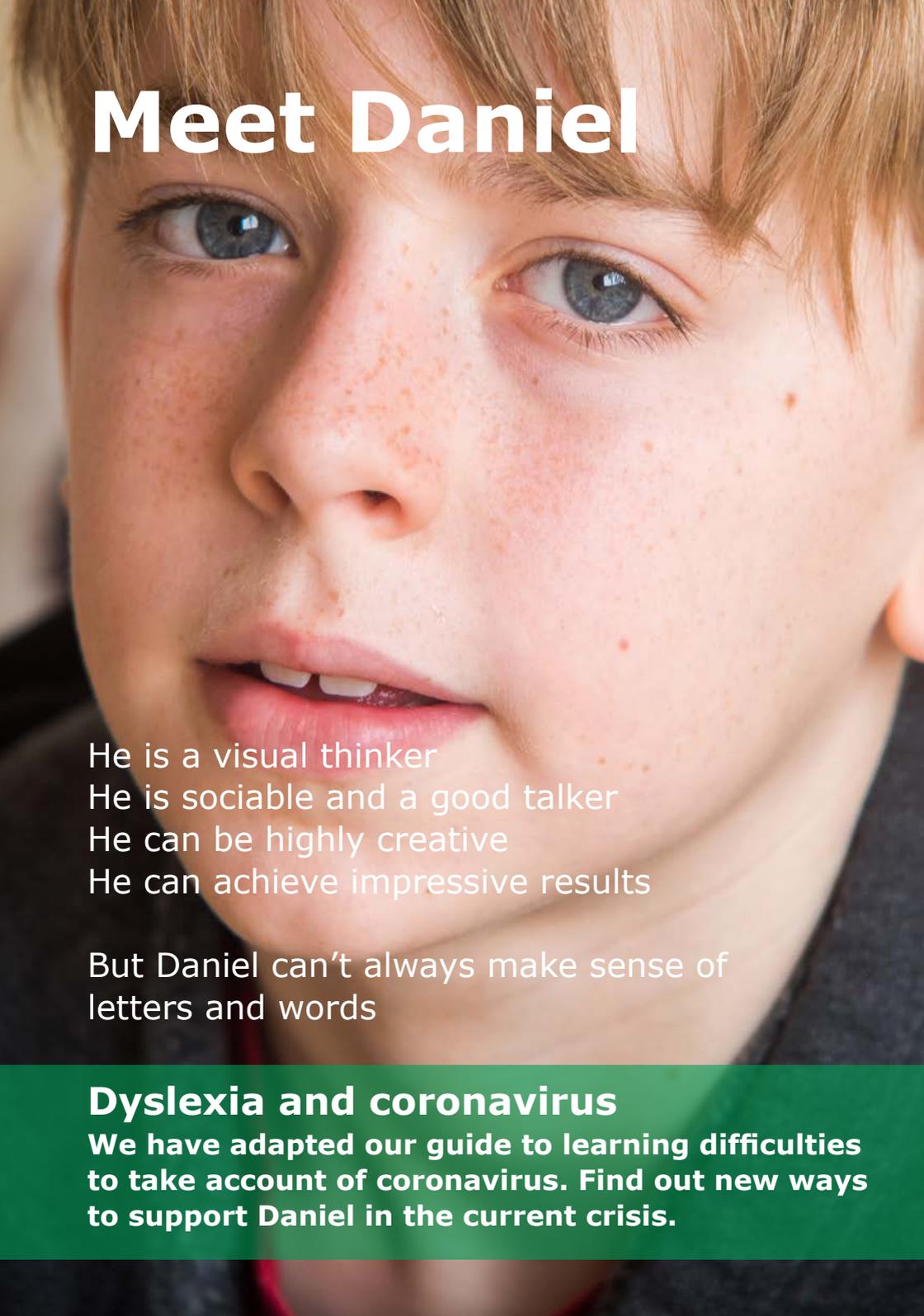


Meet Daniel

A close-up portrait of a young boy with light brown hair, blue eyes, and freckles. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blurred.

He is a visual thinker
He is sociable and a good talker
He can be highly creative
He can achieve impressive results

But Daniel can't always make sense of
letters and words

Dyslexia and coronavirus

We have adapted our guide to learning difficulties to take account of coronavirus. Find out new ways to support Daniel in the current crisis.

Understanding Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a neurodevelopmental condition - which means that it is part of the make-up of the brain. It is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties. As many as 1 in 10 people are thought to be dyslexic, and it can run in families.

Dyslexia is best described as a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect reading, writing and/or spelling. It is often a result of not being able to sort out the sounds that make up words. Some people with dyslexia have associated difficulties with processing information, short term memory and organisation.

Although dyslexia can cause significant problems, especially if not spotted early, it is no reflection of intelligence. People with dyslexia may have challenges with literacy, but can excel in other subject areas.

Dyslexia commonly co-exists with any of the other neurodevelopmental conditions.

Similar Conditions

Dyscalculia is a condition which causes specific difficulties in maths. Those affected have particular difficulties in learning 'basic' arithmetic facts, performing calculations and estimating amounts.

Dysgraphia is a condition which causes difficulty with handwriting, affecting the ability to write fluently. It is more than an untidiness in writing and can worsen when under time pressure.

Dyslexia: strengths and challenges

Daniel needs you to make the most of his social, visual and creative talents and to minimise his reliance on text and documents.

Daniel will achieve most in a position that maximises his creativity. He is likely to enjoy varied tasks and has a capacity for lateral thinking. Though he may find purely academic situations challenging, projects using computers suit him well and technology can help him to do his best work.

Take advantage of Daniel's creative ideas and don't hesitate to put him in charge of projects. He has the capacity to do this and just may need some support with his note taking.

Remember that although Daniel may have difficulty with simple writing challenges, he will have many compensatory strengths. These strengths are incredibly valuable if you work with Daniel to profit from them.

In the coronavirus crisis, children and young people with dyslexia may:

- Feel especially anxious because of changes to routine and new uncertainties about the future
- Be aware of the news, but be unable to process everything they hear, leading to a lot of confusion and maybe exhaustion
- Be unable to always remember the rules, such as keeping a safe distance away from people, or hand-washing
- Find the reliance on technology to learn at home very helpful
- Feel overwhelmed by schoolwork sent home, and may need extra support with this

Here are a few ways we can all support Daniel during the coronavirus crisis and lockdown:

General

- Use as much visual information as possible
 - For example, find a visual that explains concepts like 'social distancing'
 - Use audiobooks to help with reading
 - Use text to speech software to help with writing
- Make sure written information is easy to read with big clear fonts and printed on non-white paper
- Be direct and to the point - avoid long sentences

At home

- Provide reassurance and encouragement
- Plan for breaks when doing tasks involving reading or writing
- Encourage Daniel's creative and visual talents

When you help Daniel to keep learning at home, think about these general tips for schools and see if you can also do these things:

At school

- Use verbal instruction rather than written
- Let Daniel use a computer for written pieces of work
 - Have voice to text software and spellcheck enabled on the computer
- Ensure planned and appropriate adjustments are in place for exams
- Use Daniel's creative capacities
 - Let him take the lead on project work on topics that interest him
 - Remember that spellcheck is a useful tool

At the hospital

- The hospital might have some different processes than usual, find these out in advance if you can
- Talk to Daniel instead of giving written information
- Provide help with forms or paper work
- Explain any medical procedures clearly



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