



**BRAILES C of E
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Handwriting Policy



DEFINITION OF HANDWRITING:

Handwriting is writing done with the hand using a pencil, pen, digital stylus or other marking instrument. Handwriting involves using a recognised system of symbols to express and communicate language.

1. AIM

Our aim is for all children to learn and practise appropriate handwriting skills at each stage of development, working towards comfortable handwriting which is legible, fluent and fast.

How?

INTENT:

- By providing a carefully designed handwriting curriculum which is coherently planned and based on evidence-based practice to cumulatively develop children's knowledge and skills

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Handwriting teaching is delivered by a confident and skilled teaching staff who have a good knowledge of the development of handwriting skills
- The school creates an environment that optimises learning within handwriting and quickly identifies those children who need further support

IMPACT:

- Learners develop handwriting skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well
- They produce legible, fluent and fast handwriting which enables them to express their thoughts and ideas and communicate with others

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Successful practice in handwriting is based on consistency and continuity across the whole school community. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by all teachers is vital. Consistency in the attitudes displayed, the methods employed and the models provided is the key to effective learning. A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is planned throughout the school. We use the Read Write Inc. handwriting scheme, which links to our phonics teaching.

The children will:

- Learn to form upper and lower-case letters and numbers correctly from their Reception year.
- Learn and practise handwriting during dedicated handwriting lessons, with links made to the phonics and spelling programme.
- Sit correctly at a table, holding their pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Be encouraged to use neat, appropriately joined handwriting for all subjects as appropriate to the task and according to the ability of each individual.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and will practise these.

The teachers and teaching assistants will:

- Provide direct teaching and accurate modelling of handwriting.
- Have high expectations of the presentation of children's writing.
- Ensure that children adopt good writing posture and position.
- Observe individual children's handwriting to ensure correct formation is adhered to, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- Quickly identify children who have difficulty mastering handwriting and build in appropriate support

3. TEACHING TIME

It should be frequent, discrete and direct teaching. We advise there should be a minimum of 5 x 10 minute handwriting lessons each week in Key Stage 1 and 2 x 15 minute or 3 x 10 minute handwriting lessons each week in Key Stage 2. More opportunities will need to be provided for children in Early Years, and for those higher up the school who still have difficulties, to improve their skills in letter formation.

4. STRUCTURE OF A LESSON

Begin your lesson with a fine or gross motor activity to get the children warmed up for a handwriting lesson.

Identify the type of letter shape and join. Handwriting to be correctly joined by the end of Year 1. See Appendix

Trace and/or write the letter, or spelling pattern, on the whiteboard ensuring you demonstrate best practice to the children. Use talk to describe the actions. See Appendix

Provide opportunities for deliberate practice.

5. ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 need to have their progress towards legible, joined handwriting monitored very carefully. Studies have shown that incorrect letter formation early on is a significant contributor to handwriting difficulties later on.

Senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books half termly.

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene immediately. 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?

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO NEED FURTHER SUPPORT:

Handwriting is a complex skill to master, one that involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion. As a result, some children may have difficulty mastering it. These children need to be identified quickly and have additional support put in place.

To provide the most appropriate support, a teacher must first identify which area of handwriting is the main area of concern:

1. Legibility: can the words be read out of context?
2. Neatness: is the handwriting messy or poorly controlled?
3. Comfort: does the child experience pain, strain or discomfort when writing?
4. Pressure: is the child pressing too hard or not hard enough, or is the pressure within one piece of writing variable?
5. Speed: is the child writing very slowly, producing too little writing, or too fast, becoming inaccurate?
6. Motivation / enjoyment: is s/he reluctant to write or gives up too easily?

RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN SCHOOL TO SUPPORT HANDWRITING DEVELOPMENT:

Equipment:

- Soft pencil grips to help reduce fatigue caused by writing pressure
- Slope boards to reduce the stresses and strains caused by working on flat surfaces
- Softer lead pencils to improve legibility for children with light pressure (e.g. 2B)
- Wide-lined exercise books and maths books with larger squares for children developing control of size

Small group and Individual Interventions:

- Write from the Start: Unique Programme to Develop Fine Motor and Perceptual Skills Necessary for Effective Handwriting
- Speed Up: A Kinaesthetic Programme to Develop Fluent Handwriting
- Handwriting Development Activities developed by Warwickshire NHS Occupational Therapy Team (available on the Shared Drive under English - Handwriting).

6. POSTURE

- Feet - flat on the floor.
- Arms - resting on the forearms without the shoulders being forced upwards. Forearms should ideally be positioned 45 degrees to the table edge away from the body in order to support the shoulder girdle.
- Back - should be almost straight (but slightly leaning forwards).
- Head - upright without the neck poking forwards.
- Weight - evenly distributed between feet and forearms.

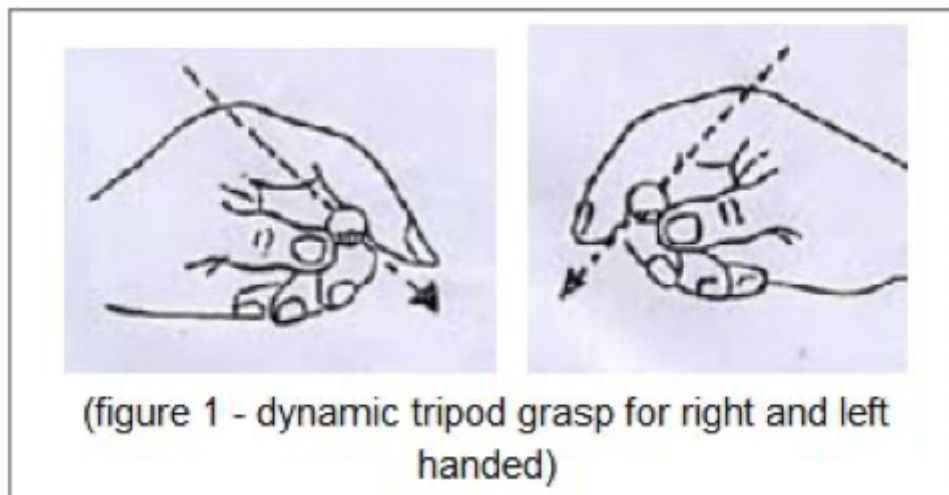
- Non-writing hand - should support the work at the top corner furthest away from the writing hand. This allows the forearm to support the body enabling the writing arm to move lightly across the page.
- Left-handers should have the same posture as right-handers but may wish to use a sloping board to raise their work slightly or use a seat wedge to raise their bodies to allow them to see over their hand.
- Children should be seated so that a left-handed child sits on the left-hand side of a table if next to a right-handed child.

7. PAPER POSITION

Right-handers should position the paper towards their right side and left-handers should position the paper towards their left side, within their body range, not too far and not too close. As they move down the page, right-handers should move the paper up in the same line using their left hand and left-handers should move the paper up in the same line using their right hand, to maintain the correct body posture.

8. PENCIL GRIP

Children need to hold a pen or pencil with an appropriate grip; these need to be explained and modelled. The dynamic tripod grip offers the greatest control and allows the precise movements needed to form letters:



However, this grip does not suit all children. Comfort and ease of movement are more important. As a child grows older, if the grip is not causing pain, discomfort or fatigue, and it is not seriously affecting legibility, it should be left alone.

9. CORRECT FORMATION BEFORE JOINING

Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given the highest priority and this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining.

10. CHILDREN NEW TO THE SCHOOL

Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting should be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Children are shown how to sit correctly and how to hold writing tools comfortably. They are also shown how to position paper correctly. Adaptations will be made for right and left handed children, and resources which need to be copied will be in a position to ensure comfort of view.

12. TYPE OF WRITING IMPLEMENTS TO BE USED

In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children need to use a sharp pencil. After the Handwriting Pen Licence has been awarded children are able to use a blue pen, not a biro. School will provide a pen which is solely for the use of that child. For left-handed children we will offer a suitable left-handed pen for the child to use.

Children can bring a pen from home if it is the same type of handwriting pen or approved by the class teacher.

Teachers may find it appropriate to use handwriting pens during specific handwriting lessons from Year 2.

13. REWARDING PROGRESS

Superstar Writer - in Reception and Key Stage 1 children can be awarded a Superstar Writer pencil to reward them for the effort they are making with their mark-making or handwriting. There is no limit as to the amount of times a child can be awarded this.

Handwriting Pen Licence - children can be awarded a Handwriting Pen Licence for consistently neat, joined, legible writing. All children should have been awarded a Handwriting Pen Licence by the end of Year 4.

Some children try very hard but their handwriting will never be as neat as other children's. Teachers are to use their professional judgement if they think this is the case and award the licence. It may be appropriate for these children to use pencil for some of their written work.

Fountain Pen Licence - in Upper Key Stage 2, and Year 4 in some exceptions, children can be awarded a Fountain Pen Licence for sustained neat, joined, legible writing.

The minimum expectation is that children will be awarded a Handwriting Pen Licence by the end of Year 4 and a Fountain Pen Licence by the end of Year 5.

Pen Licences can be taken away if a child's handwriting isn't neat, joined and legible at the appropriate times.

Teachers are responsible for recording handwriting awards.



Handwriting Stage 3

Joining letters

There are *only two basic joins*: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal).

Each of these joins has three variations

1. Arm join to small letters, e.g. am
2. Arm join to tall letters, e.g. al
3. Arm join to 'sister' letters, e.g. nd

4. Washing line join to small letters, e.g. ow
5. Washing line join to tall letters, e.g. wl
6. Washing line join to 'sister' letters e.g. wa

So children only learn two actions with three variations on each – six in all. Once these have been taught, children practise them over and over until they can write them effortlessly in the handwriting lesson. In order to encourage children to apply this to their own writing see p.189 of the *Get Writing! Handbook*.

1. The arm join to small letters

The arm join should not be too straight, nor too curly. (This depends on the school's adopted style.)

Phrase: 'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter)'.

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the flick gentle – not too round, not too spiky
- ✓ Make the 'arm' sweep up in a gentle curve
- ✓ Write the down stroke of the second letter very straight

Use for joining letters from

a c d e h i k l m n t u

to

e i j m n p r u v w x y z

le lm lu ly

me mi mm mu

ne ni nu ny

te ti tu ty tw

ui ue up

uw uy

ai ae aj am ar

ci ce cu cy

di dr dy de

ee ei em er

he hu hi hy

ie ir ip iw iy

ke ki kn ky

2. The arm join to most tall letters

The arm should still meet the next letter just over halfway up. It should sweep smoothly into the tall letter.

Phrase

'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter) and shoot up to the top'.

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the join like an arm – not too straight, not too round
- ✓ Continue the line up to the top of the next letter
- ✓ Write the second letter carefully

Use for joining letters from

a e i d h k l m n t u

to

b h k l t

ab ah ak al

at eb eh ek el

et ib ik il it

al ch mb th da

3. The arm join to the 'sisters'

The arm should touch the sister letter's forehead and then go to the back of the head as though resting a hand.

Phrase

'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter) – and stroke the sister's head.'

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the join like an arm
- ✓ Continue the arm join over the head of a 'sister' letter – as though a hand is stroking back her hair
- ✓ Go back along the hand
- ✓ Write the second letter carefully

Use for joining letters from

a c d e h i k l m n t u

to

a d g c o q

Examples:

ic ka ko la

ld lo

4. The washing line join to small letters

The washing line should not be too floppy (the clothes get dirty), not too straight (the line breaks in the wind).

Phrase

'Not too droopy, not too tight'.

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the join like a washing line – not too tight or too droopy
- ✓ Write the second letter carefully

Use for joining letters from

v w r f o

to

i j m n p r u v w x y z e

Examples:

m wu

wi wr wy we

ri rr ry re

fi fr fn fu fy

oi or ow ou oy

5. The washing line to most tall letters

The washing line should still meet the next letter just over halfway up. It should sweep smoothly into the tall letter.

Phrase

'Not too droopy, not too tight – and shoot up the next letter'.

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the join like a washing line – not too tight or too droopy
- ✓ Continue the washing line up to the top of the next letter
- ✓ Write the second letter carefully

Use for joining letters from

v w r f o

to

b h k l t

Examples:

wh wl rb

rh rl fl ob

oh ol ot

6. The washing line to the 'sisters'

The washing line should touch the sister letter's forehead and then go to the back of the head – as though stroking back the sister's hair.

Phrase

'Not too droopy, not too tight – and shoot up the next letter'.

Checklist

- ✓ Write the first letter carefully
- ✓ Make the join like a washing line – not too tight or too droopy
- ✓ Stroke back the sister's hair
- ✓ Write the second letter carefully

Use for joining letters from

va vo

v w r f o

to

wa wo

a d g c o q

ra ro rd rg

fa fo

oa oo od og

Other joins

bi gi ji si

yi

APPENDIX 2 - Patterns used in EYFS

If your child is finding it hard to form letters it could be that they need to practise the pre-writing patterns. These are the ones we use at school.

Pattern:

Helps with:



n m h b p



i u y l t



v w x

f j k s – these letters use parts of more than one pattern.