

Coloured Overlays



Staff at Northgate High School are able to screen students to identify whether the use of a coloured overlay will benefit both their reading ability and speed. A coloured overlay is a sheet of matt, coloured plastic that can cover a page of text and when used can prevent visual fatigue when reading or can stop words from blurring or moving.

If a student is identified to be struggling with their reading, they will be offered a coloured overlay screening through the Learning Support Team. This screening is called a visual stress test and looks at reading speed without a coloured overlay and then with, in a variety of colours. The colour preference of a child is very specific to them and can change as they age and children will be offered a re-test at a later date if necessary.

If your child is reporting headaches whilst reading it may be due to a visual fatigue issue such as this, although this cannot be diagnosed by our screen, the child should always be taken for an examination by an eye expert (optician or optometrist).

If your child needs an overlay, they will be issued with their first one from Learning Support, any subsequent replacements need to be funded directly by parents/carers. Overlays can be used both in lessons and at home and can be taken into all public examinations to support children with reading text and reading back their own work to check it.

Some children with more extreme sight conditions may benefit from work being printed on coloured paper and/or coloured exercise books. This is normally diagnosed by a medical professional and will be referred to us through the sensory support team from virtual schools or from formal diagnosis by an optician or ophthalmologist. In order for a child to be provided with modified papers in exams, we need further evidence of need beyond that of our in-house overlay screening.

Children with dyslexia may also benefit from work being printed on coloured paper and/or the use of coloured exercise books and a diagnosis of dyslexia will be sufficient to enable a child to be provided with modified papers in exams.

If you think your child would benefit from an overlay or from coloured exercise books/coloured worksheets and exam papers, please contact Mrs Beasley (Director of teaching and support for learners) to discuss it.