

ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL HANDWRITING POLICY

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Date: 5/9/2018



St John's C of E Handwriting Policy 2018

Our aim is for children to develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting.

We have recently reviewed our handwriting policy and we feel it is important for us to approach handwriting with a consistent style across each Key Stage.

Our handwriting policy is aimed at children who are very early on in their writing and handwriting. Also, for those children who are not already using a legible handwriting style.

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. It is not sufficient to exhort children to improve their handwriting; the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

The following is a brief outline of our agreed policy:

Gross and fine motor skills: activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are essential to the development of good handwriting. Pattern sheets are included in the Appendix; many other materials and suggestions for activities are available in school.

Posture: children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.

Pencil grip: Children should use a tripod grip, and be given constant reminders until this is established. Triangular section pencils and shaped pencil holders are available in school for children who find them helpful.

Position of paper: Left handed children should be encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing, and to reduce smudging later on when they write in ink. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt paper slightly to the left. Paper should be steadied with the free hand.

Paper: Early writers will write on unlined paper so that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing, they will be given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line.

Correct letter formation: Children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to the starting point for each letter, the direction of pencil movement, the shape and orientation of the letter, and the relative heights of the body of each letter, and any ascender and descender. Teaching will be multi-sensory and appropriate to the needs of the child. Our policy is to teach a letter shape which closely resembles print for early readers, and which will not need to be changed as handwriting becomes joined.

Joining letters: Children should be introduced to joined handwriting as soon as they have mastered the shape of individual letters. They will begin by joining vowel and consonant digraphs, to facilitate the recall of spelling patterns. Later, the four basic handwriting joins will be taught. Basic joins will start being taught in year 1.

Correcting mistakes: Use of rubbers is to be discouraged except in the case of work in pencil for display. Otherwise, mistakes in pencil or ink should be crossed out using a single horizontal line, and the whole word rewritten.

Handwriting Scheme

In order to achieve a consistent handwriting approach, we have chosen to use continuous cursive where each letter starts at the line.

Teach Handwriting provides a clear, practical framework for implementing and developing a whole-school handwriting policy. Pupils are actively encouraged to explore different styles of handwriting and develop their own style whilst learning to form letters and joins accurately. The scheme is introduced to children in Year R and continues and develops with children throughout the stages into Key Stage Two.

Handwriting lessons

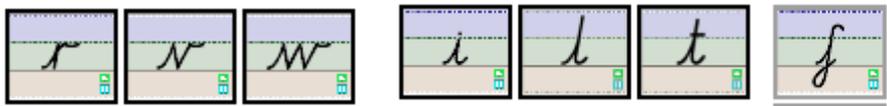
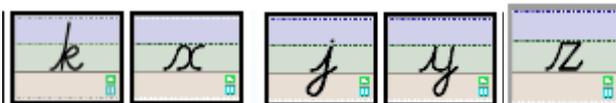
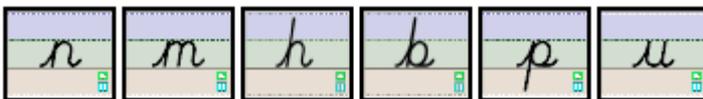
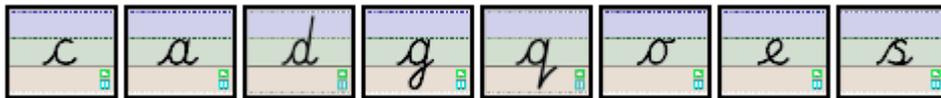
The frequency and length of handwriting lessons will vary according to the age and competence of the pupils. With Early Level pupils it is appropriate to have short sessions at least 3 times a week. This will differ as children enter Key Stage Two depending on their ability. Regardless of subject or lesson, handwriting expectations should be consistently high.

Assessment

All handwriting skills are assessed by the teacher on an on-going basis. Children will also have the opportunity to self and peer assess their work. They may use formative assessment strategies to highlight their best piece of work as well as areas that they feel they need to improve on, for example, using traffic lights or circling best letter/join.

Promoting 'Good' handwriting in children

To encourage children to improve their handwriting we have introduced handwriting progression certificates. Children from Year R to Year 6 can work their way through the descriptors and will receive certificates at each stage. Levels start at level 1 and finish at level 6. When children's handwriting includes correct formation and accurate joins (most of the time) children will receive their pen licence. This can be earned at level 4. When children are using different styles of handwriting for different purposes and they have developed a consistent and personal legible style, they will receive a fountain pen and their final certificate. This is level 6. Teachers should find a way to track this and children should know which level they are on and how to improve. When a child is writing consistently at each level they will receive a certificate. (see handwriting level descriptors).



Ten Benefits of Teaching Cursive Handwriting

1. Relative ease in introducing cursive penmanship to pre-schoolers

Contrary to common beliefs, it is very easy to teach cursive handwriting. It only requires 3 movements: under curve, over curve and up and down. Print handwriting necessitates an even more complex stroke of straight lines and perfect circles.

2.Prevents reversals and confusion of letters

The letters "b and d", "f and t", "g, q and p" are confusing for young children. In cursive, writing the letter "b and d" require a huge difference in directionality.

3.Enhances spelling ability

In cursive, children learn to spell correctly since hand movements create some muscle memory that retains the spelling patterns.

4.Develops internal control systems that can be used as tool for learning

In a cursive writing, the incorporation of movement, pressure and visual processing is a bit multifaceted. This augments visual spacial and coordination skills. In writing lowercase letters in print, six strokes are required against three movements in cursive writing. Fluent movement is developed. With cursive writing practice, the neuron connections in the brain, responsible for organizing other kinds of information and skills, are greatly strengthened.

5.Potential for errors are diminished

Cursive handwriting reduces errors because of the continuous flow of writing. In print, the child picks up the pencil from the paper to start a new letter in a word, thus the potential for mistakes is higher.

6.Improved reading skills

The goal in reading is to read words instead of letters at a time. Cursive writing promotes reading words, instead of a distinct letter. After words, reading will move to sentences. Thus, remedial support for comprehension and reading of words are occurring less. The child reads what he or she writes as "whole words" rather than as individual letters.

7.Enforces the skills for patterns in reading and writing

Unlike print writing, lower case cursive writing starts from the same beginning point. In print, various letter start from the top, down, middle and many different positions. Letter inversions and reversals are eliminated.

8. Prevents erratic spaces between letters and words

In cursive, the flow of writing moves from left to right. It teaches spatial discipline. In print, the child's handwritings are difficult to discern. The spaces between words are so tight. It is hard to tell where the words begin and end.

9.Helps Left Handed Children

In print, the left-handed child proceeds to write printing from left to right but will cover what he has written with his arms. This is called the hook position. In cursive writing, the left-handed child learns to write from bottom up and turns the paper clockwise causing great comfort and legibility.

10.Use as a tool to put thoughts on paper quickly and easily

Mastery of cursive will be to the advantage of any student in the long-run. The child will be able to write faster. The student can get his or her ideas on paper quicker. It can also be advantageous in taking notes from lectures