

Dyslexia

The term Dyslexia is an 'umbrella term'
(a term within or under which a range of difficulties can be combined)

People with dyslexia may experience the following:-

- Difficulty with letter recognition and word recognition.
- Weak phonological processing (linking the sounds to the symbols on the page).
- Visual issues including tracking problems –skipping lines and reading the same line twice when reading. Visual sensitivity, especially to black text on white paper, can cause unusual effects like text blurring, appearing raised up, or moving around (for more on this, look up Scotopic effects or Irlen Syndrome). Some dyslexic students process visual information slowly, which inhibits fluent reading. This can reduce the pleasure that reading can bring. Some dyslexic students have weak visual memory skills and experience marked difficulty reading and copying from the board.
- Working memory difficulties are very often a factor in dyslexia. This means students may have difficulty holding information and manipulating it, and are therefore disadvantaged in literacy core skills, e.g. when reading, spelling or writing. Working memory skills also affect concentration in the classroom and listening to information and instructions.
- Dyslexic children often struggle with writing, as ordering and structuring their thoughts is challenging, and the physical act of writing can be slow and effortful (this can be linked with motor skills issues).
- They may have difficulties with completing homework, due to not understanding what they are being asked do, or struggling with knowing where to start. Homework can take much longer for dyslexic students than for other students.
- Academic self-confidence is often weak in students with dyslexia, especially prior to diagnosis, as they find themselves unable to reflect their learning in written work although they can often express it well verbally.
- Dyslexic difficulties can have an effect on behaviour in class, and students with dyslexia can become discouraged and disengaged from learning.



- Students can also become withdrawn and unhappy and reluctant to attend school, therefore it is important to identify and address these problems.
- Dyslexic difficulties often occur within a family pattern, but this not always the case.
- Students who struggle with any or all of these difficulties can be easily distractible in class and appear to lack persistence when working. However they may in fact be making a significant effort to produce work.



- Some students with dyslexia will be entitled to examination concessions, and all PsychEd Educational Psychologists can advise on this. Examination concessions can apply at any age from Key Stage 1 to University, subject to students meeting the criteria. For more information on requirements, see the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website.

Some simple ideas to try

- ✓ Always ensure the student is seated with a good view of the board. Try copying from a prompt on the table, not from the board.
- ✓ Focus on phonological skills. Concentrate on strengthening weaker phonics.
- ✓ Try using a computer programme focused on phonological sounds.
- ✓ Using supportive visual materials like line guides and / or coloured overlays and coloured paper may encourage more fluent reading.
- ✓ Learning to use alternative methods of recording, for example, 'Mind Maps' and 'bullet points', may be useful when taking notes. Developing fast typing skills will be useful in the long term, for efficient recording.
- ✓ With young children, practice working memory skills by playing games like 'I went to the shop and I bought...' to practice the skills of remembering and manipulating aural information.
- ✓ With older children and teenagers, playing card games and strategy games like chess may be helpful, as you need to keep track of what cards have been laid, and keep different strategies in mind for chess.
- ✓ *Always, make homework as much fun as possible! Aim to increase confidence and reduce anxiety, whilst building in opportunities to experience success.*
- ✓ *Where difficulties persist and cause a high level of concern, consider exploring the pattern of difficulty with a PsychEd Educational Psychologist.*



Our assessments address all the areas and concerns highlighted in this leaflet.

