

## Handwriting Policy (Prep including EYFS)

### 1. Rationale

- I. Handwriting is a skill which affects written communication across the curriculum. As a pupil progresses through school, the need to write legibly, fluently and at speed increases considerably.
- II. There is a risk to creativity and attainment for a child who struggles with the mechanics of writing.
- III. Handwriting is a complex skill which needs to be taught explicitly. It requires short, regular and frequent practise.

### 2. Aims

- I. An entitlement for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting through a consistent and multi-sensory approach to the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.
- II. Raising pupil's self-motivation and esteem and encouraging a sense of pride in the presentation of their work.
- III. Experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across Nursery and Pre Prep.
- IV. Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line.
- V. Understand the importance of neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- VI. Study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- VII. Be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- VIII. Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.
- IX. Develop a fluent, joined handwriting style by Year 2.

### 3. Objectives

- I. All children should be given the opportunity to develop an effective, cursive style of writing. In order to do this, they should be taught the following:
- II. During and at the end of the Foundation Stage:
  - a) Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters [with 'kicks'/'flicks'], **most** of which are correctly formed
- III. At Year 1:
  - a) Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
  - b) Write with spaces between words securely
- IV. At Year 2:
  - a) Write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words
  - b) Form and use the four basic handwriting joins

### 4. Teaching and Learning

- I. Class handwriting is taught alongside phonics and spelling patterns, thereby connecting and internalising the letter shapes with sounds. Handwriting is taught as a specific skill rather than as an independent task (which can often reinforce poor formation having a reverse effect

than the intended outcome). Little and often is the most successful way – at least 10 minutes 3 times a week is ideal with additional, independent practise.

## 5. The Joining Style

- I. Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing *without* reducing legibility.
- II. Which letters join?
  - a) All letters join and have joins to them, with the exception of capital letters.
  - b) Capital letters should stand alone and not be joined to lower case letters.
  - c) The formation of printed and joined letters appears at the end of this document.
- III. There are four basic joins:
  1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, an, am
  2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. it
  3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on, or
  4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the 'eb' in z-eb-ra
- IV. The basic structure of a handwriting session is:
  - a) Relaxation, see Appendix B.
  - b) Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair.
  - c) Teacher guiding and modelling
  - d) Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory, monitored by the Teacher/Teaching Assistant
- V. Sessions should be fun, varied and multi-sensory. For example, children could be asked to write letters in the air, on their backs or on hands, on the backs of their hands or on their palms. They may also be asked to orally describe letter shapes and joins with children.
- VI. Books can be used, whiteboards and pens are ideal as mistakes can be wiped away leaving no record of poor performance.

## 6. Nursery

- I. In Nursery pupils are encouraged to:
- II. Develop gross motor control such as:
  - a) playing with constructional apparatus and malleable materials
  - b) threading, sewing and weaving
  - c) painting, colouring and using scissors.
- III. Develop fine motor skills to promote pencil control and awareness of letters. Such as:
  - a) Making letters in play dough and plasticine
  - b) Tactile letter tracing using textured shapes, lines and words
  - c) Writing with a stick or finger in sand
  - d) Using paints, chalks or large felt tips
  - e) Use sky-writing and large-scale practise
  - f) Practise copy writing and tracing own name

- IV. Use a range of mark making tools such as pencils, pens and crayons, with confidence and enjoyment
- V. Develop a recognition of pattern
- VI. Develop a language to talk about shapes and movements
- VII. The main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes; l, c, and r
- VIII. Develop letter-like shapes on their planning cards e.g. 's' for sand
- IX. Their first name, using a capital letter for the beginning and correct letter formation

## 7. Reception

- I. In Reception pupils continue to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from Pre-School in addition to:
  - a) Learning letter formation and the flicks
  - b) Learn letter formation using 'shape families':
    - a. **long ladder** letters: l i j t u y
    - b. **one-armed robot** letters: r b h k m n p
    - c. **curly caterpillar**: letters c a d e g o q f s
    - d. **zigzag**: letters z v w x
- II. Once basic letter formation is mastered, children are provided with large pieces of paper (turned landscape) with a single line.
- III. At the end of Reception or the beginning of Year 1 the majority of the children will have been introduced to joins. Lined paper or line guides are provided. Lines can be widely spaced 15mm or 8mm.

## 8. Year 1

- I. Pupils develop a legible style and will:
  - a) Form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join
  - b) Practise handwriting in conjunction with phonics, spelling and independent writing, ensuring correct letter orientation, formation and proportion
  - c) Use joined writing for spelling patterns using two or three letters.

## 9. Year 2

- I. Pupils begin to develop a joined writing style by:
  - a) Practising handwriting patterns from Year 1
  - b) Practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and phonic patterns.
- II. By the end of Year 2 most pupils will use joined script consistently in their writing.

## 10. Year 3

- I. In Year 3 pupils will endeavour to:
  - a) Use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required
  - b) Practise correct formation of basic joins from Year 2
  - c) Ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.
  - d) Build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practise.

## 11. Year 4

I. In Year 4 pupils will need to:

- a) know when to use:
  - a. a clear neat hand for finished, presented work.
  - b. informal writing for everyday informal work, rough drafting etc.

ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and spacing between letters and words.

II. Understand why and use a range of presentation skills:

- a) print script for captions, sub-headings and labels
- b) capital letters for posters, title pages, headings
- c) a range of computer-generated fonts and point sizes

## 12. Years 5 and 6

I. In Years 5 and 6 pupils will:

- a) Practise, reinforce and refine skills taught in previous years.
- b) Improve the presentation of their work.
- c) Continue to practise handwriting in conjunction with spelling.

## 13. Assessment and Recording

I. Teachers assess handwriting on a regular basis (each half term) to note progress against the expectations above. An informal handwriting assessment of pupils who arrive later than the Reception year is made within two weeks. Teachers aim to ensure that when marking written work, comments about neatness are kept in proportion to those about content and/or meaning.

## 14. Inclusion

I. The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this. Teachers of pupils whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the Lead for Learning Enhancement to develop a programme designed for the individual pupil. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources. Other areas that could be considered are posture, lighting and the angle of the table. Outside agencies may be contacted where appropriate.

II. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of pupils who write with their left hand and make appropriate provision:

- a) Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- b) Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- c) Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- d) Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- e) Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

- III. Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for these pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to pupils on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

### **15. The Learning Environment**

- I. In all classes, writing boxes with suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Writing areas/boxes are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, word lists and dictionaries. A model of the agreed handwriting style is displayed in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- II. The cursive font is used in displays and written communication widely across the school to model the correct formations.

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## Appendix A

- I. *Gross Motor Control* is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance.
- II. Activities and exercises to develop Gross Motor Control:
  - a) Dancing and skipping
  - b) Running and jumping to music
  - c) Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
  - d) Cycling
  - e) Gripping climbing frames
  - f) Building with large-scale construction kits
  - g) Hammering
  - h) Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as, *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*
  - i) Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons, use music
- III. *Fine Motor Control* is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes).
- IV. Activities and exercises to develop Fine Motor Control:
  - a) Folding paper
  - b) Cutting out shapes from paper and card
  - c) Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
  - d) Model making
  - e) Building and stacking bricks
  - f) Screw toys and wood working tools
  - g) Pegboards
  - h) Modelling with malleable materials like Playdoh, plasticene and clay
  - i) Drawing in sand and sand/water play in general, including sieving, pouring and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
  - j) Sewing and weaving
  - k) Chopping and peeling when cooking
  - l) Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers to pick up sequins, beads and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
  - m) Scribbling and drawing with chalk, dry wipe pens, felt tip pens, paints, and easels on small and large paper
  - n) Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
  - o) Puzzles
  - p) Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets
  - q) Use increasingly finer tools to make patterns of lines

**Appendix B**

- I. Hand gym/miming activities to relax fingers and hands before writing
  - a) Washing
  - b) Wringing, rubbing, shaking and folding clothes
  - c) Brushing hair
  - d) Stroking a cat
  - e) Playing a musical instrument
  - f) Playing with snow, bubbles, feathers, balloons
  
- II. Later on:
  - a) Sit in the writing position but with arms dangling limply. While in this position let the hands flutter loosely
  - b) Let the forearms lay limply on the table in the correct writing position. Raise and lower the elbows several times
  - c) Place elbows on the table with the forearms held upright. Let the hands flap loosely backwards and forwards
  - d) Clench and unclench the fists
  - e) Drum lightly with fingers on the table
  - f) Circle the hands, inwards, then outwards
  - g) Hold the pen in the tripod grip lightly. With the forefinger tap the pencil lightly

The cursive font used is as follows:

												
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>m</i>
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
												
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
<i>n</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>z</i>
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z