

S5 pupil, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway (May 2018)

### **Enabling the dyslexic – from a real dyslexic**

I am an S5 pupil and have known that I am dyslexic since I was in p5. I am about to sit 5 Highers and I enjoy school. I think I have had about 31 teachers over the years. For me there has never been one resource that helps me and the key thing for me has always been the approach of the teacher. These are the things that I have learned about things teachers can do that make a difference.

- Do discuss with us what will help us learn, we are not all the same
- Having access to a laptop with spellcheck can help
- Do realise that dyslexia can affect us when we are doing other things in class not just reading and spelling
- Do realise that just saying “copy it from the board” when we can’t keep up with writing doesn’t always work, that can be hard too
- It’s really useful when the teacher gives the option of having printed out sheets
- Some of my teachers put notes on Edmodo and I find that helpful
- Do try to make sure all teachers know about the fact that someone is dyslexic, it doesn’t feel nice having to explain it to every teacher you go to.
- In S1/S2 I had support from the Support for Learning Teacher and we went through a programme called the Sound Reading System – this really improved my spelling and made me more confident
- Do realise that giving us extra time in the exams does not magically cure our dyslexia for the whole year in class, teachers have to help out too
- Please realise that we have good days and bad days just like everybody else, sometimes reading and spelling can be even harder, so don’t tell the whole class about how we misspelt an easy word
- It helps me when I sit in line with the board
- Please realise that some people who are dyslexic don’t like being made to read aloud in front of a big class because we fear that we will get a word wrong. Ask the pupil if they mind or not ... in private.
- It helps some dyslexics if the font/paper colour isn’t black and white
- Please realise that commenting or joking about how bad our handwriting is isn’t funny, we have had teachers comment on it since we started school, we already know that not everybody can read it. It’s difficult to get a flow for handwriting. It is helpful when typing can be an option
- Please realise that when we don’t learn something instantly, or still find it hard after the teacher has explained it many times, doesn’t make us stupid or lazy, we just need a little bit more time to learn it
- And finally remember that dyslexia doesn’t just affect us in the exam, it affects us at all times, in class doing class work and at home doing homework... all the time. And that does not make us stupid or lazy, it just makes us special.

I have realised that the teachers that have helped me the most were the ones who have shown me kindness, acceptance, patience and understanding. When I was small I thought I was stupid but because of a group of teachers I have been able to enjoy school and achieve.