



## **Handwriting Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy was written to give guidance to parents and staff about best practice in handwriting in our school. Our staff worked together on a style of handwriting based on guidance from the inspectorate and educational courses we attended. The use of cursive writing is a recommendation in the Primary School Curriculum

### **Rationale**

We worked on this area to:

- Have a common approach across the whole school.
- To ensure our work with handwriting follows best practice in the Primary Language Curriculum and guidance from the Inspectorate
- To give information to parents on early writing and our style of handwriting

### **Aims**

- To ensure good letter formation from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class
- To ensure that all children are using the correct pencil grip
- To ensure uniformity and consistency in letter formation from class to class
- To help in the improvement of spelling
- To help develop speed, accuracy and writing fluency
- To facilitate the neat presentation of all written work
- To develop a positive attitude to handwriting

### **Early Writing /Pre Writing**

- Children in Junior Infants are encouraged to scribble and draw. Mark making will be an important activity in the Infant classroom. Materials will be readily available at all opportunities for children to engage in mark making.
- They will complete various pre-writing patterns to strengthen fingers and hands. These patterns will also create an awareness of left-right and top – bottom orientation.
- The children will also engage in other pre – writing activities to strengthen their hands. These will include:
  - Threading and lacing** with a variety of sized laces.
  - Playdough** activities that may involve rolling with hands or a rolling pin, hiding objects such as coins in the play dough or just creative construction.
  - Scissor work** that may involve cutting out various shapes to then paste together to make pictures.
  - Tweezers** to pick up objects.

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**Drawing** or writing or colouring.

Every day activities that require finger strength such as opening containers and jars, zipping coats and so on.

**Finger games** that practise specific finger movements such as Incy Wincy Spider.

**Construction:** Building with Duplo, Lego, Mobilo or other construction toys

**Puzzles and jigsaws**

**Pegboards**

In Junior Infants, two alphabets will be taught – a reading and a writing alphabet.

- A number of techniques are used when forming the letters. These include finger tracing on the table, in the air and painting of letters on sugar paper with just water.
- The children will also be taught the role of their “helping hand” and their “working hand”.
- Pupils will see the teacher model good hand writing at all times.

## Tools / Writing Instruments

The writing instruments the children will use will depend on their readiness for writing:

- In Junior Infants, children will start using Chubby Stump crayons. They will then progress onto the Chublets during the year depending on their readiness.
- Children from Junior Infants to 3<sup>rd</sup> Class will use triangular shaped pencils.
- In 4<sup>th</sup> class, the children will work towards earning a pen licence. This is achieved by a continued high standard of handwriting. Once this is achieved, children are allowed to use a pen for writing exercises. They can continue to use their pencil as well.
- At the beginning of the year senior teachers may get the children to write in pencil and when ready transfer to pen.
- Copies – children will start in Junior Infants in copies with no lines. They will also have opportunity to write in sand, on white boards, write on fancy paper (Aistear)
- Children progress from this to 15A (wideline) copies
- The size of the lines reduces as children’s competencies grow. Senior classes use A11/Number 11 copies.
- Handwriting book series: “Go With The Flow,” (CJ Fallon) is used to supplement the class handwriting. If there is a page where the style of letter formation is different to our own the class teacher will cover that page with a worksheet using the school letter.



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- Tippex is not used, by children, for corrections. Children can draw a bracket around the error – and draw a single line through the mistake. This also allows the teacher to view the mistake.

## **Presentation of Children's Work**

- From 1<sup>st</sup> Class children's copy will have a margin. In all senior classes children will draw margins.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> Class children's work should have a title. The date is also used, by children, from 1<sup>st</sup> Class.
- Handwriting Awards – Certificates are presented at weekly assemblies for handwriting and improvement in handwriting.
- Handwriting may also be displayed on the corridors.

## **Use of Cursive Handwriting**

### Advantages

- Prevents reversals and confusion of letters
- Enhances spelling ability – hand movements create some muscle memory that retains the spelling pattern
- Potential for errors diminished due to continuous flow of writing
- Improved reading skills – Cursive writing promotes reading of words instead of a distinct letter
- Prevents erratic spaces between letters and words
- Able to write faster - cursive style is faster to write than the stop and-start strokes of printing.
- More aesthetically pleasing

We start cursive writing in Junior and senior infants with tails and loops.

Letters are joined in First Class

Children continue to use this form of handwriting throughout the school.

## **To promote good handwriting in the school we:**

- Parents receive a new infant pack with items to strengthen hand muscles – playdoh, scissors, cutting sheets, information on handgrip
- Teachers model good practice to children
- Posters, displays should feature the cursive script we use
- Cursive letters on display in the classrooms
- Certificates presented for good handwriting at assembly
- Pen Licence

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(cursive letters anseo)

## **Differentiation**

- If a child continues to struggle with handwriting despite class teacher and support teacher intervention children may be allowed to use print writing.
- This decision will be made following consultation between class teacher, SET, principal and parents.

## **ICT**

Some children may have extra needs which require them to use Assistive Technology. Application for Assistive Technology will be made by the school principal/SET in consultation with the parents, class teacher and Occupational Therapist.

## **Review and Ratification**

This policy is part of our English Policy  
It will be reviewed annually at a staff meeting to ensure it meets the needs of the school.