



# Handwriting Policy

## Aims

1. To develop correct habits of letter formation and handwriting posture
2. To adopt an approach leading to consistency and continuity across the school in the acquisition of handwriting skills by using a chosen handwriting programme
3. To promote the teaching and learning of handwriting in conjunction with a spelling programme
4. To acquire handwriting that is swift, legible and adaptable for different purposes
5. To encourage children eventually to develop their own individual style
6. To value and celebrate handwriting as a means of sharing their work across the curriculum in PNEU tradition

## Objectives

These objectives relate directly to the aims for Handwriting at Dormer House School and are intended to show how the aims will be implemented.

1. In the Early Years staff should provide a variety of experiences to aid pupils to learn how to hold a pencil/pen, to write from left to right and top to bottom of a page, to start and finish letters correctly, to form letters of regular size and shape, to form lower and upper case letters and to sit in a comfortable position to write. Initially the children will form their letters from top to bottom.
2. In Reception triangular pencils should be encouraged in school and at home. (See The Write Path and Units 1, 2 and 3 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)  
The most important details at Key Stage One are to make sure the children form their letters correctly and hold their pencils correctly. Letters should be taught in pattern groups. Please see The Write Path for further info.
3. In Year 1 pupils who can form letters correctly will begin to learn the letter joins. All letters have 'feeder-leader' lines. These have to be practised on each letter to prepare for joined-up writing. These all start from the line as opposed to the top when practising letter formation in Reception. Letters should be taught in pattern groups. Please see The Write Path for further info. (See Units 1, 2 and 3 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)
4. In Year 2 pupils will continue to practise joins using the letter size:
  - Capital letters are tall and set the height for the rest of the tall letters. –
  - Small letters which are half the size of tall letters.
  - Dangling letters; p, g, q, j, y
  - Four lined handwriting books should be used for practice so that letter size can easily be compared.
  - Joining should be encouraged as soon as these are all mastered.

5. In Year 3 pupils will continue to learn to join correctly as their writing develops in speed and fluency. (See Units 4, 5 and 6 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)
6. Staff across the school will use handwriting as an opportunity to reinforce links with spelling and the recognition of phonic patterns and letter strings.
7. In year 3 if a pupil is deemed ready she/he may use a blue handwriting pen. By year 4 most children should have progressed on to blue handwriting pens for all written work. (See Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)
8. Staff will provide regular opportunities to practise both cursive and printed styles in order for pupils to become proficient writers in all areas of the curriculum. (See Units 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)
9. Staff will encourage pupils to consolidate and then if desired develop their own style that is fast, joined and legible. Pupils will begin to use different forms of handwriting for different purposes. (See Units 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Spectrum Handwriting Programme for guidance)
10. Staff will set clear standards for all written work where the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate effectively will be valued and celebrated.
11. Staff will conduct all lessons in a secure, supportive and disciplined manner. SEND pupils will be appropriately supported and the SEND team will encourage SEND pupils to follow the adopted Handwriting Programme.
12. Staff should follow the handwriting scheme when marking children's work and when using the whiteboard. Display material may be in different fonts if handwriting font is unavailable.

Difficulties in handwriting may be specific to bad habit formation or may indicate an alternative difficulty. It is recognised that some pupils will have so much difficulty with handwriting that they will need to use some other method of recording. For others this may only be a temporary need whilst they master the skill of handwriting but with the pressure of recording removed, i.e. typed work, dictaphone or scribe. It is further recognised that an alternative recording method would only be used if considered beneficial to that pupil.

## **KEY FACTORS FOR GOOD HANDWRITING**

It is recognised that these factors are essential elements of writing across the school:

### **Pre-writing skills**

Gross motor skill development is vital to reinforce concepts taught. Sensory media is used imaginatively and direction and correct letter formation are more important than neatness initially.

### **Knowledge of letters**

Pupils need to have knowledge of phonemes and letter names.

### **Perception**

We recognise the need to explain how to use the page, print concepts, left to right, top to bottom etc.

### **Hand dominance**

This is usually well established by age 5 but preference may appear earlier and hand dominance must be taken into consideration in teaching tasks.

### **Sitting position**

The pupil must be sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor and the body upright, leaning forward slightly. The non-writing hand should rest on the paper, supporting the upper body, facing slightly to the dominant side. The eyes should be approximately 30 to 40cm from the paper. Whenever pupils copy from the board they should be facing it. Pupils should be encouraged to push paper up when doing extended writing so that the wrist is always supported by the desk and not dangling over the end. This reduces wrist strain. Please take into account left-handers when photocopying worksheets.

### **Furniture**

Pupils need a chair that enables them to sit with their feet flat on the floor and their knees at right angles. Tables should allow space between the knees and underside of the table.

### **Lighting**

Good lighting is essential. Pupils should not write on paper in their own shadow.

### **Writing surface**

Ideally surfaces should be slightly angled. A book or paper should provide cushioning under the paper.

### **Paper**

Writing on lined paper aids organisation and letter formation. Beginner writers can start with one heavy widely spaced base line. Paper with four parallel lines can help pupils judge the spatial relationships between ascenders and descenders and is the next step. The space between the lines can be reduced as the pupils develop their skills. Monitoring is essential as use of lined paper will be the school norm, but underlays may be used for those with continued difficulty in using lined paper.

### **Position of paper**

Paper position should be adjusted to suit the writing hand. The paper should be placed slightly to the writing hand side of the body. The writer should move the paper up rather than lower the arm.

### **Writing tools**

Children will initially be encouraged to experiment with a range of implements producing thick and thin lines. The size of the nib, lead or tip is important and should be appropriate to the size of the writing. Generally all classes will use a range of writing implements but Reception will use thick and thin pencils mostly, Years 1 and 2

will use pencils and Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 will mostly all use roller ball and fountain pens. Biro's will not be used.

### **Grip**

If children are to develop a fluent and fast handwriting style, they must learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. Care should be taken that children do not grip too tightly as they will be unable to develop a free flowing movement and will tire quickly. Children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible. Pencil grip is recognised as of paramount importance and is highlighted as a key school focus as it is very difficult to change after a year or two. Thin triangular pencils are recommended. Commercial pencil grips may be used to correct grip in Year 1 but should only be used in Years 2 and 3 if a grip is unconventional and writing fluency is being impaired.

### **Emotional conditions**

If a pupil has emotional difficulties this can affect the tension of the grip. Tremors in writing may reflect a lack of confidence in letter sound/names and how letters are formed.

### **Gross motor skills**

To produce smooth controlled lines a pupil needs arm stability.

### **Left-handed Pupils**

Left handedness is not a problem and most left handers (approx 10%) learn to write perfectly well. However we give additional consideration to the following in the context of left-handed learners (LHL):

### **Letter formation**

Most LHL naturally draw a circle in a clockwise direction, which has implications for letter formation. Extra time and attention is given to ensure they are able to form letters as right handed people do.

### **Paper**

LHL need to have the paper to the left side of the mid-line of the body and tilted at an angle of 30 degrees clockwise so the pupil can see what is being written. Please take into account left-handers when photocopying worksheets. Put words to be copied on the right rather than left hand side.

### **Writing tool**

It is important to have a free-flowing implement as the implement is being pushed rather than pulled across the paper. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide variety of implements including left handed nibs.

### **Grip**

Pupils are encouraged to hold the pen further from the point than right handers (approx 1.5cm from end of writing implement) so that the writing is not obscured. The wrist should be straight and any hook grip should be corrected with paper angle and formation guidance.

**Seating**

LHL sit on the left of right handed children to avoid arms clashing. Some children will benefit from a higher seating position to see their work more clearly.

**Modelling**

Modelling must be done with the left hand specifically for the LHL.

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher and the Trustees and will be reviewed in three years, or earlier if necessary.

**Signed****Date:**