



# Handwriting Policy



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Person(s) Responsible for Policy: **English Lead, SLT**

Date of Review:

Signed:

Chair of IEB

Head Teacher

### **Introduction**

The Handwriting Policy is intended to enable all children in the school to develop a consistent and legible script that will assist their writing. It follows the guidance of the National Curriculum and is supported by the use of the **Cambridge Penpals** scheme. Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly for children to practice by copying and repeating.

### **Timing**

- Little and often is the most effective approach.
- Handwriting sessions should be included on each timetable and should take place 3 times a week for 15 - 20 minutes including a warm up.
- As well as this there should be at least two extra 'practice times' of 5-10 minutes.

### **Posture and control**

The starting point for any handwriting is for teachers to ensure that all pupils understand the need to hold the pen correctly and for appropriate seating and posture when writing. This must be applied from the moment a pupil picks up a pencil or pen:

- A pencil must be sharp before it is used.
- Tiny pencils should be discarded.
- There are 4 learning stages in the pencil grip, which should be taught, until the final stage is reached. The pencil is always held correctly – resting in the crook of the forefinger and thumb, with control supplied by the middle finger (making fine motor skills crucial).
- Pupils sit with both feet on the floor, sitting up, with a straight back, the chair pushed in a comfortable amount.
- Both arms should rest on the table.
- During writing the non-writing hand (left for right handers; right for left handers) should be in a supportive position to hold the paper down.
- When writing, books should be fully open, not folded over.
- Right handers can tilt their books to the left; Left handers can tilt their books to the right. The tilt should not be more than 45 degrees.
- Left handed pupils – should sit at the end of the table or to the left of a right-handed pupil to avoid clashing elbows.
- A clutter free table is required with adequate space for a number of children to write.

### **Progression of skills**

At Goldfinch Primary, teachers can refer to the interactive computer programme specific to the year group they are teaching. This supports the teaching of handwriting progressively and at the appropriate stage for the pupils in their class. Supporting materials are also available through an interactive programme. This includes warm-up activities for the children to follow along for their specific joining rule.

At Goldfinch Primary we ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time.
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school.
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting.
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist.
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practice and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing.
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it.

- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum.

First, children experience the foundation of handwriting through multi-sensory activities

**Stage 1 Gross Motor Control** - to develop the physical strength in the arm.

- Squeezing or manipulating play dough/plasticine in the hand
- Making large patterns in the sand (using the finger and whole arm movement)
- Using large paintbrushes to paint water on the floor outside
- Letter formation in the air, using whole arm/body movements
- Begin to use scissors
- Pushing and pulling large toys with wheels
- Rolling hoops
- Twirling ribbons
- Hand painting
- Using construction toys
- Sliding objects around
- Employing 'Write Dance' for whole arm movements

**Stage 2 Fine Motor Control** - to develop flexibility and suppleness of fingers and wrist. This control enables pupils to hold their pencil/pen effectively and efficiently.

- 'Hand aerobics' – funky fingers
- Finger painting, finger patterns in sand
- Using a paintbrush
- Using the parachute
- Rolling a ball
- Tearing paper into shapes
- Cotton-bud painting – tilting wrist to use each end of bud
- Use of pegboards
- Removing and then replacing the lid on a pen
- Cutting skills
- Sewing
- Threading of beads onto string

- Correct letter formation is taught, practised, applied and consolidated (EYFS/Y1).
- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y1/Y2/Y3).
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y2–Y6).
- As children practice joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6).
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5).
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6).

### Higher Level Handwriting

As children progress it is very likely that by the end of Year 5 and into Year 6, they have a consistent, legible style and practice exercises need to match their skill level. Activities such as timed tasks, looking at different fonts etc. are all acceptable extension activities. Children should also be given the opportunity to write from memory sentences dictated by the teacher.

Children will also be taught how to adapt their handwriting style for a range of different purposes in their writing.

### Recording

All children are expected to record their weekly handwriting practise in their handwriting books. Books should be marked with a ✓ as the children practise independently and any misconceptions addressed through verbal feedback and modelling.

All teaching staff should consistently model exemplary handwriting on flipcharts, around the classroom and when marking children's books. This forms part of the Learning Environment walk.

### Good intervention includes:

- Re-modelling
- Extension
- Marking and teacher feedback as children practise
- Teachers may send home additional practise as homework.

### Expectations for children

- Sharp pencils are used for most writing until a pen licence is awarded.
- Pencils must be HB.
- Black Berol Handwriting Pens should be used for written work as soon as possible from Year 5 onwards at the point where the teacher judges the child's handwriting to be sufficiently neat and fluent.
- When self-assessing or editing children will use a blue biro pen.
- Errors should be crossed out with a ruled pencil line, not a rubber.
- A handwriting pen can be used when pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 sustain a good level of presentation.
- Pencils should be used in all Maths books and in draft work if appropriate.
- Felt pens should not be used in exercise books for underlining or illustrations although they can be used on paper at the teacher's discretion.

### Letter formation

Teaching the correct formation of the letters should be given highest priority and that this should be achieved by pupils before any attempt is made at joining. Since handwriting is an essential movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed handwriting style by all adults is very important. We will never simply ask children to copy models from a sheet or practice book.

Below is the font that is taught across the school and must be adhered to throughout the school when modelling and teaching writing.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Example letter formation with joins:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

- We do not allow loops to join letters to f, g, j or y.
- The 'k' is particularly difficult for younger children to form correctly and distinguish from a capital 'R'. As such, a standard 'k' may be taught instead.
- Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practice starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter and not joining the subsequent letter. This should be modelled by the teacher during English and Phonics sessions.

### **Classroom organisation and resources**

- Children should have easy access to the appropriate equipment: rulers, pens, pencils, colouring pencils, books.
- Each room has mini whiteboards, whiteboard pens and whiteboard rubbers available for all the children.

Handwriting is always introduced and practised in the lined handwriting books so that children quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases.

### **Equality of opportunity**

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

### **Supporting individual children**

Left-handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their arms bumping each other. Left-handed children should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents children smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. Some children may also need to use different tools to support their handwriting development, for example; pencil grips, a sloping surface or a thick triangular pencil.

SEN children will move through each stage at the time that is right for them but should still be exposed to their age appropriate phase. The overall idea of each new letter formation and relevant task is for everyone to learn.