

Midlothian Council Guidelines

Midlothian Dyslexia Practice Guidelines: Identification and Support

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2.0 Guidance statement

The guidance document provides a formal framework identification and support of dyslexia in our Education settings

The guidance document will ensure consistency across all schools.

3.0 Scope

This policy covers the identification and support of dyslexia in Midlothian education settings.

4.0 Dyslexia Overview

4.1 Introduction

These Midlothian Dyslexia Practice Guidelines have been developed following a participative consultation process with dyslexic learners, parents and staff. They sit alongside Midlothian Council's "Staged Intervention Policy" and the "Midlothian Literacy Progression and Toolkit". They are also informed by the Scottish Government's practice guidance, including the "Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit" (2017), and Education Scotland reports, "Making Sense: Education for Children and Young People with Dyslexia" (2014) and "Getting it Right for Every Child" (2008).

Aims of the Midlothian Dyslexia Practice Guidelines

- Ensure a consistent understanding of dyslexia amongst all learners, parents and staff
- Provide a clear framework for identifying and supporting literacy learning differences
- Provide a clear process to enable the confident identification of dyslexia in a timely manner
- Promote consistent, high-quality support for learners with literacy learning differences.
- Ensure the engagement of learners and parents as partners in identifying and supporting dyslexia
- Promote recognition and promotion of the strengths of dyslexic thinking

Definition of Dyslexia

Midlothian Council follows the Scottish Working Definition of Dyslexia. We believe that this definition provides the most accurate summary of the lived experience of dyslexic thinkers and is the one most likely to be familiar to our learners and parents. We also recognise that everyone with dyslexia has different strengths, difficulties and strategies that work for them. Many dyslexic learners will develop their own learning strategies which may make it more difficult to recognise their dyslexia. It is important to note that identification, understanding and acknowledgement of their dyslexia is still key to supporting their wellbeing and helping them achieve their full potential.

Scottish working definition of dyslexia (Education Scotland, Updated October 2025)

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.

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

- auditory and/or visual processing of language-based information
- phonological processing – awareness, processing speed and or memory
- 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.

4.2 Dyslexic Strengths

Every individual thinks and learns differently, and part of investigating dyslexia is to identify the strategies that will best support each learner to achieve their full potential. Dyslexia Scotland highlights the fact that, whilst the definition focuses on the difficulties associated with dyslexia, there are as many, if not more, associated strengths, including:

- visual-spatial, or 3D thinking
- imagination
- visualising
- making connections
- storytelling
- curiosity
- self-understanding
- problem solving
- divergent thinking

Identifying and encouraging the use of these strengths will support a learner to progress and develop their confidence and self-esteem. It is the responsibility of all school staff to recognise, celebrate and build on these strengths.

Be Aware: Not All Literacy Difficulties Are Dyslexia

While many children with dyslexia experience challenges with literacy, not all literacy difficulties are due to dyslexia. As part of the assessment process, you should also consider and support other possible factors, including:

- Visual or hearing impairments
- Early childhood experiences that may affect learning
- Gaps in education (e.g. missing early phonics or vocabulary instruction)
- Speech, language and communication difficulties
- Neurodivergent profiles (e.g. ADHD, autism, DCD)
- Social and cultural factors, such as low exposure to print or oral traditions
- EAL, particularly where the first language uses a different script.

Similarly, we must be mindful that dyslexia could co-exist alongside any of these. For advice and support speak to your Support for Learning staff or ESO.

4.3 The Importance of Dyslexia Identification

Identifying dyslexia isn't optional - it's part of our responsibility as teachers under Scottish legislation. Education authorities have a duty to identify and assess additional

support needs that create barriers to learning, and to ensure that all children and young people get the help they need to thrive.

Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across the range of abilities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is hereditary, life-long and neurodevelopmental and it can impact on wellbeing. Unidentified, dyslexia is likely to result in low self-esteem, high stress, atypical behaviour, and low achievement.

However, it's important to remember **support is not dependent on a formal identification**. It should always be based on the learner's needs at any given time.

As educators, we should use the term '**identification**' rather than '**diagnosis**', which is a medical term and not appropriate in the context of education. Our goal is to clearly identify dyslexia—not to use vague terms like 'dyslexic traits' that may cause confusion or delay targeted support. We should also avoid the term 'label' when discussing dyslexia with families - dyslexia is a learning difference and can be a legally recognised disability.

Shared Responsibility

In Scotland, **any qualified teacher can identify dyslexia**. There is no requirement for an Educational Psychologist to be involved, although they - along with other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists - can be consulted as part of a wider support process. Identifying dyslexia is a **shared responsibility across the whole school community**.

Class Teachers are best placed to:

- Recognise early signs of literacy difficulties.
- Adapt teaching and learning approaches, providing differentiation and support.
- Maintain and share records of progress and attainment through class observations and assessments.
- Work in partnership with learners, families, and Support for Learning staff.

The **Support for Learning Teacher** will coordinate the process by:

- Gathering input from class/subject teachers, the learner, and family.
- Collating assessment information.
- Leading a collaborative discussion to decide whether dyslexia should be identified.

The investigation of literacy difficulties, and identification of dyslexia fully supports the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. This means we are:

- Empowering children, young people, and families.
- Keeping the child at the centre of all decisions.
- Supporting the wellbeing of the learner, using SHANARRI indicators.
- Offering tailored support, based on individual needs and potential.
- Identifying needs early, to prevent issues from escalating.
- Building on the strengths of the learner, family, and wider community.
- Fostering trusting and respectful relationships with families and colleagues.
- Working in a joined-up way with all relevant support services.

Supporting Children's Learning: Statutory Guidance on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) Code of Practice (Third Edition) 2017

4.4 Timing

Class teachers are in the strongest position to notice when a child might be experiencing difficulties with literacy. This is particularly true in primary school, where we must aim to identify most dyslexic learners. Ongoing formative assessment and observation can identify learners who may benefit from additional support, which should be introduced as soon as this is recognised. Concerns should be shared parents and Support for Learning staff, who will decide whether to begin the process formal process of investigating possible dyslexia.

International studies have shown that children with the highest risk of dyslexia can be identified as early as five or six years of age and that early intervention with structured, multi-sensory teaching is the optimum approach to improve educational attainment for those with the most severe dyslexia. Learners with dyslexia will benefit from early identification, inclusive ethos, approaches and environments, appropriate intervention and support.

At this stage, it can be recorded on SEEMIS that the child is receiving support for dyslexia. The SEEMIS Guidance 2024 states, "You should record information about children and young people who receive additional support if the child/young person has had dyslexia identified or support is being provided to a pupil who may exhibit

dyslexic characteristics". This is recorded on the Personal Tab along with all ASN. You should state in the ASN text box that dyslexia is being investigated.

Identification Over Time

The dyslexia definition describes difficulties which "persist despite the provision of appropriate learning opportunities". This means some time is needed for the learner to engage with targeted support whilst their progress is reviewed.

You should gather evidence through:

- Observations
- Assessment records
- Work samples
- Response to interventions
- Discussions with all involved, especially the learner

Typically, a holistic view is built looking at evidence across 6 months to 2 years, but what matters most is quality of evidence and professional judgment. In many cases this evidence will already be available within the school and can be accessed retrospectively. It is important that any barrier to learning or well-being is recognised at the earliest possible stage and the identification process is completed as efficiently as possible.

4.5 Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

Feedback from the Midlothian Working Party on Dyslexia highlighted common concerns from parents. They felt:

- Their concerns weren't always listened to or were misunderstood, especially in early years.
- The process was too long, negatively affecting their child's self-esteem.
- Each school year felt like "starting from scratch" with no continuity.
- Teachers seemed to dismiss the need to identify dyslexia when a learner was on track in their learning
- Secondary subject teachers often lacked awareness of their child's needs and strengths.

It's the responsibility of Senior Leadership Teams to ensure staff are aware of and using the current guidance to build trust, remove these concerns from all Midlothian schools, and develop positive relationships with families.

It is important to clearly communicate to parents or carers that Scottish education is a needs-led system, and as such, all support is based on need, not on identification.

Introducing support strategies and working through the identification process should go hand in hand.

However, we know that this process can feel slow and sometimes frustrating. Keeping families informed, involved, and supported throughout is essential for building and maintaining strong relationships, where parents and learners feel heard and can contribute to developing the most effective strategies for the individual.

Based on the Statutory Guidance on Additional Support for Learning (2017), these practical steps are recommended for effective partnership working:

Professionals should:

- Value and acknowledge parental expertise.
- Consider both the strengths and needs of the child.
- Make processes clear and accessible.
- Avoid jargon and be inclusive in communication.

Good communication includes:

- Keeping parents updated between meetings.
- Sharing documents in advance.
- Acknowledging all input from families.

Effective meetings:

- Are scheduled at times that suit families.
- Involve parents in setting the agenda.
- Avoid last-minute surprises.
- Make decisions with parents present, not after the fact.

4.6 Parental Requests and Private assessments

Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, parents and young people aged 12 or over have the right to request an assessment for dyslexia at any time. Schools must:

- Respond as soon as possible to the request.
- Begin the identification process within 10 weeks of receiving a written request.

It is important to recognise that this can be an emotional and sometimes challenging time for both children and their parents or carers. It's important to explain to families that:

- There's no entitlement to a specific test or type of assessment.
- In Midlothian dyslexia is identified through a holistic, collaborative process—not a one-off test.
- As such identification may take some time but will be completed as soon as possible.
- Support is based on need, not on having a formal identification.
- Their child will receive support throughout the process and afterwards.

Some families may still choose to seek a private assessment. By law, schools must:

- Take account of any independent assessments provided by approved assessors
- Consider all relevant information submitted by the family during the school's own identification process

The holistic and collaborative process of identification undoubtedly takes longer than an independent assessment involving a one-off test. We follow this approach as it is the recommended approach of Education Scotland and Dyslexia Scotland. It should be appreciated that these differences in approaches and timescales can cause families a great deal of confusion and frustration. The hope is that by providing better clarity and efficiency in the process, parents will not feel the need to pay for an independent assessment.

5.0 Identification Process

5.1 How to Identify Dyslexia

Identifying dyslexia and providing appropriate support go hand in hand. As evidence of support needs are gathered, the appropriate supports strategies should be introduced. Dyslexia Scotland provides the following recommendations, which reflect Scottish legislation and policy:

The identification of dyslexia for learners in Scottish schools should:

- Be a dynamic process rather than an end-product.
- Be a holistic and collaborative process which takes place over time.
- Actively involve teachers/school staff, parents, learners and other agencies as required.
- Include the gathering of information from varied sources
- Support learners to become successful learners and confident individuals

Gathering Evidence

Most of the assessment evidence needed for identifying dyslexia can come from existing classroom assessments and observations. Schools are well placed to gather a wide range of information over time, across different learning contexts, to build a holistic picture of a learner's strengths and difficulties. The Midlothian Dyslexia Working Group has developed a suite of resources to support all school staff with this process.

What Counts as Evidence?

- Curriculum-based assessment and moderation.
- Observations and daily interactions.
- Review of literacy jotters
- Tracking progress over time.

In addition to this, Class or Support for Learning Teachers may carry out targeted literacy assessments to provide more in-depth information. **Important: A single standardised test or screening tool is not sufficient for identifying dyslexia.**

These tools offer helpful snapshots but do not replace a holistic identification process. Teachers should feel confident in using their professional judgment, which should take precedence over screening tool results where these differ.

5.2 Identification & Support Process

Concerns raised and difficulties identified by staff or parents.

IDENTIFICATION

Discuss concerns with parents.
Add all available evidence to the
Dyslexia Tracker.
Share concerns with SfL.

Ongoing communication and
evidence gathering.
Complete **Parent, Learner and
Teacher Checklists**.
Record observations &
assessments (There should be at
least 6 months and up to 2 years of
evidence. This can be gathered
retrospectively.)

Decide collaboratively whether to
identify dyslexia.
Create **Dyslexia Assessment
Report**
Share with all staff involved and
update SEEMIS.
Continue to monitor progress and
update report for transitions.

SUPPORT

Adaptations made to learning
environment
Learning differentiated
In class supports extended

Consider group or individual
interventions.
Develop use of technology
supports.
Work on self-understanding and
self-esteem.
Encourage identification and use of
individual strengths.

Continuously review and embed
impactful adaptations and
interventions.
Support understanding of dyslexia
and identify individual strengths.
Include in **Understanding
Dyslexia Group** and create a
Learner Profile to share with
future teachers.

Open communication amongst staff and parents is vital throughout.
The identification process informs and enhances support throughout.

5.3 Identification Documentation

- **Primary Dyslexia Tracker** – This is an excel spreadsheet created to allow you to gather all information and assessment evidence in one place over time. Evidence should be added by class teachers, overseen by SfL staff. It is linked by the merge function to enable the creation of a complete Dyslexia Assessment Report. This should continue to be updated following identification to ensure that an up-to-date record of a learner's strengths, support needs and attainment can be created as required.
- **Primary Dyslexia Assessment Report** – This can be automatically generated when the identification process is complete in order to create a final report to share with parents and teachers. Ongoing tracking should continue, and updated reports can be generated as required, including on transition to secondary school and before leaving secondary school.
- **Secondary Dyslexia Tracker and Assessment Report** – This is an alternative to the tracking spreadsheet. In secondary, we know that information is often gathered in a shorter timeframe by Support for Learning staff. This document has been developed by secondary staff with this process in mind. The document serves as both a place to gather information, and as an assessment report. It should also be updated and reshared when a learner is leaving school.
- **Parent Checklist** – This is a word document which can be shared with parents in either electronic or paper format depending on their preference. This checklist allows you to gather evidence from out with school, including pre-school development and family history. Use your knowledge of the family to decide whether to simply send this out, or whether to invite parents in and support them to complete it as part of a shared discussion about their child.
- **Learner Checklist Primary** – This is a word document which can be completed by a learner supported either by school staff or parents. There are two options, one is a checklist and the other provides visuals to help discuss strengths and difficulties. Use your knowledge of the learner to decide which to use, and how best to complete the checklist.
- **Learner Checklist Secondary** – This is a Google Form that learners can complete online with support as required. Use your professional judgement to decide whether you wish to support the learner in school to complete this as part of a wider discussion about their learning.
- **Teacher Checklists** – These are Google Forms that class teachers complete online. There is a different format for primary and secondary class teachers.

5.4 Recommended Assessment & Observation Resources

Most of the evidence gathered will be from routine teaching and assessment procedures. However, it is recognised that in some cases you may feel the need to supplement this evidence with more in-depth literacy assessments. You are free to use your own preferred assessments, including those listed below. However, **do not allow evidence from individual assessments to override the weight of evidence from other sources and your own professional judgement.**

The following assessments and observation strategies are available in all Midlothian Council schools and are felt to support the dyslexia identification and support process.

CIRCLE Participation Scale

Individual observation of holistic areas of need. Assessment provides recommended support strategies.

Single Word Spelling Test

Whole class assessment from age 5 to 12 which provides a spelling age.

Single Word Reading Test

Individual assessment which provides a reading age (unnecessary if using the YARC)

SNSA P1, P4, P7 and S3

Whole Class Online Assessment. Certain questions assess phonics, reading and other literacy skills.

Observation of Free Writing – including comparisons with typed/voice typed writing

This can provide useful information on spelling, grammar, structure, handwriting, speed of work, vocabulary use.

Dictation (see Appendix)

This can provide useful information on spelling, punctuation, handwriting, working memory.

Fluency analysis and miscue analysis (see Appendix)

These can provide useful information on reading speed, decoding strategies, sight word knowledge, expression and intonation.

In addition to these assessments, we recommend that schools invest in the **Crossbow Visual Stress Assessment** to support or rule out visual stress. Parents should also be requested to have their child's vision fully examined by an optometrist. Some optometrists also offer a visual stress assessment, but only at a cost to parents.

The following assessments are in use in the majority of Midlothian Schools and may be helpful in the dyslexia identification and support process.

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)

YARC measures reading ability in both primary and secondary. It is an individual paper assessment, supported by a computer package, which will create a score sheet for individual students. YARC assess the following skills:

Early Reading

- Letter sound knowledge
- Early word recognition
- Sound deletion
- Sound isolation

Passage Reading

- Single word reading
- Reading accuracy
- Reading rate
- Reading comprehension
- Fluency (Secondary)

Phonological Assessment Battery (PhAB)

The latest version, PhAB2, tests phonological ability in children aged 5-11, while you can use the original for learners aged 11-14. It has sub-tests in alliteration, naming speed, rhyme, spoonerisms, fluency and non-word reading. PhAB2 includes extra sub-tests such as blending, phonological working memory, phoneme segmentation and phoneme deletion.

PM Benchmark

The Benchmark literacy assessment identifies learners' instructional or independent reading levels. The resource offers a complete literacy assessment, allowing teachers to conduct reading records to capture progress in reading fluency, retelling abilities, and comprehension.

5.5 Formalising an identification of Dyslexia

This decision must be made in discussion with all relevant school staff, parents, and the learner. Where possible a planning meeting involving all relevant parties should take place to enable open and clear communication.

A **Dyslexia Assessment Report**, which collates the difficulties, strengths and supports of the learner should be provided to parents and added to the learner's PPR.

The dyslexia tracker should continue to be updated to reflect most recent attainment and supports. This will allow a current report to be created at any point, including at transition to secondary school and when a learner is leaving secondary school.

An update to the **SEEMiS** record must be made at this stage to record that the learner has been identified as dyslexic. The SEEMiS Guidance 2024 states, "You should record information about children and young people who receive additional support if the child/young person has had Dyslexia identified or support is being provided to a pupil who may exhibit dyslexic characteristics." This is recorded on the Personal Tab along with all ASN. You should state in the ASN text box that dyslexia has been identified.

At an appropriate time following identification, the learner should be invited to join an **Understanding Dyslexia Group** within school, as part of which they will have the opportunity to create a Learner Profile. It is then the learner's responsibility to update this and share it as they wish to with any staff working with them. A recommended template for the Learner Profile and suggested guide for the Understanding Dyslexia group is included in the appendices.

It is vital to remember **that identification of dyslexia is not the end of the process**, just one more step in the journey of supporting the learner to fulfil their potential and understand their learning differences. The Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit (Scottish Government, 2017) is recommended as a key resource to support literacy progress. There is also a list of recommended strategies in the appendices to these guidelines.

6.0 Transitions & assessment arrangements

6.1 Transition to Secondary School

Where learners have been added to the Dyslexia Tracker during primary school, every effort should be made to complete the assessment prior to their transition to secondary school. Any learners being investigated or already identified as dyslexic must be highlighted during the transition process, and the following steps must be taken:

- Create an up-to-date Dyslexia Assessment Report and share with secondary school
- Enable the learner to create an up-to-date Learner Profile
- The secondary school has a responsibility to ensure that all staff working with the learner:
 - are aware of their dyslexia (or possible dyslexia)
 - know their individual strengths and support needs
 - implement any recommended support strategies

The secondary school has a further responsibility to complete the process of identification for any learners still in the process of being identified, and to continue to update tracking for those identified. This will allow an up-to-date Dyslexia Assessment Report to be created as required, including for applying for Assessment Arrangements and for transition from secondary school.

Further Recommendations from Dyslexia Scotland on Transition:

- Ensure strategies and approaches available in primary school are discussed and supported in secondary school as appropriate
- Provide a coloured timetable and ensure multiple copies are available and shared with home (it is up to the learner how they use this)
- Be sensitive to the fact that the parent's experience of school may not have been positive if they are dyslexic. It may not have been identified
- Ensure that staff have access to professional learning on dyslexia and inclusive practice

6.2 Assessment Arrangements

The purpose of assessment arrangements is to provide candidates with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their attainment and ability without compromising the integrity of the assessment. All candidates are individuals with a diverse range of needs, and it is important that you consider the individual assessment needs of your candidates when considering the most appropriate assessment arrangements.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) will, as far as possible, ensure that barriers to internal and external assessment are avoided in the specifications for qualifications. The SQA will allow reasonable adjustments/assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those identified as having additional support needs. Assessment arrangements are adjustments to the published arrangements and are intended for young people who can achieve the national standards but cannot do so by the published assessment arrangements – including because of dyslexia, whether identified or not.

In school settings **no formal identification of need is required** for a learner to be provided with appropriate assessment arrangements. The determining factor is providing evidence that the candidate has been identified as having a particular difficulty and that support in accessing the assessment and demonstrating attainment is needed. The collaborative identification process supports this approach.

Examples of assessment arrangements which may support dyslexic learners:

- Adapted question papers
- Assistance in aural assessments
- Extra time may be permitted in any timed assessments
- Extension to deadlines
- Use of ICT or digital question papers
- Numerical support in mathematics assessments
- Practical assistant
- Prompts
- Reader
- Scribe
- Supervised breaks or rest periods in a timed assessment
- Transcription with correction of spelling and punctuation

You must submit requests using the Assessment Arrangements Request (AAR) software for all assessment arrangements required in the external diet of examinations. In submitting requests for the external examination, it is understood that

the arrangements requested may also be used in any assessments undertaken internally.

It should be kept in mind that using a scribe adds an additional cognitive layer for a learner, and there is also evidence, that learners do not ask scribes to make corrections, even if they change their mind. It is therefore preferable to develop learner's use of technology to support reading and writing wherever possible.

6.3 Transition from Secondary School

The criteria involved in providing a post school identification of dyslexia is different from the criteria for a young person who is attending school in Scotland. Therefore, it is important that the information gathered at school is made available to the young person before leaving.

Post-school independent assessments are carried out by practitioners who hold specific qualifications which are not required for teachers in Scottish schools. Independent assessors usually charge for this service. It is therefore preferable that learners leave school with a complete and up-to-date Dyslexia Assessment Report.

Beyond leaving school with a comprehensive understanding of their own learning differences, there are two further reasons why a completed dyslexia assessment may prove useful for our learners. These are, in order to receive "reasonable adjustments" in any further studies and, where necessary, to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance

Reasonable Adjustments

Colleges and universities have a duty under the UK wide Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments', to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at a disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled students. An independent assessment is not required for such adjustments if an appropriate, recent assessment has been carried out in school. To ensure that universities and colleges can support a learner with reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment, it is vital that learners are provided with an up-to-date Dyslexia Assessment Report when leaving school, which accurately reflects their current strengths and support needs.

Disabled Students' Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a fund to support disabled students and those with additional learning needs who are studying higher education and may have extra costs because of their disability. Support is available for a range of disabilities or learning difficulties including dyslexia and dyscalculia.

According to SAAS, evidence of dyslexia is acceptable **for this purpose** if the person providing the report is:

“a registered teacher working in or supporting the school in Scotland which the student attended and who has completed the Dyslexia Scotland & Open University 'Dyslexia: Identification and Support' (Module 3).”

<https://www.saas.gov.uk/guides/dsa>

Whilst it would be ideal for all Support for Learning teachers to complete 'Dyslexia: Identification and Support' (Module 3), both for their own practise and to enable identification to be recognised for the purpose of later obtaining a DSA, this should in no way detract from the duty to identify dyslexia which is a formal identification for all other purposes.

7.0 Appendices

APPENDIX A: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Open University free online learning modules - Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice

Three free online learning modules, which support GTC Scotland Professional Standards, Professional Update and Professional Recognition, have been developed for teachers, school management and GTCS registered local authority education officers.

The modules aim to:

- Inform practitioners about ways in which they might engage in meaningful career-long professional learning in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults
- Support deeper learning and understanding of dyslexia and inclusive practice
- Provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their practice regarding dyslexia and inclusion

The modules are:

- Module 1: 'Introduction to Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice'
- Module 2: 'Supporting Dyslexia, Inclusive Practice and Literacy'
- Module 3: 'Dyslexia: Identification and Support'

Click the link below for further information about the modules:

[Free Online Learning Modules | Addressing Dyslexia](#)

Dyslexia Scotland – Information and Resources

Dyslexia Scotland is a national charity providing a wide range of support, information, professional learning opportunities and resources to educators. The Charity works collaboratively with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, partners, those with lived experience, families and educators to improve the educational experiences and life opportunities of children, young people and adults who are, or who may be dyslexic.

Resources Include:

- National helpline: 0344 800 8484
- Free online learning
- Newsletter
- Annual Scottish Dyslexia Awareness week each Autumn.
- A range of downloadable support leaflets

GTCS Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice Professional Recognition Programme

The Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice Professional Recognition Programme is co-delivered by Dyslexia Scotland and Education Scotland. It develops expert teachers to effectively identify and support learners with dyslexia in Scotland. By gaining Professional Recognition in Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice, educators become better equipped to identify and support learners with dyslexia.

Programme structure (The course lasts one year)

Three Masterclasses (September/October; February/March; May/June). Participants are expected to carry out intersessional study, practitioner enquiry and collaboration with peer learners between each masterclass, as set out below.

- Participants' own study: online Open University Dyslexia and inclusive practice Module 3.
- Practitioner enquiry, involving personal reflection as well as collaboration with colleagues
- GLOW Team space for sharing ideas and practice
- One Professional Recognition Reflective Support day
- Submission of Professional Recognition application

APPENDIX B: DIGITAL SUPPORTS FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Please see the [Assistive Technology Stages of Intervention](#) for full details on what is available at each stage. A brief summary is given below.

Universal

[Read&Write](#) provides a large number of accessibility supports such as word prediction, text to speech, dictionary & visual dictionary support to help learners engage independently in reading and writing. There is also the new addition of a range of tools for EAL Learners. There is a simplified app version available on the iPads. If you feel a learner needs additional support in learning to use these tools confidently, staff are encouraged to refer these learners for small group/1:1 sessions via this [form](#). Staff are also able to book refresher training on using Read&Write via the [Digital Discovery brochure](#).

When creating digital presentations be mindful of accessibility. There is a “[Making Learning Accessible](#)” slide within the [EFL digital pencil case](#) with helpful reminders and suggestions such as:

- Use a pastel background
- Choose a dyslexia friendly font
- Ensure sufficient contrast between writing and background
- Do not over clutter the page
- Do not put large chunks of text into a slide
- Upload presentations etc to Google classroom so that learners can follow these on their own device, or review later with more time.

Additional

- Headphones with an in-built mic can make voice typing easier, school SFL departments have been provided with a set courtesy of Digital Inclusion and Learning.
- Digital Inclusion and Learning Team [Assistive Technology review form](#)
- [RNIB Bookshare/Books for All](#) – Free to all schools. Both provide a wide range of online books that learners can read in more accessible formats, or listen to, including Read Write Inc and Freshstart resources. Suitable for pupils with an identified print disability.

Writing

- Develop touch typing competency using [Doorway Online](#) or [BBC Dancemat](#)
- Using [OrbitNote](#) to make PDFs more accessible on Chromebook
- [Mind Mapping](#) / Visual planning/ [Flashcards](#)

APPENDIX C: UNDERSTANDING DYSLEXIA GROUP

All children who are identified as dyslexic (or having significant challenges within literacy) should have the opportunity to discuss what this means for them, and plan how they learn best. A recommended approach for this is to hold an Understanding Dyslexia Group for Primary 6 learners and above. This is a suggested plan to support you to develop such a group.

Session 1 - What is dyslexia?

- Newsround clip - [What's it like to have dyslexia? - BBC Newsround](#)
- Brief discussion of each of the learner's understanding of themselves and dyslexia
- Activity: Create an all about me drawing that shows how their brain works. Provide head outline template to add to, and show examples as inspiration.

Session 2 – Dyslexic Strengths & Challenges

- If using the book, introduce the Mission Dyslexia Superheroes
- What does it feel or look like in different people?
- Discussion with the learners about their own strengths and challenges.
- Activity: Add these strengths and challenges to the visual from session one.

Session 3 - Famous people with Dyslexia

- Strengths and how employers seek out ND learners.
- Look at famous people with dyslexia – what has made them successful?
- Mindset discussion
- Activity: Write you own mantra for a success

Session 4 – Tips for learning – reading, spelling, writing

- Remind learners of their mantras
- Reading: Whole Word learning (Frys/Dolches common word lists)
- Spelling: Visual learning (using colour or pictures to help remember words/spellings)
- Advice on accessing suitable books – both finding books at a good level to read and help reading to progress, and accessing more interesting books using audio books or online libraries. Best practice to follow the words on the page while listening.

Session 5 – Tips for learning – memory and organisation

- Memory and Organisation Strategies
- Colour mapping

Session 6 - ICT to support

- Using the Read & Write Toolbar
- Touch Typing (bbc dancemat)
- What can my phone do to support – timetable, calendars etc

Session 7 - Bringing it all together

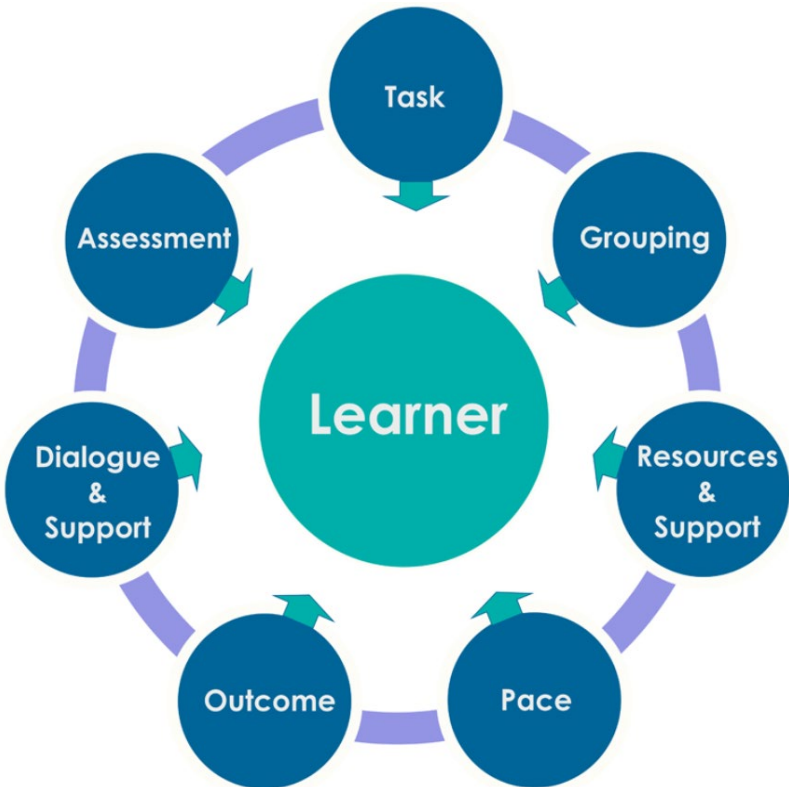
- How will you integrate the toolkit into classroom
- How will you advocate for your needs in class
- Activity: Create a learner passport that learners can choose who to share with

APPENDIX D: DIFFERENTIATION

We know that the impact dyslexia has will vary in degree according to the learning and teaching environment and pedagogical approaches used.

The differences between learners, and how they learn require to be incorporated within all planning so that all learners in a group have the best possible chance of learning.

One approach to learning and teaching does not fit everyone and developing practice which is inclusive and includes a range of differentiation is a pragmatic and time saving approach as it will support all learners to meaningfully participate in a flexible, accessible and inclusive curriculum.



Education Scotland, 2024

In planning differentiation for dyslexic learners, it is important to bear in mind that ideas and understanding can be shown in many ways other than writing. Allowing alternative responses such as pictures, videos, spoken reports, and digital presentations not only removes the difficulties of writing or spelling, but in

many cases taps into dyslexic strengths of creativity, originality and problem solving.

APPENDIX E: TARGETED SUPPORT STRATEGIES

These strategies have been shared by teaching staff across our local authority. Some can be used to provide differentiated support, but many can be used as a whole class approach. They represent effective practice for all learners, and are known to support those struggling with literacy, and those who are dyslexic.

Every learner is different, so it is recommended to introduce a few approaches at a time, and keep a record of what works and what does not. A record of what has been tried and what is working for the learner should be passed on to future teachers. This can be recorded in the Dyslexia Tracker, or simply by dating and highlighting on the list below.

The Reading Circle



The Reading Circle is a comprehensive downloadable resource designed to help educators gain an understanding of how literacy skills have developed for the child or young person they are working with who may be experiencing literacy difficulties.

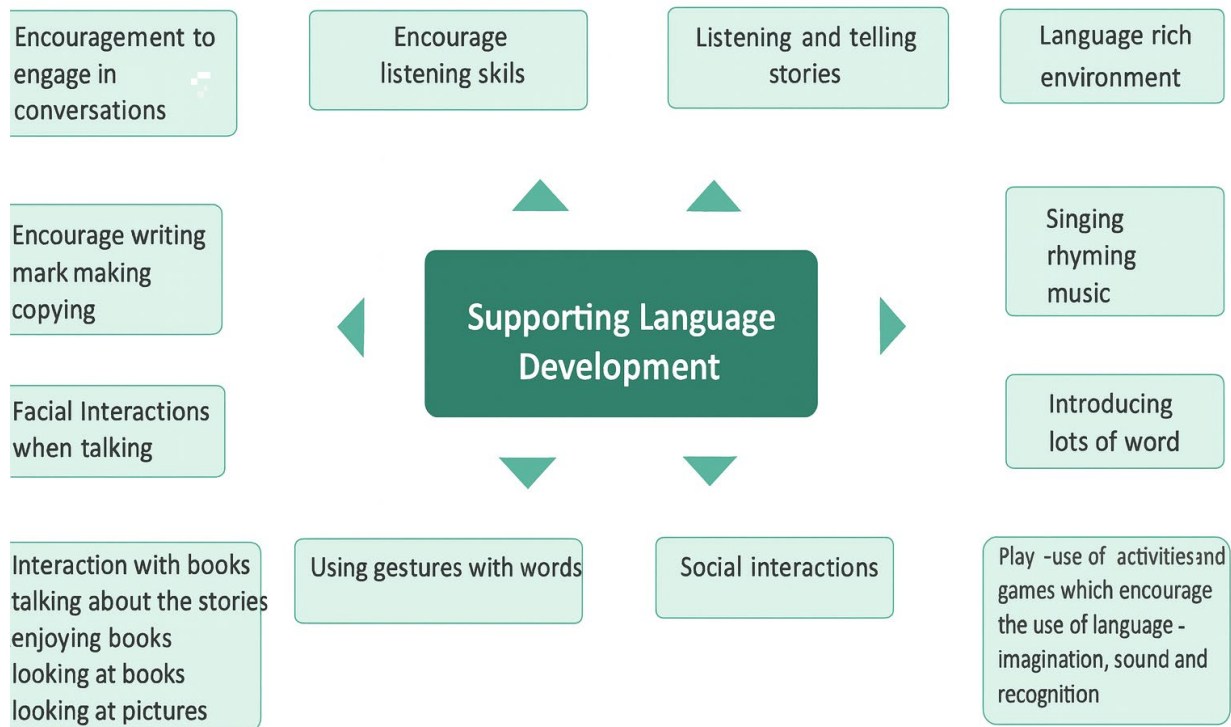
The Reading Circle can be used in early learning, primary and secondary settings and may also be beneficial for children and young people for whom English is not their first language, as well as for adults. Developing as a reader is linked to positive attitudes and experiences, as well as skills. Curriculum for Excellence recognises the fundamental importance of reading for enjoyment within the reading experiences and outcomes.

The Reading Circle provides:

- Descriptions of the key areas involved in the acquisition of reading skills
- Approaches to help understand and support reading difficulties
- A discussion/planning tool to record discussions with colleagues, staff and, where appropriate, the learner. The planning tool can highlight strengths and difficulties and offer guidance to plan the next steps appropriately.

[Reading Circle | Addressing Dyslexia Addressing Dyslexia](#)

LISTENING AND TALKING



Open University, Dyslexia Identification and Support - Module 3

Language Development

Literacy is based on language, and for literacy to develop successfully a secure language base is required. In the early years this should be the focus for all learners. Those showing early signs of literacy difficulties will benefit from a continued and ongoing focus on language development.

Sound Production

- Colour Coding – A SaLT approach which explicitly and visually teaches children which parts of their mouths are used to produce different sounds.
- Minimal pairs – A SaLT approach focusing on slight sound differences

Confidence

- Adjust expectations to make the task manageable, e.g. speaking to a friend, speaking in a small group, only saying a very short part, having words or pictures as prompts.
- Encourage a learner to read to themselves first, before reading aloud.

READING AND SPELLING - PHONICS

Phonological Awareness

- Using a phoneme chart (Read Write Inc or Edinburgh Phonics chart)
- Marking up dots and dashes
- Read Write Inc, Fresh Start or Project X
- Flashcards of common/useful words
- Nessy Phonics / Alphablocks video clips (all on Youtube)
- Highland Literacy: Phonological Awareness Assessment
- Syllable Awareness Clapping games
- Drumming Hand-under-jaw 'test'
- Folding card/ jigsaw/ colouring visuals
- Toe by Toe

Rhyme & Cluster Awareness

- Orchard Tree Games
- Class stories - rhyming books
- Flashcards Bingo, Snap or Memory Games
- Code Cracker

Blending

- APPROACH: Say it, stretch it, blend it. Start with the stretchy consonants, as these are easier to stretch and blend.
- Trugs (Teach Reading Using Games)
- Switch (similar to Trugs)
- Read Write Inc
- Edinburgh Literacy Programme
- Codecracker
- CVC matching words and pictures
- Toe By Toe
- Stile
- Alphabet arc
- Make and break words
- Elkonin/sound boxes

COMPREHENSION AND FLUENCY

Fluency

- Choral reading
- Drama
- Modelling while learners follow in their books.

- Do not ask me to read aloud in class without giving me the option first
- Adult to model good reading pace and expression
- Teacher to number the paragraphs or lines in a text
- Using a reading ruler

Comprehension

- Using a highlighter to pick out key information
- Small group work or partner work
- Using video clips or audio books
- Picture inference
- Midlothian Literacy Progression Planners
- IDL / SRA intervention groups
- Fresh Start
- Ensure differentiation of reading level, but with high interest/understanding level
- Chunk task
- Vary the response - same text but verbal or pictorial response.
- Allow text to be read to learner using digital tools, audio books/ Books for All
- Mind mapping/visual flow charts
- Explicitly teach skimming and scanning, summarising and inference

SPELLING

- Not being marked wrong when I reverse letters
- Using a phoneme chart (Read Write Inc or Edinburgh Phonics chart)
- Access to a phonetic spelling dictionary

WRITING

- Sentence Structure
- Colourful Semantics
- Ninja punctuation
- Text Structure & Organisation
- Using the computer for extended writing
- Using a planning sheet to help me organise my writing
- Mind-mapping

- Just writing – edit later
- Using digital tools to help me edit
- Teacher notes so I don't have to copy things down / remember
- Using a Dictaphone or digital recording to record my ideas
- Having an editing buddy
- Clear success criteria
- Touch typing to increase speed and confidence using a laptop, e.g. BBC Dance Mat
- Say it, draw it, write it.
- Audio recording to play back when typing/writing Cartoon sketches

NUMERACY

- Not being marked wrong when I reverse numbers
- Using patterns and working from known to unknown to 'work around' recall problems
- Visual aids to recall basic number facts – own pocket number line, 100 square etc
- Using a calculator when solving problems
- Simplifying a calculation and relating it to those I can do
- Use of concrete objects for learning e.g bead strings to teach place value
- Colour-coded place value cards for problems with left-right sequencing
- Make notes / instructions for each of the steps in multi-step problems or mental calculations, to help overcome problems in working memory
- Introduce new concepts using simpler numbers
- Texts read aloud where necessary by a peer or adult Help with vocabulary
- Visual reminders that there is more than one expression for the same thing which can be confusing – for example 'subtract', 'take away', 'minus'
- Help with learning and understanding vocabulary
- Read through questions together
- Help extract the numerical information and work out the steps needed, perhaps by drawing simple pictures
- Give as much practical experience as you can
- Use concrete examples to illustrate ideas

- Building a tower of bricks helps with counting
- Cutting a cake or pizza into portions helps with fractions.

VISUAL PROCESSING

- Larger text – comic sans 14 +
- 1.5 or double line spacing
- Use dyslexia friendly fonts such as open dyslexia or comic sans
- Having a copy of the text right in front of me not just on the IWB
- Pastel coloured background / overlay / sheets
- Barrington Stoke texts have dyslexia friendly formatting

ORGANISATION

- Single step instructions
- Visual/written instructions or task sequence cards
- Visual timetable Time for extra practice/to complete tasks
- A homework diary / written reminders in jotter
- Place-keeping & organisational strategies
- Use of technology to support learning
- A block of computer-based study support skills
- Teach Mind Mapping
- Try to have regular structure and routine in the class
- Help the learner to develop organisational systems e.g. colour coding their timetable and their jotters to match
- Have a supply of vital equipment
- Demonstrate the setting out of written work
- Try a range of scaffolding techniques to help the learner use those which work
- Use timers to help the learner keep track of how long they have to complete tasks
- Use checklists to aid memory
- Break tasks down into individual components
- Display deadlines on times lines for important assignments/ assessments
- Single step instructions
- Time for extra practice/to complete tasks
- Using a timer to help me focus on short tasks

- A homework diary / written reminders in jotter
- Routine prompt card
- Place-keeping & organisational strategies
- Visual reminder cards/bookmarks, e.g. things I need in my bag, brushing teeth...
- Teach use of Google calendar, Google Classroom and Google Drive to organise self and work

WORKING MEMORY AND PROCESSING

- Games like Simon Says, matching cards, or digital apps
- Use visualization and mnemonic devices (acronyms, rhymes or stories)
- Provide memory prompts, e.g. visuals, colours etc
- Provide concrete supports, e.g. 100 square, times tables grid, word banks, etc
- Keep instructions short & chunk longer instructions
- Eliminate unnecessary tasks – give copies of instructions or reminder lists especially for homework
- Repeat key words and phrases
- Extra time to think through what has been said / think of response / complete task
- Check for understanding – can I retell the information?
- Be aware that I can't easily copy information – give me a digital or paper copy
- Teaching note-making skills
- Develop my own strategies e.g. asking for help, rehearsal, note-making, high lighting, using my long-term memory
- A block of listening or memory skills support
- Use visual reminders of key facts/concepts – on the board, on a keyring, attached to learner's desk e.g. alphabet strip, mini 100 square, multiplication grid
- Let them record/take pictures of tasks on their phone/tablet if applicable

Implementation

The guidance will be implemented from with immediate effect. The guidance will be shared on the Midlothian Council website. School Handbooks should be updated to reflect the new guidance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Midlothian Council's Chief Education Officer has overall responsibility for this guidance.

Integrated impact assessment

All new and revised policies must be subject to an integrated impact assessment to ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation.

Risk assessment

The risk of not having a consistent, clear and published guidance means that parents/carers are not kept informed of this process and pupils are not able to access school education.

Review

This guidance will be reviewed on a two-year cycle with the next review being December 2027 by Children, Young People and Partnerships.