



Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools
'A place to belong, grow and succeed'

A Parent/Carers' Guide to Dyscalculia



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This guide is designed to help you support your child if they have persistent difficulties with numbers. At Harlington and Sundon Lower Schools, we believe that every child can find success in maths with the right support, and we want to work with you to build your child's 'number sense' and confidence.

What is dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding and using numbers. It is not related to a child's overall intelligence, but it can affect their ability to grasp even basic mathematical concepts. Common signs include:

- **Number Sense:** Difficulty understanding that the numeral '5' represents five objects.
- **Counting:** Relying heavily on finger counting long after peers have moved on, or struggling to count backwards.
- **Basic Operations:** Difficulty remembering basic addition or subtraction facts (e.g., $2+2=4$).
- **Time and Money:** Finding it hard to tell the time on an analogue clock or struggling to understand the value of different coins.
- **Patterns and Estimation:** Difficulty recognising patterns or estimating whether an answer 'looks right.'

What does the school do that supports children with dyscalculia?

We use 'Quality First Teaching' strategies to make maths accessible and reduce 'maths anxiety':

- **Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA):** We always start with physical objects (cubes, counters, beads) before moving to pictures and finally to abstract numbers.
- **Visual Aids:** Using number lines, 100-squares, and multiplication grids as permanent references on tables.
- **Maths Games:** Using play-based learning to build fluency and take the pressure off 'formal' testing.

- **Small Step Instructions:** Breaking complex problems down into tiny, manageable steps to avoid overwhelming the child's working memory.
- **Low-Stakes Practice:** Providing plenty of opportunities for repetition in a safe, supportive environment.

What else can the school do?

If your child requires more tailored support, we can offer further specialised interventions:

- **Specialised Manipulatives:** Using tools like Numicon to provide a visual and tactile 'shape' for numbers.
- **Assistive Technology:** Use of calculators or specialised maths software to help with calculations so the child can focus on the method.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Small group sessions focusing on core number bonds and place value.

What can I do at home?

- **Make it Real:** Involve your child in 'everyday maths'—counting out pieces of fruit, measuring ingredients for baking, or spotting numbers on front doors.
- **Play Games:** Traditional board games with dice (like Snakes and Ladders) or card games are brilliant for building subitising skills (recognising a number of items without counting them).
- **Focus on 'Number Sense':** Instead of practising abstract sums, talk about numbers. "If we have 3 apples and I buy 2 more, how many will we have?"
- **Stay Positive:** Many adults say, "I was never good at Maths," but this can accidentally tell a child that it's okay to give up. Try to model a 'can-do' attitude together.
- **Use Visuals at Home:** Have a clock with clear numbers or a simple number line on the fridge to help with daily routines.





What might the next steps be?

- If concerns persist despite the strategies put in place, please arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher. They may then refer the child to the school's SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator).
- We may then complete a referral to an Educational Psychologist to identify if a formal diagnosis of dyscalculia is appropriate.

Where else I can get support?

- The Dyscalculia Information Centre: Guidance and resources for parents (www.dyscalculia.me.uk).
- British Dyslexia Association (BDA): Provides information on dyscalculia, as it often overlaps with dyslexia.
- National Numeracy: Resources to help parents feel more confident with maths (www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk).

We are on your team! We know that maths can be a source of frustration, but by working together and using concrete tools, we can help your child grow and succeed. Please know that we are here to support you just as much as we are here to support your child. Our shared goal is to see your child thrive.