

# **Dyslexia Initiative**



# **Queenstown Primary School**

## **Introduction**

Children and young people with a specific learning difficulty find it harder to learn to read, write and spell than other children. Dyslexia is one type of specific learning difficulty.

Although there has been a lot of research about dyslexia, there are many views about what dyslexia is.

At Queenstown Primary School, we use the following definition for dyslexia.

“A specific learning difference which, at any given level of ability, may cause unexpected difficulties in the acquisition of certain skills.”

(Neil MacKay and DFNZ)

Research shows that dyslexia affects many children and young people. We believe that teachers should be able to identify children and young people with dyslexia, rather than rely on a small number of specialists such as educational psychologists and specialist services.

Dyslexia is not to do with the pupil's ability or background. Sometimes, children have emotional problems if their dyslexia is not identified and they are not supported as early as possible.

## **Principles**

Early and effective support is essential in overcoming the barriers to learning and social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people with dyslexia. To make sure we achieve this, the following is happening or will happen.

We have achieved Dyslexia Friendly status by becoming a registered 4D (For Dyslexia) school with the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand.

### **We will:**

- Identify children who are at risk of having dyslexic difficulties as early as possible and provide 'catch up' help in Years 1 and 2 for all children who show early difficulties in reading, writing and spelling. More intensive help will be given to children and young people who still have difficulties in Year 3 onwards.
- Get specialist advice from teachers in our school who have training in dyslexia. All teachers and teacher Aides will have dyslexia awareness training. This will mean that they will be able to identify children and young people with dyslexic tendencies. They will also develop an understanding of the potential frustration and emotional responses that children and young people with dyslexia may show and how to make sure these young people learn more effectively.
- Demonstrate empathy, respect and understanding of these students.
- Celebrate and maximize the strengths of dyslexic students.
- Be proactive by building relationships with these students.
- Identify the various social and learning needs of children/ students coming into school who don't easily access learning.
- Keep these children/ students at school happy and connected.
- Personalise the learning. All teachers will know about the range of strategies and resources (including computer programmes) that will help children and young people with dyslexia access their lessons, so their difficulties in reading, spelling (or both) do not hold them back in other subjects.
- Promote and supporting self-efficacy

- Build home and school partnerships by helping parents and carers understand their dyslexic child's strengths and difficulties, and help them to support their learning.
- Ensure the transition from preschool to school and from primary school to intermediate and high school is as successful for the child/ student as possible.
- Change benchmarks and expectations for these children to take the stress out of learning for children/students and their families.
- We will use a range of assessment procedures to gain information about a student's strengths and difficulties and progress. Dyslexia screening programmes will not be used exclusively.