging. Others may be good communicators with no word finding difficulties but might have poor auditory processing so process spoken language at a different pace than others. Young people may find one or all these skills difficult, no matter how hard they try.

PHS will investigate literacy difficulties so we can help to identify these and recommend appropriate supports and strategies to improve the learning experience of the young person. Information on literacy difficulties identified in primary school is shared with PHS staff before young people transition to S1.

The process of investigating literacy difficulties is called **profiling**.

- Concerns about a young person's literacy are raised by a parent/carer/teacher/young person and a referral is submitted to the relevant House link within the SFL/Literacy profiling team
- Investigation into the learner's potential literacy difficulties begins. Evidence is gathered from class teachers (pieces of work, assessments, photocopies of jotters, screenshots etc), learner and parent/carer checklists. Previous information and evidence from primary school is also included in this investigation (if a young person has a pupil card in primary school, this will be used at PHS as a Ready to Learn (R2L) plan)
- Where appropriate, diagnostic tools and assessments are utilised to help gather further literacy evidence. These can involve standardised tests to identify difficulties and highlight differences between a young person's actual and expected

literacy and reading levels eg. LASS, YARC, single word spelling assessments etc

- A thorough literacy team review of all literacy evidence from class teachers, learner and parent/carer checklists and diagnostic tools and assessments takes place
- A literacy profile report is completed. Results and strategies to support will then be shared with the learner, class teachers and parent/carer

For more information (including timescales), please use these links:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sb/public/peebleshighschool/uploads/sites/3558/2024/09/25164930/Literacy-Profiling.docx>

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sb/public/peebleshighschool/uploads/sites/3558/2024/09/25164819/Literacy-Profiling-Flowchart-2024.pdf>

2. Support strategies and tools

The Dyslexic Collective have supplied the school with resources specifically to support dyslexic learners including iPad folders, Bluetooth keyboards, iPad styluses and headphones which allow speech to text. These are available for dyslexic learners and are used in conjunction with learning strategies.

Strategies for Young People:

- Ask your teacher for help! They are there to support you. Teachers use a range of strategies and techniques, tell them which work best for you and don't try to pretend that things are fine when they are not (this is called 'masking')
- Set your iPad background to the colour which works best for you (this avoids visual stress which is called scotopic sensitivity)
- Use the accessibility tools in your iPad (see section 3)
- Make use of the resources in the accessibility box in the classroom
- If you need a specific-coloured overlay and don't have your own, PHS has a supply which you can use (provided by the Dyslexic Collective). We also have smaller coloured eyeline rulers which can help you keep your place when reading
- Take photographs of lessons or notes written on a board (most lessons will be on OneNote on your iPad). You will be able to file these photos in a subject area of your iPad.
- Bring headphones to school to access Immersive Reader/Ivona which are applications on your iPad which will allow you to listen to documents rather than read them
- Reduce the distraction of background noise by using ear buds
- Use an iPad keyboard if you prefer this to typing on the iPad
- Use an iPad stylus to make notes directly on your iPad - this can help with revision and mind mapping
- If you are anxious about homework and/or assessments, talk to your teacher about this, they will be understanding

- If you are worried about your learning, speak to your Pastoral teacher who will speak to your teachers on your behalf.

Strategies for Parents/Carers:

- Be understanding - your child may be working harder than their peers because it could be taking them longer to process information, both written and spoken. They may come home exhausted, particularly if they have been 'masking' any challenges they have faced during the day
- Praise your child for what they have done well
- Encourage your child, highlight their strengths
- Be supportive - communicate with the Support for Learning team at PHS and build positive working relationships
- Patience - allow your child time to relax (they may be tired), appreciate that it will take your child longer to complete homework (encourage them to do this in short blocks of time), give gentle reminders to help with short term memory difficulties
- Be positive - try not to show your anxiety (this will make your child feel anxious)
- Organisation - establish routines, make a clutter-free homework area, plan homework breaks, check your child's timetable with them (colour coding can help)
- Encourage your child to engage with audio books
- Encourage your child to ask their teachers for help

Strategies for Teachers:

All teachers (including supply teachers) know who our dyslexic learners are. They have access to information about young people on the school electronic information management system (SEEMiS) and the whole school tracker. Every dyslexic learner has a highlighted box on the register. Teachers can click on this box and find out how to help the dyslexic learner e.g. do not ask the young person to read aloud in class. Teachers understand that not all dyslexic learners are the same. When they know their learners and their needs, it helps young people feel confident, comfortable and safe in the classroom.

- Encourage open dialogue with young people in order to meet their needs
- Use dyslexic friendly approaches and strategies to find out which ones work best for learners
- Make use of the resources in the accessibility boxes provided by the Dyslexic Collective
- Use blue pens on whiteboards to avoid visual stress (some have been supplied by the Dyslexic Collective)
- Use dyslexia friendly fonts (Comic Sans, Trebuchet and Arial) and font will be size 14 on documents and size 28 on PowerPoint
- Set whiteboards to have a parchment/cream background to avoid visual stress (scotopic sensitivity)
- Dyslexic learners may find a specific colour of paper easier to work with. Be aware of the colour learners require and copy printed materials on this colour of paper.
- Allow photos of the board to be taken with iPads instead of writing things down
- Encourage the use of accessibility tools
- Encouraged access to dyslexia friendly curriculum books. The school has an audio library membership which all young people can

use to access books, including for home use. 'Books for All' may be used by teachers to access curriculum books (not all titles are available for download though)

- Seating - check dyslexic learners can hear and see them, sitting them near the front of the room if that is what the young person prefers
- Instructions (both written and verbal) - make these short and concise
- Give thinking time to process information
- Give time for the completion of written work
- Young people may 'mask' challenges they are experiencing, be aware of and look out for this
- Try to ensure that classroom displays are not too 'busy'
- Understand that homework and assessments can cause anxiety, discuss this with learners so that there is a shared understanding of expectations

3. ICT/iPad tools to support accessing and engaging with the curriculum and assessments

ICT can support young people in school by helping to address difficulties associated with dyslexia. Every learner in PHS has their own iPad which has accessibility tools to help dyslexic learners.

Accessibility tools

The Support for Learning (SfL) and Business and Computing Technology (BCT) teams will offer a support session to go through accessibility tools with learners. Click the links below to find out more.

<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/1779901798782337701>

[Student Guides - YouTube](#)

iPad accessories

The Dyslexic Collective have raised funds to supply dyslexic learners with iPad accessories including keyboards, headphones and styluses.

4. Assessment and SQA exam support arrangements

Dyslexic learners sometimes need specific arrangements in their exams and assessments. Some dyslexic learners require more than others and in some but not necessarily in all subjects. Teachers gather evidence to support the assessment arrangement (AA) and the impact of this is analysed. **All assessment arrangements should be normal classroom practice and there is no guarantee of AA without evidence.**

The following are examples of AAs which could be used to support dyslexic learners, **depending on the needs of the young person concerned and pending evidence from class teachers:**

- Adapted paper e.g. coloured paper, modified font size and style
- Bilingual support e.g. dictionary in certain subjects
- Extra time (usually 25%) - due to it take longer to re-read questions and process information
- PC with spellcheck (only for significant spelling issues due to a specific learning difficulty)
- PC without spellcheck e.g. when a learner has poor/illegible handwriting or if this is the learner's preferred working style
- Prompt - may be required when a learner has little/no sense of time or has significant concentration difficulties
- Reader - speech to text software e.g. Ivona reader will be encouraged as much as possible
- Scribe - ICT will be encouraged, as much as possible, and learners should use laptops/iPad keyboards as standard practice
- Specific hearing impairment - may include technological aid to amplify sound, signing questions to a candidate, candidate signs response with translation (filmed)
- Specific visual impairment - including medical conditions

- Transcription with correction - removes the 'unreadability' of a learner's written responses due to the very high frequency of spelling and/or punctuation errors
- Transcription without correction - for learners who have illegible handwriting and are unable to use appropriate ICT

The assessment arrangements for each young person will be shared with them and their parents/carers prior to exams. Communication between the school/young people and their parents/carers helps to alleviate any potential additional stress.

5. Study Skills

Dyslexia has nothing to do with intelligence; it just means that dyslexic learners learn in a different way and may take longer to process and remember information. Difficulties with short-term memory can mean that dyslexic learners may need to over-learn things until they know them.

Tips for studying:

- Use different coloured folders for each subject
- Use post-it notes to summarise notes e.g. a very short sentence or drawing might help
- Work out what time of day suits the learner best to study
- Think about distractions and how to prevent these
- Study little and often - 10/20 min bursts
- Start with the basics and build up understanding
- Keep notes to a minimum
- Use flash cards - key points on one side and on the other side draw a reminder, then test knowledge
- Use mind maps and make notes (write down information)
- Look at past papers and underline the keywords of the task
- Make 'to do' lists
- Make a study timetable (include breaks)
- Choose a quiet location to avoid background noise (this can make things difficult for those who struggle with auditory processing)

Check out other study skills resources at www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/leaflets

6. Where to get support

Peebles High School is dedicated to supporting dyslexic learners.

Class teachers - have learners who have literacy difficulties in all their classes. Not all learners with literacy difficulties are dyslexic. Teachers will help to identify, support and closely monitor **all** learners. Teachers want to help all young people achieve their potential.

Pastoral teachers - every young person in PHS has a Pastoral teacher who will support them throughout their time in school. Parents can contact Pastoral staff with any concerns, including potential literacy difficulties. Pastoral staff will also offer emotional support to young people.

Support for Learning (SfL) team - each member of the SfL team has been assigned a House and will deal with referrals for their House (see Section 1 on how literacy difficulties are identified).

You can find more information on these websites:

Dyslexia Scotland - www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Call Scotland - www.callscotland.org.uk

British Dyslexia Association - www.bdadyslexia.org.uk