

## BACK TO SCHOOL – PROBLEMS WITH READING, SPELLING OR MATHS?

### Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome – also known as Irlen Syndrome



With children recently returning to school, I feel it is important to raise awareness of Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, also known as Irlen Syndrome. Research has shown that it affects at least 50% of children who have difficulties at school, in particular, problems with reading, spelling and mathematics.

Individuals with Irlen Syndrome may experience a number of types of reading problems. Not only can Irlen Syndrome affect reading itself, but it can affect energy levels, motivation and work production. It is a complex and variable condition often found to exist as a component of dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADD, ADHD and many other learning problems.

It has a high genetic link, and therefore you may find that Irlen Syndrome runs in families. Treatment is simple. Once Irlen Syndrome has been diagnosed by a qualified screener, they will provide the individual with a coloured overlay sheet plus a referral to a diagnostician for prescription of coloured lenses. These coloured filters change the spectral content of the light and range from yellow to purple and almost all the colours in between, making the task of reading much easier.

Irlen Syndrome is a perceptual dysfunction, not a vision problem, and won't be picked up by an optometrist. Unfortunately, Irlen Syndrome is also not being picked up by the educational system. It cannot be readily diagnosed through currently used educational and psychological evaluations or other school related tests.

I am an experienced teacher with an interest in learning difficulties and I recently completed the necessary training in Melbourne to become a qualified Irlen Syndrome Screener. I am able to provide this screening for you and your children and can be contacted on (03) 5572 3567. Alternatively you can email me at [alisonwedding@hotmail.com](mailto:alisonwedding@hotmail.com). I am based in Hamilton but am willing to travel to provide this screening service.

Jenny O'Neill has also been screening children for Irlen Syndrome for a number of years and is based in Jindera, NSW. She can be contacted by calling St John's Lutheran School on (02) 6026 3220, or by email on [joneill@stjls.nsw.edu.au](mailto:joneill@stjls.nsw.edu.au).

I urge teachers to make contact with either one of us as an avenue for assisting children with learning difficulties in our care. Further information about Irlen Syndrome can be found at [www.dyslexiaservices.com.au](http://www.dyslexiaservices.com.au).

Kind regards,

Ali Wedding

Good Shepherd College, Hamilton