

How can I make sure that all my child's teachers are aware of my child's learning needs?

Ask the school Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) about writing a Pupil Profile for your child, which will provide information for the teachers about your child's strengths, areas of difficulty and how they learn best. This can be especially important in secondary school, where your child will have several different teachers.

Does my child need to have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia in order to get support in their exams?

No. If your child has been identified by school as having any additional needs, then the school's Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) will arrange for your child to be assessed for exam access arrangements by an assessor who has been approved by the Head of school. Any exam access arrangements put in place for your child must reflect their normal way of working in school e.g. if your child requires extra time, or a laptop, a reader or a prompt for example. If you have concerns regarding this, please contact your school's ALNCo and arrange a meeting.



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DYSLEXIA



Frequently Asked Questions



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I think my child is not making enough progress with their reading and writing in school - what should I do?

Try not to show your child that you are anxious about their progress as they will pick up on this. Make an appointment to discuss your concerns either with your child's class teacher, or with the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo). The ALNCo should be able to tell you exactly how your child is progressing. If you feel that your child's reading book or spelling list is too difficult for them, you can speak to the class teacher about school providing differentiated homework for your child.

I think my child might be dyslexic. Do I have to pay for my child to have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia in order to get support in school?

No. There are tools available to schools for screening for dyslexia and other Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs), so that schools can identify children who may need additional help and put support in place as soon as possible. Most Pembrokeshire schools take part in the Early Identification and Intervention Program. This involves children in Nursery provision in Pembrokeshire being screened for speech and language or social communication difficulties. Intervention is put in place for those children who present with difficulties, in the form of the Hands on Communication activities program.

Children in the Foundation Phase in Pembrokeshire are initially screened for signs of dyslexia at the pre-literacy stage using the Dyslexia Early Screening Test (DEST). Children who are found to be 'at risk' of dyslexia take part in the Hands on Literacy intervention program and are then regularly re-tested in order to monitor their progress.

Children who have been identified by school as having dyslexic difficulties should then receive intervention or support according to their level of need. For example this support might take the form of an intervention program for spelling or reading, dyslexia friendly classroom strategies, alternative methods of assessment, differentiation of work according to ability, or the use of assistive technology in the classroom.

I'm not sure if my child has any support in place in school – how can I find out?

If you are unsure what support has been put in place for your child, you should ask to speak to the school's Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo), who should be able to supply you with this information, as well as answer any questions you may have about your child's progress. Support for your child could take various forms such as: differentiated activities, dyslexia friendly classroom strategies, small group intervention / paired activities, literacy or numeracy programmes, use of IT, or concessions for exams and tests.

If my child has dyslexic difficulties, does that mean they need coloured overlays or tinted glasses for reading?

No, not necessarily. Evidence shows that visual difficulties are found across the whole range of reading abilities and not surprisingly, particularly in those with weakest reading ability. If your child is experiencing any difficulties with words 'moving' on the page when they read, appears to have difficulty reading black print on white paper, or has difficulty tracking when reading (losing their place or skipping lines), then it is advisable to book them an appointment with an Optometrist, who can diagnose visual difficulties. An eye health assessment by a qualified professional is first priority when people experience any visual discomfort and/or disturbance.

An Optometrist can carry out a full test to diagnose the nature of the problem and whether it relates to visual sensory / visual perception (visual disturbances or discomfort), refractory (causing eye strain, squinting, blurred vision), or an ocular-motor difficulty relating to how the eye muscles are working together (which might cause blurring, words 'moving', or tracking difficulties). Many symptoms labelled as 'visual stress' are often actually caused by refractive or ocular-motor problems.

- People who have dyslexia have the same chance of having visual difficulties as those without dyslexia
- Dyslexia is a language and literacy related learning difficulty, not a difficulty with vision
- Vision problems do not cause dyslexia, but they may also be present