

**Fife Council Educational Psychology Service – Parents’ FAQs to be posted on FCEPS website**

Question	Answer
Does the Educational Psychologist (EP) work full time in my child’s school?	No. Each Educational Psychologist (EP) has a number of different nurseries and schools that they visit.
How often does an EP visit my child’s school?	<p>There are nearly 200 educational provisions in Fife and the Educational Psychology Service has around 25 EPs.</p> <p>Each Fife Council school and nursery has a link EP and our time is proportionally shared across these depending on their size. The maximum allocation a large secondary school would receive is one half-day per fortnight. A small primary school may only have a visit for one half-day every six weeks.</p>
How does an EP become involved and how long will this take?	<p>If you are concerned about your child’s progress or development in education, the first person to contact would be someone from your child’s nursery or school.</p> <p>Each school has a link EP who has regular, planned times that they will visit each school. School staff will agree with their EP what the priorities are and how they can make best use of the time available. The EP service does not have waiting lists. School staff can seek advice from their EP about pupils during these visits or at other times by phone or email.</p>
Will I know if the school is going to speak to the EP about my child?	<p>If the school would like their EP to become involved with supporting your child, this would be discussed and agreed with you in advance. With your agreement, the school would then complete a Request for Assistance (RfA), which outlines what they hope the EP will be able to help with. This form will include your name and contact details and that you have provided your consent for EP involvement. If your child is over the age of 12, we would need their permission too.</p> <p>When the school sends in the RfA to the EP service you will receive an email acknowledgement. The EP will then open an electronic file to organise the information they gather about your child, and we call this opening a Priority Case. The EP will then liaise directly with the school to agree on the next steps.</p> <p>As an alternative, the school might ask their EP for general advice about how to support your child, or a group of children, or a whole class, without giving them your child’s name or any identifying information. This is called No Names Consultation (NNC). The EP will not know your child, and there will be no file opened and in this case, you may not be informed because the advice is not specific to your child.</p>

<p>Will I be told the outcome of EP involvement and next steps?</p>	<p>If there is a Request for Assistance (RfA) because the EP is directly involved with your child, then you will be told the outcome of this involvement usually by school staff.</p> <p>If your child's needs are discussed as part of a No Names Consultation (NNC) you would not hear from the EP directly, as they will not know your child. A NNC is a way that a school can seek advice from the EP without passing on any personal details. This is usually a one-off consultation about a particular issue.</p> <p>As the EP would not keep any record of the NNC discussion; the school would be responsible for recording any advice and next steps and communicating this back to you as part of the plan for your child.</p> <p>An outcome of a NNC might be for the school to discuss with you if you are happy to agree to a RfA being completed. This would be for the EP to become involved with your child as a priority case – this would always be discussed with you by the school and your consent given.</p>
<p>How will I be updated on EP involvement?</p>	<p>You will be provided with updates from school staff and through meetings organised by the school where you can ask any questions and get all the information you need from those professionals who are involved in supporting your child.</p>
<p>How will I know when EP involvement has ended?</p>	<p>This will be agreed either through a meeting, directly from discussion with the EP, or through the member of school staff you are in contact with most. We call this ending an 'episode of support'. We can become involved again in the future if the need arises.</p>
<p>Will the EP work directly with my child?</p>	<p>EPs mainly work through supporting the staff who have existing relationships with your child in school. We will work with them to, for example, make adjustments to how the curriculum is delivered to your child, the teacher's learning approaches, how support staff help your child, or how the classroom environment is organised.</p> <p>In some circumstances, the EP may meet with your child directly to help assess what is getting in the way of their wellbeing and progress in school. The EP would usually do this alongside a member of school staff but may do this on their own if the child or young person is happy to do so. This would usually be agreed with you and your child in advance.</p>
<p>How does an EP carry out an assessment?</p>	<p>EPs contribute to a shared assessment process with the school, child or young person, parents/carers and other agencies that are involved, such as Speech and Language Therapists or Social Work. We aim to identify and understand a child's strengths and areas where they need additional help. This supports the process of identifying any additional support needs.</p> <p>This work may directly involve the child or young person which would be discussed and agreed with you and your child in advance. However, we can often support your child without having</p>

	<p>any face-to-face involvement with them if this is felt to be the most effective and best way to help.</p> <p>The ways that an EP may gather assessment information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultation with relevant school staff who know your child well</li> <li>• observation of your child</li> <li>• discussion with you or other family members</li> <li>• discussion with other agencies</li> <li>• direct contact with the child or young person (if appropriate)</li> </ul>
<p>Will the EP write reports on my child?</p>	<p>We usually give feedback verbally through meetings with you and school staff – this will be recorded by the school in the plan for your child.</p> <p>We do write reports in specific circumstances, for example, if there is agreement that we want to access an enhanced support provision for your child, or for a Children’s Hearing. We will always discuss this with you and ensure that the report is shared with you, once it is completed.</p>
<p>What happens if there is a disagreement between myself and school about what my child needs?</p>	<p>EPs work closely with you and the school to be clear about the assessment of your child’s needs, how this information has been gathered and why any specific recommendations have been made.</p> <p>We will always try to agree with you and the school about a suitable way forward. Your views will always be recorded in the planning.</p>
<p>My child is over 12, can they access EP support directly?</p>	<p>Yes, a child is legally able to request support for themselves when they are over 12 years old. We will always encourage your child to talk to you about this if they are making the request on their own behalf.</p> <p>If they are over 12, we also need your child’s permission for us to become involved, even if you have made the request on their behalf. If they do not agree, you can still ask us for advice, but we would not meet with your child or keep records on your child. It is very rare for a young person not to agree to EP involvement.</p>
<p>Will the EP do direct assessment to identify dyslexia?</p>	<p>No, dyslexia assessment is completed by learning support teachers. Within each school, there are learning support teachers who have the expertise to gather the assessment information needed to identify and support any literacy difficulties, including potentially to identify a specific difficulty like dyslexia.</p> <p>If the assessment information does not provide a clear picture, they may ask the EP for advice, but usually they identify dyslexia without the EP needing to be involved.</p>

Can the EP tell me if my child has autism/ADHD?	<p>No, the EP can help support the assessment process through gathering information regarding your child's needs. We would use this assessment information to help the school to support your child's needs regardless of any diagnosis that they might or might not get.</p> <p>Depending on what the assessment information shows, a referral can be made by the school to a neuro-developmental pathway including learning disability, ADHD and ASD. These are medical diagnoses, so any diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental condition like this would be provided by a multi-agency team, including health. This team would take into account the assessment information the school and EP provide.</p>
Will the EP provide therapy to my child?	<p>No, the EP role is typically less direct, as we mainly work through existing relationships that your child or young person has with adults they already know in school. We try to support schools to make changes to teaching and learning and how they support your child to overcome anything that might be affecting their progress in school.</p> <p>We are keen that our involvement leads to a positive difference for your child, in the least intrusive way possible.</p> <p>There are other services which offer a more therapeutic approach, and if the assessment information gathered suggests that this would be helpful, we can provide advice around onward referrals to support this need.</p>
Does my child need a formal diagnosis to access support in school?	<p>No, as schools and educational services provide support based on needs, not diagnosis. They do not require a diagnosis to put support plans and strategies in place.</p>
Will EP involvement result in my child receiving additional support such as a pupil support assistant?	<p>Not necessarily. We help the team around the child through advice to meet any child's additional support needs in education. This often involves suggesting strategies or how to adapt the classroom or school environment.</p>
Does an EP need to be involved to access alternative or specialist provisions?	<p>Yes, if the school think that they may need to seek help for your child through specialist provision which is not available in their school, they will speak to you about this at an early stage. EPs would be involved in this process, and the school will discuss this with you. The level of EP involvement will vary. Schools will directly discuss this with their link EPs in the first instance and agree their role in supporting this.</p>
Do EPs do home visits?	<p>If this was the best way to gather assessment information, or if there is a gap in the assessment picture, we might carry out a home visit. This is not always necessary if the issue is mainly school based. Our primary role is to support children to access education settings so most of our work is based in schools and nurseries.</p>

<p>What are the qualifications of an EP?</p>	<p>All EPs have an undergraduate degree in Psychology. They also must have at least two years experience in working with children and young people before they complete a three-year post-graduate professional qualification.</p> <p>EPs are experts in children and young people’s learning and behaviour, and in working with others to identify and advise on additional support needs. They use their knowledge of psychology and research to understand behaviour, feelings, thinking and relationships and how these impact on learning.</p> <p>In total, it takes at least nine years to become fully qualified as an EP. All EPs are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).</p>
<p>How does an EP differ from a clinical psychologist?</p>	<p>Both of these professions require a good undergraduate degree in Psychology, and then a further post-graduate qualification.</p> <p>The key differences in the roles are that EPs focus on understanding how young people learn and develop in educational settings. They assess and support pupils with additional support needs including learning needs and any social and emotional difficulties. They also work with school staff and parents to improve educational outcomes.</p> <p>Clinical Psychologists work in clinical settings, generally using therapeutic techniques to diagnose and treat individuals with mental health and emotional issues.</p> <p>Often both professions will work together as part of a team supporting a child.</p>