

**Practical activities and information for parents to support their child
with dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies**

At The Abbey School we aim to be a 'Dyslexia Friendly School' for all children. We find that many of the 'dyslexia friendly' strategies we use also benefit children who do not have a diagnosis of dyslexia. The below strategies are primarily recommended by the British Dyslexia Association and the Specific Learning Difficulties Team. Whether your child is dyslexic or not, you can pick out the strategies that you feel are most useful when supporting your child at home.

Spelling			
Help your child to understand words are made up of syllables and each syllable has a vowel sound. Say a word and ask how many syllables there are. Help your child to spell each syllable at a time.	Write words in different coloured pens to make a rainbow or in shaving foam, flour or sand over and over again to help your child remember them.	Look with your child at the bits in the words which they find difficult - use colours to highlight just the tricky bit.	Use flashcards or play matching games to let your child see the words lots of times - the more times they see the word, the better they will be able to read and spell it.
Encourage your child to make links between words that rhyme and that have the same spelling pattern e.g. should, would, could.	Look for the prefixes and suffixes in words, e.g. -tion, -ness and learn these chunks.	Use cut out or magnetic letters to build words together, then mix up the letters and rebuild the word together.	Use mnemonics - silly sentences where the first letter of each word makes up the word to be spelled.
Find smaller words in the bigger word, for example 'there is a hen in when'.	Go over the rules of spelling together, e.g. a 'q' is always followed by a 'u'. Ask your child's teacher for the rules they teach in class	Try mispronouncing words e.g. people = pee – oppple, busy = bus – ee.	Developing word processing skills is helpful for older children as allows them to use the spell checker function.

Writing

Share Ideas Before Writing

With your child orally share ideas before writing. This gets their creative juices flowing. Children who struggle with coming up with their own ideas might get inspired by others thoughts.

Collaboratively Write

Instead of having your child start writing on their own, first, collaboratively write together. Share ideas and share the writing to create a collaborative piece of writing.

Use Sentence Starters

Your child may say, "I don't know what to write about." Sentence starters are helpful for triggering ideas when your child is struggling to write. For example:

There was only one thing for it

The door creaked open and

In my opinion I would.....

Brainstorming/Mind Mapping

Planning is important. Try mind mapping and then prioritise the points. Each point will become a paragraph.

Brainstorming ideas together with your child and both of you recording them down together either in a visual way or in the written form is a great way to help your child quickly get as many ideas as possible.

Writing Frames/Word Banks

Rather than giving your child a blank piece of paper, a less threatening approach is providing a writing frame with key words and spellings to help them with their writing journey. You can add sentence starts to this as well to help the further with their writing ideas and to give them more confidence.

Record Ideas Before Writing

Dictaphones or similar technology can be very useful for students, particularly if they are slow to write as they often forget what they intend to write because of the demands of the writing and spelling process.

Handwriting

The key to learning is practice, practice, practice!

Keep to short timed sessions so your child is able to maintain concentration without becoming bored or uncomfortable.

Make sure your child is sitting comfortably when they write, with their feet firmly on the floor. If it's helpful, try using a slanted writing surface.

Help your child to learn to grip the pen/pencil properly using the tripod grip. This allows the fingers and wrist to move freely without putting pressure on the hand.

Help your child strengthen the muscles in their hand by using play dough or performing hand exercises.

For some pupils with dyslexia the difficulties associated with handwriting can mean that the only way that they can achieve the speed of writing needed for success in the education system is to use a computer. If this is the case, then learning to touch type will be beneficial.

Reading

Paired reading is a good way to help your child to read and enjoy books. Allow your child to choose a book they want to read and let them start reading. When they make a mistake give your child a few seconds to have a go, but then say the word yourself - this keeps the flow going.

If the book is too hard for your child, read the words together. Read at your child's pace. Let your child decide on a signal they can give you when they want to carry on reading on their own. If they make a mistake, say the word and then carry on reading together. You can switch from reading together to your child reading alone.

Try to do this for 10 minutes every day - share the book together rather than 'hear' your child read.

Give your child a piece of card to use when they are reading.

Place the card underneath the sentence they are reading so it blocks all the text below to minimise the amount of print they can see at any one time, which prevents too much confusion.

Choose fun books – comics and magazines are colourful, and have short, manageable articles, so they may be more suitable for a child who has difficulty reading for a long period of time.

Barrington Stoke (www.barringtonstoke.co.uk) is highly recommended and publish books that are edited and designed to minimise some of the obstacles that can stop struggling, reluctant or dyslexic readers getting into a book. They choose popular authors/titles and retype on cream paper with short manageable paragraphs and chapters.

At the end of a page or section, talk about what you've read together. Ask what might happen next and whether it reminds your child of another story or film.

Homework / Organisation

<p>Dyslexic learners may find it difficult to maintain concentration for long periods of time and may get tired quickly, so it's a good idea to create a routine which emphasises 'a little and often' rather than trying to squeeze too much work into a longer session.</p>	<p>Encourage your child to write down what is needed for the next day and to check the list before they leave for school.</p>	<p>Be encouraging. Praise your child when they are trying their best, and focus your praise 'It was really good when you..'. </p>
<p>Go over homework instructions together to make sure they understand what they are supposed to do. You can help your child to prepare for tasks and generate ideas together before they start work.</p>	<p>Help your child learn to check their own work, so this becomes a natural part of the homework routine as they get older. Your child may find working on a computer easier than writing. Show them how to use the spellcheck facility and help them learn to touch type.</p>	<p>Making a list of frequent spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes to check against. For example, if your child often misses capital letters, make sure that's on the list.</p>
<p>Create visual reminders such as a prominent calendar or 'to do' list.</p>	<p>Try to help your child build successful study skills for example, by creating a revision timetable, by using different techniques for revising and reviewing learning, e.g. using mind maps, by talking through or recording what they've learned, or by thinking of different ways to complete a particular task.</p>	<p>Encourage them to think of coping strategies for when they get 'stuck'. For example, who would be the right person to ask for help if they are unable to tackle a problem on their own.</p>