POLICY COVERSHEET

Name of Policy and Version:	**EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT (DYSCALCULIA) POLICY v3.0**
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Contributors	Dyslexia Ireland staff & Governance & Risk sub-committee
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1. The purpose of this document is to outline the policy of Dyslexia Ireland in relation to the Educational Psychology Assessment service that it provides for Dyscalculia.

2. Dyscalculia is a learning difference that can cause difficulties with core mathematics (maths). It affects approximately 6-8% of the population. It occurs on a spectrum with some people mildly affected and others more severely. With the right understanding, accommodations and support, people with dyscalculia can achieve success in education, the workplace and in wider society.

3. People with dyscalculia lack an intuitive grasp of simple number concepts or 'number sense'. They have difficulties estimating the magnitude of numbers, exhibit poor understanding of number relationships, and lack fluency with simple numerical operations. Sometimes where the right answer is achieved or the correct procedure followed, it may have been done mechanically, or with great effort and anxiety.

4. Dyscalculia is not a general difficulty with learning, it impacts specific skill areas. Dyscalculia is distinct from mathematical difficulties arising from literacy or other learning difficulties, or maths anxiety but can co-occur with these difficulties. The impact of dyscalculia can change according to the environment (i.e. what a dyscalculic person is being asked to do and under what circumstances).

5. Some people prefer the wording 'a person with dyscalculia', while others prefer the term 'a dyscalculic person'. When working with individuals it is important to use the terminology that the person is most comfortable with. When communicating with a wider audience the terms may be used interchangeably to reflect the variation of preference that exists.

6. Dyscalculia is a recognised disability under Irish and EU law (such as under equalities, accessibility and disability legislation). However, many dyscalculic people do not consider themselves 'disabled' and this view should be respected.

7. Dyslexia Ireland offers an individualised assessment service that investigates the presence and nature of maths difficulties, and establishes if the difficulties are consistent with a profile of dyscalculia.

8. The educational psychology assessment for dyscalculia offered by Dyslexia Ireland is informed by the following principles:

    - Informed consent
    - Best interests of the individual being assessed
    - Evidence-based practice
    - Early assessment and intervention
    - Contextualised assessment
    - Least intrusive assessment

9. The assessment service is offered to children, young people and adults. Children should be at least seven years of age and have completed at least two years of primary education.

10. Referral forms are completed by the parents/guardians or the individual (and their school as appropriate). All information is reviewed by the educational psychology team before the assessment appointment date. In a small number of cases the educational psychology team may contact the individual (or their parents/guardians) in advance of being offered an appointment to get additional information.

11. The Dyslexia Ireland educational psychology team takes a contextualised approach and takes account of relevant background information from parents/guardians, individuals, mainstream and support teachers, schools and colleges, and any other relevant sources. This information is analysed alongside results of tests administered during the assessment.

12. A dyscalculia assessment is done in person (and not offered online) due to the nature of the tests and how they need to be administered. The assessment process takes around two hours in total. This includes interviews, test administration and verbal feedback.

13. The assessment covers a range of maths skills including numeracy, maths problem solving, maths fluency, number sense and understanding of time and money. Related literacy tests and cognitive skills (including processing speed, working memory and non-verbal reasoning) may also be investigated. The actual tests used will depend on the individual's age and needs.

14. The Dyslexia Ireland educational psychology team will only conduct an IQ test if it is in the best interest of the individual. (Traditionally a discrepancy model, measuring the gap between IQ and numeracy skills, was used to diagnose dyscalculia, however, this model is now outdated and does not reflect many years of research evidence).

15. A full written report is sent four to six weeks after the assessment. Clients are encouraged to contact Dyslexia Ireland at any time if they have a query about the report.

16. Dyslexia Ireland operates this dyscalculia assessment service on a not-for-profit basis and offers reduced rates to those in financial need.

17. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it remains in line with current best practices and the evidence base.