

Adjustments for Dyslexia

Dyslexia (which is more formally called a Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in reading) is a difficulty in learning to read. Students with dyslexia may have difficulty with reading accuracy or fluency. They may also have a difficulty with reading comprehension, vocabulary and spelling.

This InfoSheet provides information about adjustment for classroom and homework, assessments, programming and intervention for students with dyslexia and reading difficulties. These adjustments can also be used to support students who have reading difficulties but may not have a diagnosed specific learning disorder.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Cth makes it unlawful for an education authority to discriminate against a student because they have a disability. Educators must offer students with disability the same educational opportunities as students without disability.

Educators must make changes or “reasonable adjustments” to how a student with disability accesses a course, the course delivery and the assessment procedures. Educators do not need to make a change if that change will cause “unjustifiable hardship”.

Dyslexia is a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Similar protections are available under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW.



Adjustments help ensure that students with dyslexia and reading difficulties can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. **Adjustments can be made to planning, teaching, assessments & reporting, the environment and resources.**

Teachers make adjustments by modifying or changing the way they:

- plan and prepare programs, materials and activities
- provide instruction and present information to students
- have students practise and revise information and complete work in the classroom or at home;
- assess and report on students
- set up the classroom and school environment

in order that students with dyslexia or reading difficulties can access the syllabus outcomes and content and demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Planning and Programming



The Disability Standards for Education 2005 clarify the obligations of education providers to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

The Standards provide that when considering an adjustment for a student with disability, the education provider must:

- **consult with the student** (and their parents or guardians) about whether the adjustment is reasonable, whether the adjustment would allow the student to participate on the same basis as a student without disability and whether there is any other adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial
- **decide on the adjustments** to be made to enable the student to participate on the same basis
- **make the adjustments in a reasonable time**
- consult the student and **review the adjustments** as necessary to allow for the changing needs of the student over time.



Programming Adjustments

Teachers plan and program for the most appropriate way for students to access the curriculum. This includes considering which syllabus outcomes best suit the needs of the student.

- Collaborative curriculum planning is the process outlined by NESA to determine the appropriate programming, classroom and assessment adjustments for a student with disability, taking into account the needs, strengths, goals, interests and prior learning of the student.



Nationally Consistent Collection of Data **NCCD**

Schools have an obligation to report the adjustments made for students who have a disability (or who the school imputes have a disability on reasonable grounds) to the NCCD (the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability).

Under the NCCD, schools are required to:



- have procedures for recording and storing evidence
- assess the **functional impact** of the student's disability or imputed disability (the impact on teaching and learning, communication, participation, personal care and movement)
- provide **reasonable adjustments** to assist the student with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students for at least 10 weeks in a 12 month period. Before making reasonable adjustments, **consult** with the student (and their parents or guardians) about the adjustments
- determine the **NCCD level of the adjustments** provided - support provided within Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice, Supplementary, Substantial and Extensive. [The NCCD has prepared this helpful Guide to choosing the Level of Adjustment](#)
- determine the NCCD category of the student's disability – physical, cognitive, sensory and social/emotional
- **record and retain evidence of adjustments**, consultation and collaboration with the student (and their family), monitoring and reviewing of adjustments and then review that evidence and approve the NCCD data before it is submitted to the NCCD.

Students who must be included in the NCCD are those students who have a disability or those students who the school imputes (judged to exist) have a disability on reasonable grounds and who receive reasonable adjustments because of the functional impact of that disability.

The Federal Government uses the information about the number of students receiving the different levels of adjustments reported to the NCCD to provide funding to support students with disability to schools and school systems.

Adjustments and Student Plans

It is best practice to document the adjustments for classroom and homework, assessments, programming and intervention that a student with learning difficulties or disabilities is receiving in a Student Plan.

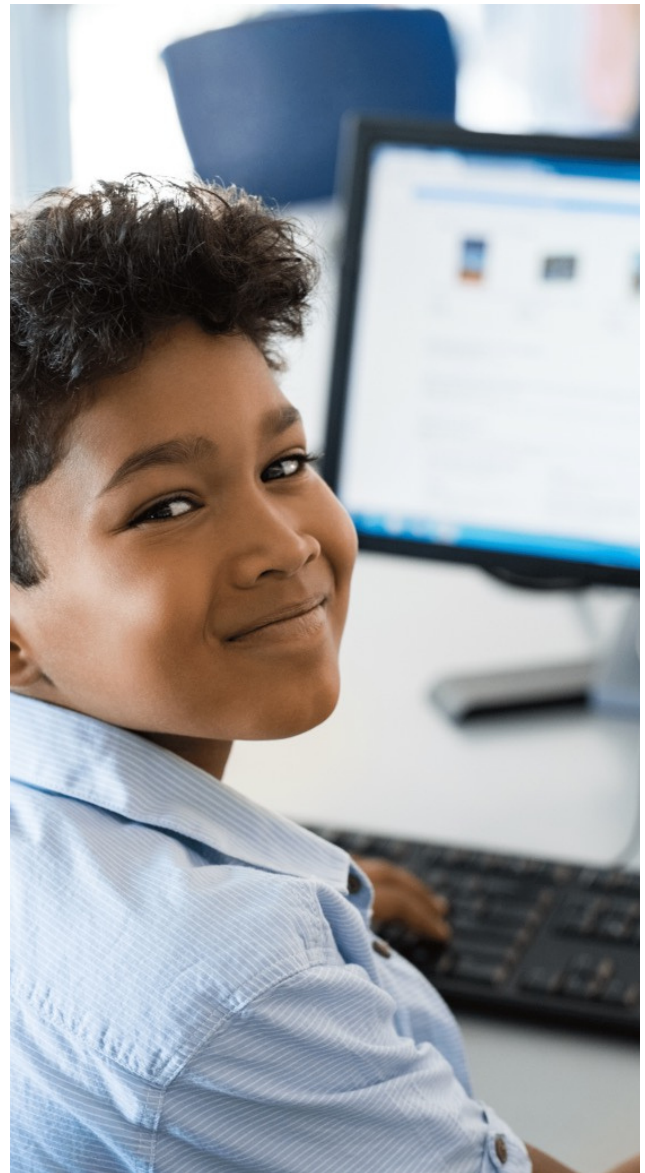


Student Plan

A Student Plan (commonly called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personalised Learning and Support Plan (PLSP)) is used to document adjustments for classroom and homework, assessments, programming (or curriculum), and intervention provided to a student with a learning difficulty or disability to enable them to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

A Student Plan (an IEP / PLSP) can be used as evidence when recording adjustments for the NCCD.

A Student Plan (an IEP / PLSP) should be developed by the team supporting the student including their parent or guardian, classroom teacher/s, learning support staff, school leadership and the student.



Intervention for students who have **dyslexia or reading difficulties**

The provision of intervention to support students who have dyslexia or reading difficulties is essential to enable these students to continue to develop their reading and spelling skills.

Students who have difficulties with reading should have their reading assessed to allow for explicit, systematic and evidence-based intervention that targets their areas of difficulty.

Such interventions can include explicit, systematic intervention in phonics, word reading, fluency, morphology, spelling and vocabulary.

While students are developing their reading and spelling skills, adjustments can be provided to allow them to access the learning in the classroom and demonstrate their knowledge in assessments.



Adjustments for students **with dyslexia or reading difficulties**

Each student with dyslexia or reading difficulties will have different needs for adjustments. Set out in this InfoSheet are adjustments that can be used to support students with dyslexia or reading difficulties based on their different needs.

The following pages outline homework, classroom and assessment adjustment options and some best practice inclusive teaching practices to support ALL students with reading.



Classroom and homework adjustments for students with dyslexia and reading difficulties

Student's area of difficulty	Classroom and Homework Adjustments
Difficulty with reading accuracy	
<p>Reading accuracy is the ability to read words without errors.</p> <p>These students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have difficulty reading words in isolation • have difficulty sounding out words (decoding) • have difficulty remembering words they have read before • guess at words when reading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate or reduce the amount of required reading (except in reading instruction) and allow students reading rest breaks. • Provide students with age appropriate decodable books to read as part of reading instruction. • Provide instructions verbally or in visual formats. • Provide alternative formats for class texts and subject specific information, e.g. audio books or electronic, audio, or video formats, e.g. YouTube. • Provide scaffolded and structured reading tasks. • In upper primary and high school, provide access to assistive technology, for example, text to speech software, reading pen, and audio books. • Avoid asking students to read in front of their peers or class.



Classroom and homework adjustments for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties

Student's area of difficulty	Classroom and Homework Adjustments
Difficulty with reading fluency	
<p>Reading fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and good expression.</p> <p>These students will be able to accurately read many individual words, however they may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have slow or laboured reading which may reduce their ability to recall and comprehend text • find reading tiring • have difficulty completing reading tasks in the allocated time. <p>These students will also likely benefit from some of the adjustments to support reading comprehension.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of reading that is expected (except in reading instruction) and allow students reading rest breaks. • Provide students with age appropriate decodable books (or other text they can read with good accuracy) to read as part of reading instruction. • Provide instructions verbally or in visual formats. Simplify written questions and instructions or highlight key information. • Provide alternative formats for class texts and subject specific information, e.g. hi-low texts, audio books or electronic, audio or video formats (YouTube). • Provide class texts to students early to allow additional time for them to read or preview the text. • Provide scaffolded and structured reading tasks. • In upper primary and high school, provide access to assistive technology, for example, text to speech software, reading pen, and audio books. • Avoid asking students to read in front of their peers or class. Instead, give them opportunities to volunteer or sufficient time to prepare before reading.

Classroom and homework adjustments for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties

Student's area of difficulty	Classroom and Homework Adjustments
<p>Difficulty with reading comprehension or with limited vocabulary</p> <p>Reading comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read.</p> <p>Reading vocabulary refers to the words that a student can read and understand.</p> <p>These students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read text accurately but may not understand what is read • have limited vocabulary, which means they have difficulty understanding what is read (this may have been compounded by lack of reading experiences due to reading difficulties). <p>These students can also benefit from adjustments to support reading fluency.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of reading that is expected (except in reading instruction) and allow students reading rest breaks. • In upper primary and high school, provide access to assistive technology, for example, text to speech software, reading pen and audio books. • Provide prior instruction on new vocabulary included in class texts and subject specific topics. • Provide scaffolded and structured reading tasks. • Provide additional materials and support to allow students to develop their understanding of class texts and subject specific topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ outlines, summaries, preview questions, and key vocabulary ◦ video and audio materials ◦ highlight key information in texts ◦ diagrams, charts, or pictorial representation ◦ graphic organisers for note taking. • Avoid asking students to read in front of their peers or class. Instead, give them opportunities to volunteer or sufficient time to prepare before reading. • Avoid asking students to use traditional dictionaries to check meaning; instead, offer digital alternatives.

Classroom and homework adjustments for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties

Student's area of difficulty	Classroom and Homework Adjustments
Difficulty with Spelling	
<p>Students with reading difficulties will often have difficulties with spelling.</p> <p>These students may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have reduced quality and quantity of writing • choose simplified vocabulary for writing tasks compared to their oral vocabulary • make frequent spelling errors and misspell high frequency words • make errors in notetaking, especially when copying from the board • avoid written activities or be slow to complete spelling and writing tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the expected amount of written work to be completed in class and at home. • Allow content knowledge to outweigh spelling in written expression tasks. • Avoid penalising written content due to poor spelling. • Allow classroom spelling practice of the spelling content being taught in intervention. • Provide word banks or a glossary of topic terms to assist with correct spelling and appropriate vocabulary choice in writing tasks. • Provide scaffolded and structured writing tasks. • Allow written tasks to be completed with alternate response formats e.g. point form, audio, graphic, verbal, or video responses. • For students in upper primary and high school, allow the use of tablets or computers to assist with planning and completing written expression tasks. • For students in upper primary and high school, provide access to assistive technology for written tasks to ensure difficulties with spelling do not impede written expression, e.g. speech to text, predictive spelling, spelling and grammar checkers, and online thesauruses. • Avoid peer marking of students' written work and spelling assessments. • Avoid asking students to spell words aloud or write on the board. Instead, give them opportunities to volunteer. • Avoid asking students to use traditional dictionaries to check spelling; instead, offer digital alternatives. • Avoid students having to copy notes from the board or requiring extensive notes to be taken in class. Allow students to photograph the board, provide copies of notes or presentations, or allow digital recording.

Classroom and homework adjustments for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties

Student's area of difficulty	Classroom and Homework Adjustments
General adjustments for students with reading difficulties	
These adjustments can assist all students with reading difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide students with evidence-based intervention.• Do not keep students in class during break times to complete unfinished class work, or require students to complete unrealistic amounts of work within limited time frames, or work beyond their ability at home. Instead, adjust the amount and / or complexity of work to be completed.• Provide parents/ carers with access to important information including homework and assessment tasks requirements, and topic summaries.



Adjustments to In-School Assessment Tasks for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties

Schools are able to make adjustments to in-school assessments tasks for students with dyslexia or reading difficulties. Adjustments to assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

- Adjustments to the **assessment process** can include:
 - Use of a reader, scribe/writer or reader pen
 - Giving extra time in an exam or to complete take-home tasks
 - Providing rest breaks
 - Scaffolding instructions
 - Making the assessment more accessible by providing a reading stimulus at the appropriate reading skill for the student
 - Highlighting key words or phrases
 - Providing additional information, e.g., providing a word bank
 - Providing a quiet or separate area to undertake examinations to reduce distractions when using a reader or scribe/writer
- Adjustments to the **assessment activities** can include:
 - Rephrasing the questions or simplify the language in the assessment task
 - Providing scaffolds or writing templates to use in written assessments
 - Providing an alternative format for questions, e.g., short responses instead of extended responses
 - Setting a visual or oral task instead of a reading task, e.g. provide an image or video as a stimulus
 - Setting an alternative task
- Adjustments to the **response format** can include:
 - Providing a computer or assistive technology to complete the task
 - Allowing written responses to be in point form or notes instead of extended response
 - Allowing video, graphic, presentations, or oral responses instead of written responses
 - No reduction in marks for messy or illegible handwriting, poor grammar, or spelling errors

If adjustments have been provided to allow a student to access an assessment, then this should not restrict the student's access to the full range of grades or marks for that assessment.

For InfoSheets about adjustments available to students completing the HSC, NAPLAN or the HSC Minimum Standard for Literacy and Numeracy Tests, please refer to the SPELD NSW website.











The SPELD NSW website also has InfoSheets on adjustments for students with difficulties with spelling, written expression and mathematics and using assistive technology to support students with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

Best Practice Inclusive Teaching Strategies to support ALL students with reading

These best practice inclusive teaching strategies can be used in classrooms to support ALL students with reading.

- Provide whole class explicit instruction of systematic phonics content in the early years and phonics, morphology and word attack strategies in upper primary and high school.
- Provide whole class daily reviews (or regular reviews) and other opportunities for spaced practice of taught skills and concepts to achieve mastery learning.
- Explicitly pre-teach the whole class new subject specific vocabulary to build background knowledge.
- Explicitly pre-teach the spelling and pronunciation of key vocabulary in all subjects (not only in English).
- Check for student understanding before assigning individual work or homework, and ensure mastery before progression to more difficult tasks and skills.
- Adjust oral communication when giving teaching and giving instructions to support students with working memory difficulties.
- Provide audio versions of texts and access to assistive technology to all students.
- Allow the use of mind maps, scaffolded graphic organisers, tablets, or computers to plan and complete written expression tasks for all students in upper primary and high school.
- Provide information to students using a mix of written, video, oral and visual displays. Allow students to have later access to all of the materials to clarify and revise learning.
- Avoid asking any student to read aloud in front of the class unless they volunteer or have sufficient preparation time.
- In upper primary and high school, provide all students with copies of the presentation or notes from the board, or allow students to take photos of the board.
- In upper primary and high school, teach note taking and evidence-based study skills.
- Ensure documents provided to students are designed and edited to allow all students to access the key information with ease, for example, reduced density of text, including checklists and annotated worked examples, and highlighting tasks to be completed with due dates.
- Ensure all students have opportunities to succeed in the classroom and recognise student effort over outcome.
- Encourage student engagement by allowing access to alternative information sources, for example, audio books, podcasts, and documentaries in areas of interest and topics being addressed in class.
- Promote a culture in the classroom of being a safe environment to talk about reading, spelling, and writing errors (without identifying individual students).

REFERENCES

WEBSITE	LINK
Association of Independent Schools - Planning Support and Resources (aisnsw.edu.au)	
AUSPELD Specific Learning Disorders Flow Chart (auspeld.org.au)	
Disability Standards for Education 2005 - Disability Standards for Education 2005 (legislation.gov.au)	
NCCD Website (nccd.edu.au)	
NCCD Guidelines (https://www.nccd.edu.au/tools/nccd-guidelines-0)	
NCCD Planning for Personalised Learning and Support: a National Resource (nccd.edu.au)	
NESA – Adjustments: Adjustments (https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/)	
NESA – Assessments: Assessment and reporting (https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/)	
NESA - Collaborative Curriculum Planning: Collaborative curriculum planning (https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/)	
NESA - Special Education: Special education (https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/)	
NSW Department of Education – Adjustments to teaching and learning: Adjustments to teaching and learning (nsw.gov.au)	
NSW Department of Education - Personalised Learning and Support: Personalised Learning and Support (nsw.gov.au)	