



Information, Advice, and Support Service (IASS): Choosing a School - Things to Consider When Visiting a Secondary School for a Child with Dyslexia

Some General Information:

When you visit your child's prospective secondary school, there will be many things to consider. You may feel unsure as to what to ask. I hope that the following information will give you some guidance.

You may want to ensure you have someone with you on this visit, as two heads are better than one. Take a notepad to jot down some of the key information. You will be surprised how much you forget otherwise.

If possible (as part of your visit), ask to speak to the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). This person is responsible for coordinating the learning support department within the school. They will have a team of people working with them, including teaching assistants and other teachers.

Some Questions You Might Like To Ask (You May Think of More):

1. "Do You Have a Dyslexia Policy?"

The dyslexia policy might be a stand-alone policy, or it might be included in the SEND policy.

2. "How Do You Identify Children With Possible Dyslexia?"

If your child's needs have not been identified yet, schools can use various screening devices to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The screening will inform the school's provision, help them remove any learning barriers, and provide support.

3. "Do You Have Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) Trained in Dyslexia?"

Staff at the school must have good knowledge of dyslexia, including the TAs. Ideally, they will have a qualification.

4. "What Programmes or Interventions Do You Use?"

There are specific programmes of work that are used with pupils that have dyslexia. For example, Ruth Miskin's "Fresh Start" or "Catch Up Reading." Pupils with dyslexia sometimes have difficulty with maths or spelling as well, so ask the school how this will be approached.

5. **“Do You Use Alternative Methods of Recording in School?”**
Pupils with dyslexia often have good ideas but struggle to put pen to paper. Work does not always have to be written. Work could be recorded, written on a computer, or illustrated.
6. **“Can My Child Use Alternative Recording Methods for Homework (e.g. Typing Up)?”**
Make sure this would be acceptable to all departments.
7. **“Do You Use a Two-Week Timetable?”**
Two-week timetables might create organisational difficulties for your child. They might end up taking everything to school just in case!
- 8a. **“Is There a Method by Which We Can Communicate With the School (so We Can Support a Good Homework Routine)?”**
- 8b. **“Will There Be a Homework Timetable? Would We (As Parents) Get a Copy?”**
Homework timetables help you keep track of what is happening. They also help you support your child and the school.
9. **“Are There Any Support Systems for Dyslexic Pupils (e.g. Homework Clubs, Homework Buddies, etc.)?”**
Homework clubs can be helpful because staff will be on-hand to provide support.
10. **“What Type of Support Might I Expect My Child To Get? How Is This Likely To Be Organised?”**
11. **“How Would Support Fit Into the Timetable?”**
12. **“Is There a Flexible Policy on Foreign Languages (e.g. Are Foreign Language Subjects Compulsory)?”**
13. **“Do You Organise Transfer Days With Primary Schools?”**

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