

Handwriting Policy

Mrs M Baggott

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Approved by Chair Amanda Picken

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Vision Statement

Through our curriculum we aim to ensure that all children develop a life- long passion for learning. All children should be able to communicate their thoughts and ideas confidently and listen to others with respect. They should have the fundamental skills necessary to enable them to be successful people in an ever changing society.

Rationale

This handwriting policy is for staff, parents, carers, students and visitors. It is intended to provide a clear framework for a shared understanding of teaching handwriting and ensuring continuity across the school. Handwriting is the skill of fluid movement where memory holds the shapes because it has made them so often. This is why children need to be taught through demonstration, explanation and practise. The correct formation of letters needs to be automatic before children can move to learn a fluent, joined handwriting style.

We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practiced in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Aims and Intentions

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses *Penpals for Handwriting* to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time. This is evident on class timetables.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.

- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

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The teaching of Handwriting and Progression of skills

Penpals enables us to teach and secure the development of handwriting throughout the school:

- First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities (EYFS F1 and F2).
- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS F1/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, we introduce and give the option of using sloped writing to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order for them to develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

In using *Penpals*, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspirations that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

Teaching time

Handwriting has been timetabled daily for 10 minutes so children can practice and develop their skills.

Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention.

Teachers must ensure all writing including modelling on the board and marking in books follows the same handwriting style and policy.

If lessons are missed, which can sometimes occur due to special assemblies or days, then it is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that the session is taught somewhere else in the day.

Therefore, there should be 5 sessions of handwriting evident in books.

Nursery

Children in the nursery environment should be exposed to as many literacy opportunities as possible, and should get experience in using a number of writing tools and papers to participate in a wide and varied range of "writing" activities.

The children should be given plenty of opportunities to develop hand control by using plasticine, cutting out, small construction toys, jigsaws, peg boards, drawing patterns, etc. When a child shows an interest in writing and is ready to be taken to the next stage the role of the nursery staff is to encourage and ensure the appropriate formation of letters, for example, in the child's name, topic words etc.

Teaching Sequence

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large space between words)
- Independence

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates

- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in plasticine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced at the appropriate time) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Handwriting tools

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS.
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school.
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard.
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork.
- Sharp pencils for most writing until a pen licence is awarded.
- A handwriting pen for when they sustain a good level of presentation.

Handwriting is always introduced and practised using the Penpals Interactive Whiteboard Resources and children practise on lined paper in handwriting books. Children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases. Key Stage 1- 10mm, Year 3 and 4 10mm and Year 5 and 6 8mm.

Pen Licences

There are six clear stages for our Handwriting Stages. Pen licences are issued upon arrival on Stage 5. The children at Busill Jones use blue handwriting pens. These are differentiated for left and right handed children. Licenses are issued by the Head Teacher and children carry their licence with them until the end of the academic year. At the start of each new academic year, pupils work towards gaining a new licence. In Key Stage 1, the children are motivated to do well by being rewarded with a sparkly pencil.

Equality of opportunity

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

Finger gym and dough disco are examples of activities used to develop fine motor skills. Cool kids is used to develop gross motor skills and concentration. Some children use writing slopes, finger spacers and pencil grips to also support their handwriting development.

There are some children identified with specific needs and may need to use coloured paper to support their visual needs. These are used after advice is received from the specialist SEND Advisory teacher.

Assessment

Phase leaders in team meetings and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the National Curriculum?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use **Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check**

The child:

Looks at the word carefully
Says the word
Covers the word so that it can't be seen
Writes the whole word from memory
Checks the word is written correctly
If not, repeat.

Role of the Subject Leader

The role of the subject leader is to coordinate the teaching of handwriting across all phases of the school. This is in order to secure a consistent approach across the school and to ensure progression in handwriting is outstanding. Some key duties that the literacy subject leader should undertake over the course of the year include:

- Monitoring of handwriting books and English books
- Monitoring of the application of handwriting across other exercise books, such as topic books and science books
- Helping identify and facilitate the professional development needs of staff
- Liaising with the school SENCO to best support children with handwriting difficulties
- Organising, maintaining and cataloguing handwriting resources
- Keeping up to date of new initiatives in the teaching of handwriting and attending relevant CPD

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English coordinator, in consultation with the staff, and as and when elements of English are identified or prioritised within the School Development Plan.

Recording of work

All pupils in KS1 and KS2 will have a handwriting book which will include all work. Within the Early Years, this may be recorded on an observation form using 2 Simple and included in the English book.

Planning

All sessions should be planned using the schools planning proforma.

Objectives for the lessons being taught should be taken straight from the English Long and Medium term planning, which follow the National Curriculum for English and Penpals Scheme of Work.

All lessons should be fully differentiated and accessible to all pupils.

Marking

Teachers mark pupil's writing throughout the lesson to ensure that errors and misconceptions are addressed as soon as possible, rather than a pupil complete a whole piece of writing incorrectly. Handwriting formation, size and spellings are also corrected as issues arise, with pupil's given the opportunity to practice during the lesson.

Please refer to our Marking Policy for further guidance on marking.

Teacher handwriting

Teacher handwriting in pupil's books is expected to follow the Penpals Sassoon font at the expected stage for their year group. We expect all staff to work towards using the school font as consistently as possible.

Inclusion

Left handed pupils (approximately 10% of the population) are supported by being encouraged to:

- Turn their paper to the right rather than the left
- Sit on the left handside of a right handed child so they have enough space
- Position their keep the wrist straight and their hand below the writing line

The vast majority of pupils are able to learn to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support. Children who are not yet ready to write are provided with a range of pre-writing activities (see Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 Penpals teacher handbooks).

Further intervention may be arranged with specialist advice from the SENCO and the Occupational Therapist who may provide targeted support for individual children.

Additional resources will be provided by the SENCO where deemed necessary such as sloping surfaces, special seat cushions and pencil grips.

SEND Provision

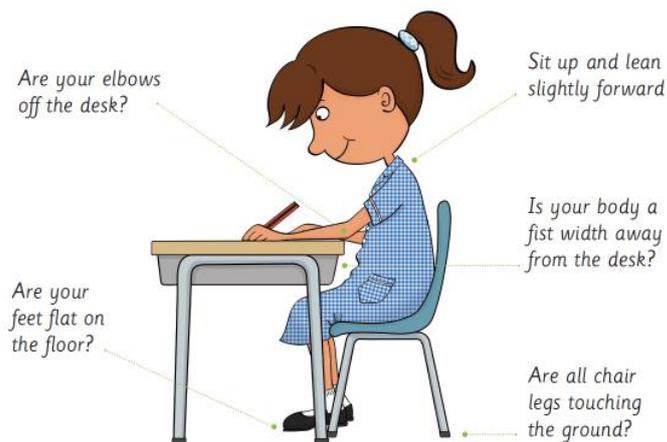
Pupils identified as needing extra support in handwriting will be given the appropriate help in the classroom. Providing for pupils with special educational needs should take account of each pupil's particular learning and assessment requirements and incorporate specific approaches which will allow individuals to succeed, such as using appropriate resources for additional support.

All appendices are subject to change based on annual review by Subject Leaders.

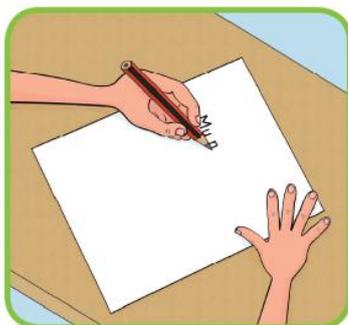
This policy will be reviewed annually unless there are any changes within the Trust.

Appendix 1 – Correct posture information

Are you ready for handwriting? Relax!



Left Handers



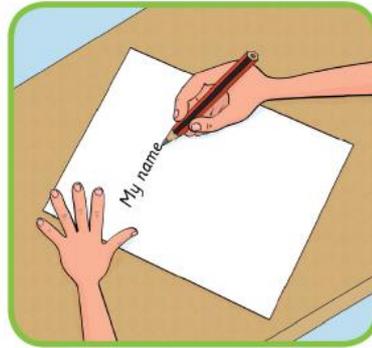
Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?

Right Handers

Is there a circle gap between your thumb and finger?

Is your paper tilted at a slight angle?



Appendix 2 – Handwriting Stages

- **Nursery: Focus on developing gross and fine motor control.**

Physical activities.

Following patterns.

- **Reception: Focus on the correct formation of letters using Letters and Sounds as the progression for the teaching of letter formation.**
- **Year 1: Revisit the formation of all letters taught in Foundation stage.**

Introduction of double letters.

Introduction of common letters strands.

- **Year 2: Revisit letter formations of letter stands taught in Year 1**

Introduction to common horizontal and diagonal joins.

- **Year 3: Revisit joins taught in Year 2.**

Introduction of lesson common joins.

Developing more consistency in letters sizes.

- **Year 4: Revisit letter formation taught in Year 3.**

Revising parallel ascenders and descenders.

Break letters.

Consistency of spacing and formation.

Developing speed and fluency.

- **Year 5: Introduction of sloped writing.**

Developing speed and fluency.

Introducing of style.

- **Year 6: Developing style and speed.**

Ensuring consistence in size and formation