Handwriting Policy

Approved by Governing Body: 27.1.26
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Aims:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- Automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations

There is a requirement at Edinburgh that the teaching of the correct formation of the letters be given highest priority, and that this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining.

Strategy for Implementation:
Handwriting is to be taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with spelling, grammar or phonics objectives. Teaching generally occurs outside English lessons, although shared and guided writing also provide additional opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting.

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important; it is not sufficient to require pupils to copy models from a published scheme or worksheet.

Handwriting is taught daily in Reception and at the beginning of Year 1, three times a week in Years 2, 3, and 4 and twice a week in Year 5 and 6.

The role of all adults:

- To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling.
- To correct formation, grip and accuracy in application.

Four stages are identified and these form the basic organizational structure of handwriting at Edinburgh.

Presentation ↓ Skills →

1. Readiness for writing: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation.
2. Forming letters correctly.
3. Beginning to join.
4. Securing joins.
5. Practising speed and fluency.

Techniques used to teach letter formation and joins:

- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process using correct vocabulary (see glossary in appendix).
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Gross and fine movement warm up
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair – see appendix for guidance
- Teacher modelling
- Children practising independently with a teacher model

After modelling the teacher will circulate to offer direct instruction to those who need support with correct formation.

The daily phonics session in Reception and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation and letter joins etc. at this time.

In order to achieve handwriting aims, the following principles are followed:

- Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, corn flour mix, shaving foam etc.
- Nelson Cursive font is used.
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling.
- As digraphs are introduced, their corresponding joins are taught.
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate.
- Teachers model cursive script on IWB, whiteboards, flip charts etc.
- Displays around the school and classroom should model clear joined handwriting as well as other fonts.
- The cursive font should be displayed on the wall and available at tables in classrooms to ensure familiarity with the style.
- Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible joined handwriting style.

Progress through the key stages:
Reception:

In Reception, children will access a range of learning opportunities to develop essential pre- writing skills.

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.

- Development of balance skills/upper body strength puzzles or crayons and paper on the floor while on stomach, puzzles, crayons and paper on all fours on floor encourages shoulder/hand strengthening, squeezing wet sponges, finger painting, water play, sand play, play dough, rice play, gloop, cooking, cornflour and water.

- They will develop fine motor skills, fastening, buttons, pull up a zip, threading, tweezers, cutting, pinching clay. The children will access a range of activities that requires them to grasp small objects: Making collage pictures using pieces of wool or string, decorating iced biscuits with small cake decorations, posting small items into narrow necked bottles.

- The children will access a range of learning opportunities that will support the development of their shoulder, elbow, wrist stability and bi-lateral use of their hands. They will also develop control of writing implements and develop hand eye co-ordination and fine motor strength. They will learn directional sequences and movements.

- The children will understand that all letters have a starting point and 'end with a hook'. They will learn that letters are part of "Letter Families" and will begin to form recognisable joined-up cursive letters with lead-out strokes, capital letters and numerals.

Key Stage 1:

Building on from Reception, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style and begin to use cursive handwriting in Year One by:

- Starting to join their letters. This is dependent on ability not the age of each child. This is achieved in Year 1 by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.

- Using correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught in line with the school's agreed handwriting style. This continues in Year 2. It is expected that the majority of children will be joining by the end of Key Stage 1.

- Handwriting practice is to be carried out in separate handwriting books but is to be modelled and expected in all writing in all books.

Key Stage Two:

The target for children in Key Stage Two is to produce a fluent, consistently formed style of fully cursive handwriting with equal spacing between the letters and words.

- Children will have regular handwriting sessions using appropriate prepared resources, in the agreed handwriting style. Handwriting practice is to be carried out in handwriting books but handwriting following the agreed handwriting scheme is expected to be used by pupils in all books and across all lessons.

- All children from year 3 upwards use a pen to write. We do not operate a pen license system.

- Children will use their handwriting pen in all work **excluding** the following:
    - mathematics where all work must be completed in pencil
    - science for diagrams, figures and tables
    - Where children are drawing pictures, for example, story maps.

- Children will write in blue ink only.

Inclusion:
These expectations apply to the vast majority of children in our school. Occasionally a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a child who has such specific needs that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress (e.g. a child with physical difficulties writing). Difficulties are addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment which can be decided through consultation with the inclusion team.
Additional handwriting sessions are given to those children whose letter formation, joining or speed require improvement.

Provision for left handed children:
Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers correctly positioned from the point of their pencil.

Celebration and Motivation:
All staff ensure that presentation and handwriting is promoted by:
- Celebrating work of a high standard, including homework, in whole class situations.

- Ensuring good presentation and handwriting is rewarded in line with the whole school behaviour policy (praise, Handwriting Heroes, certificates in assembly).
- Displaying good written work with annotated comments recognising achievement in shared areas and on blogs half-termly.

Half-termly publishing opportunities are built in and identified on curriculum mapping for every year group 1-6 and from the Spring term where appropriate in Reception.

Appendix:
Posture and grip:



