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## HANDWRITING POLICY

### Document Summary

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<b>Appendices:</b>	Two: Multisensory Support for Writing Developing Handwriting
<b>On School Website?</b>	Yes

### Amendment History

Version	Amendment Date	Pg Num	Amendment Summary

### Rationale

'There are three aims that we should have when teaching Handwriting; that it is legible, that it can be speedy and that teaching allows for development of an independent style of writing.'  
(Rosemary Sassoon)

### Aims:

- To prepare children for formal Handwriting sessions by developing fine and gross motor skills.
- To teach children a legible, and joined style of writing at the earliest possible opportunity.
- To provide excellent models of joined handwriting across the school.
- To form letters and numbers correctly.
- To keep size, shape and position of letters and numbers constant.
- To space letters and words consistently with left right orientation.
- To understand and use capital and lower case letters correctly.
- To develop an awareness of the importance of clear, neat presentation.
- For children with Special Educational Needs in handwriting to be supported in their learning and that difficulties in handwriting should not hinder content of writing.
- To take into consideration the particular needs of left handed children.



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## **Guidelines:**

- The Handwriting objectives of the National Curriculum and EYFS will be covered within this Policy.
- All children's handwriting skills will be valued and built upon.
- The development of gross and fine motor skills will be encouraged in the Foundation Stage. Children will develop pre writing skills using a range of tools and working with different media. (See Appendix 1 and 2, Multi-sensory Support for Writing and Developing Early writing.)
- Handwriting skills will be taught regularly, at least once a week and practised daily.
- Children in Reception will initially be taught to write letters with entry and exit strokes so that they will have little difficulty in joining letters when they are ready to do so.
- Children will be taught correct letter formation in stroke related families:

Curly Caterpillar letters	c, o, a, d, g, q, e, f, s
Long Ladder Letters	l, i, t, u, y, j
One Armed Robot Letters	r, n, m, h, b, k, p
Zig Zag Letters	v, w, x, z

- Children will be shown how to hold a pencil correctly and will be encouraged to adopt a correct posture when writing.
- All Teachers will use strategies suggested for left handed children in Developing Early Writing, Pg 161 (copy attached).
- Classroom and school displays will include labels made using the 'Join it' font.
- Children with Special Educational Needs in handwriting will be helped by appropriate Teacher intervention.
- Handwriting will be taught consistently throughout Year Groups. Work will be differentiated to allow children to begin joined writing as they are ready.
- The school will provide appropriate resources for handwriting. Staff will ensure that pencils are kept sharpened.
- Parents/Carers will be informed of the school's Handwriting Policy in our Foundation Stage Literacy Meeting in Term 1.
- Children in Reception will initially learn to form letters according to the Read, Write Inc handbook order.
- Keywords digraphs and blends will be taught using joined handwriting.

## **Assessment**

Handwriting will be assessed using Framework exemplar materials in Key Stage One and Development Matters in the Foundation Stage.



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## **Appendix 1**

### **Multisensory Support for Writing**

- Need to integrate the visual, auditory kinaesthetic and oral capabilities of the child using:-

Sand tray	Feely Bag
Plasticine	Roll and Write - Without ball
Wooden/Plastic letters	Write and lift boards
Chalk Board	Finger Paints
Highlighter Pens	Air writing
Changeable	Salt
Blackboard - powder (talc)	Playdough
Writing in the air - On their backs	Pipe cleaners
Subvocalisation	String
Tracing	Glitter
Shaving foam on black card	Card
Sandpaper	Water in squeeze bottle
Corrugated Card	Paint with thin or thick brushes
Writing on board	Pictograms

### **Use with the teaching of initial letters**

- Look at the letter shape.
- Say and listen to the sound (oral and aural).
- Finger trace around the shape of the letter.
- Repeat and write the letter from memory, saying the sound.

NB The child is not copying the letter but memorizing it and then using the stimulus to retrieve it again from memory.

### **Finer Tracing**

The child can make the letter on card from one of the following:  
Sand, Glitter, String etc

#### **Procedure:**

You draw the letter. He/she watches but you emphasize the shape and sound.

He/she traces it with their finger

He/she traces it firmly with pritt stick

He/she shakes on sand or glitter using the correct movement (excess can be shaken off)

or

He/she applies thick wool or string.



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During the procedure the shape of the letter is discussed and emphasized. The letters can be used for further tactile work eg use two letters. He/she closes eyes and you help him trace over one letter and then identify which it is. If he/she is unsure of the sound, he/she can show you the shape and the sound can be reinforced.

### **The Benefits of Multisensory Teaching**

- Stimulates learning by engaging all the sensory pathways in **simultaneous** use of eyes, ears, speech, touch and movement.
- It enables pupils to utilise their strengths while strengthening their weaknesses.
- It develops co-ordination and motor control.
- It can be adapted for use across the Key Stages.
- It can be used for individuals and with groups.



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## **Appendix 2**

### **Developing Handwriting**

In order that children can eventually acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style, they need to develop skills including:

- good gross and fine motor control
- a recognition of pattern,
- a language to talk about shapes and movements, and
- the main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes, as exemplified by: **l, c, r.**

#### **What is the difference between gross and fine motor control?**

*Gross motor control* is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the arms or legs. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Children can develop gross motor control through much of the physical development curriculum. Activities such as dance, football, use of small apparatus, cycling, gripping climbing frames, building with large-scale construction kits all develop gross motor control.

*Fine motor control* is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers. Fine motor control is best developed through activities which involve small-scale movements. Until children have gained reasonable fine motor control through art and other activities, formal handwriting worksheets are not appropriate. Some Teachers find that boys develop fine motor control more slowly than girls.

#### **Developing Gross Motor Control (Examples.)**

- Consolidate the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements.
- Show children how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders. For example, fix ribbons on to the end of sticks for the children to swirl in the air. Encourage the use of both sides of the body.
- Let the children make different body shapes/actions in response to music to help them to remember the shapes.
- Encourage sky writing with both hands.
- Ask the Teaching Assistant or a confident child to model the movement with her/his back to the rest of the children while you stand behind the children to check they are



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all following the movement correctly.

- Let children make patterns in the air or on each other's backs.
- Make a letter shape in the damp sand tray. Each child in the group traces over the shape, going a little deeper each time. The object is to get down to the base of the sand tray without the sides falling in.
- Reinforce the vocabulary of movement, eg the curly caterpillar, the long leg and the one-armed robot. Talk about the movements as you make them, using read, write inc language. While this is helpful in the early stages, it is purely to help to establish the movement. A letter movement can be reinforced by asking the children to write the letter with their eyes closed.

### **Developing fine motor control. (Examples)**

- Let the children make patterns using pegboards.
- Provide sewing and weaving activities.
- Provide pegs for washing lines.
- Involve the children in chopping and peeling in cooking activities.
- Provide woodworking tools - Pliers, screwdrivers, hammers.
- Use finger rhymes, counting fingers, playing with words and sounds, etc
- Provide small construction toys.
- Structure sand and water play to include sieving, pouring, picking up toys using tools, etc.
- Develop the pincer movement: show the children how to use tweezers to pick up and sort sequins, small beads, etc, sprinkling coloured sand, glitter, salt etc on pictures.
- Let the children use paints, finger paints, etc for making big/small patterns on different shaped paper, eg fish, balloons, kites. Talk about the patterns they make. Focus on developing the curly caterpillar, long ladder and one-armed robot.
- Let the children strengthen their fingers by using clay, playdough, plasticine etc for modelling. They can make letter shapes and patterns using the modelling media.
- Encourage dexterity by asking the children to cut out large letter shapes or patterns. They can use different coloured marker pens for tracing along inside the shapes. Emphasize that circles and curly caterpillars need to be traced from the top and anti-clockwise.



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- Let the children use thick/thin paint brushes and water to paint patterns on walls, fences, etc.

## **What kinds of letter patterns should I teach?**

When you introduce patterns for writing to children, it is useful to focus on features which keep recurring in letter formation, eg,

- focus on patterns which build on the three basic letter shapes: **l**, eg *the long leg*; **c**, eg *the curly caterpillar* and **r**, eg *the one-armed robot*,
- include patterns that move across the body, from left to right,
- use pattern-making for different purposes. Sometimes, allow children to produce the pattern across the entire line. This encourages fluency of movement and helps to emphasize the right to left direction of our writing system. At others times, it may be useful to restrict the number of repetitions to four or five so that the child learns a little about the need to leave spaces between words,
- keep talking about the movements you make in the patterns,
- let the children invent 'sounds' to make as they draw their patterns, eg a bouncing sound as they bounce up from the one-armed robot's feet, a buzzing sound as you draw anti-clockwise spirals, a *shsh* sound as you make wave patterns, etc. and,
- some children find drawing patterns in time to music helpful. Arches can be formed to slow, relaxed music and the tempo can be changed to a marching rhythm and children encouraged to produce angled movements.





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## **Should I use formal worksheets to teach handwriting?**

Not to begin with. While children are experimenting with shapes and letter forms, fluency of movement is most important. Size and neatness do not matter at this stage. Children enjoy experimenting with making patterns in sand or salt, using finger paints, marker pens, etc. and incorporating these into drawings, etc. Once children have had plenty of experience in drawing the letter shapes without constraints, they can then move onto using pencils and finer pens on smaller sheets of paper. For instance, you could cut out some green cabbage leaves for them to draw lots of caterpillars (C) on. The children could then cut a short slit up the stem, and with adult help, fold and staple a number of leaves together to form a cabbage. Likewise they could draw apples lying under a tree (A) or oranges growing in a tree (O). To start with, the children could trace over 'the apples' and you may want to put a mark at the point where the 'letter' begins. Then they can go on and do some more by themselves. This sort of handwriting 'worksheet' has motivational appeal and will help in the development of fine motor control.

## **Why is a good pencil grip important?**

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. If children grip a pencil too tightly, they won't develop a free-flowing movement and they will tire very quickly. Experts agree that 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. Commercial pencil grips, or triangular pencils, can be used to encourage this pencil hold but their use must be monitored as they can be misapplied. Care should be taken that children do not grip the pencil too tightly as this produces tenseness in the arm and shoulder and also increases pressure on the paper.

## **Left-handed children**

At least 10 per cent of the population is left-handed – a slightly higher proportion of males. There is no need for left-handed children to be disadvantaged when writing, if a few simple strategies are employed:

- Model letter formation, sky writing, etc. specifically for left-handed children, with your left hand.
- Make sure that left-handed children sit on the left of right-handed children, otherwise their writing arms will clash.
- Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.
- Left-handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
- Experiment with seat height – some left-handed children may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.
- To avoid smudging their work:
  - left-handed children should be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5 cm away from the end of their writing implement;
  - the pencil should sit in the 'V' between thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb;
  - the wrist should be straight.
- Writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children. They should, therefore, be given more attention in the classroom to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture and pen hold which will deter a fast, fluent and legible hand.