



Hill View Primary Academy

Handwriting Policy

At Hill View, we value and respect everyone in our community and work as a team to:

- Provide learning experiences which support and inspire high achievement for all
 - Ensure a caring, safe and welcoming environment
- Promote co-operative and responsible attitudes to make a positive contribution
 - Actively encourage independence and confidence to thrive in a changing world

“Reach for the Stars”

PRINCIPLE

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically.

AIMS

At Hill View Primary Academy our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in accordance with the cursive font.
- Develop flow and speed.
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

Teaching and Learning

- Children should experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the school.
- Develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line and be given support in finding a comfortable grip.
- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.
- Shown how to be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Encouraged to use their skills with confidence and pride in real life situations.

Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

Early Years

Children take part in activities to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil. Then how to use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. They should be given the opportunities to develop their handwriting, using the pre cursive style, to their full potential at that age. This should use the Read, Write Inc scheme which in turn supports their reading.

Key Stage 1

Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. Handwriting should be discussed within and continue to be linked to phonics sessions. Teachers and support staff continue to guide children on how to write letters correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Children should now be leaving spaces between words accurately. By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words using a cursive style. They should be taught to join when they are ready.

Key Stage 2

During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 6, be able to adapt their handwriting for the different purposes, such as: neat, legible cursive hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc.

The three P's

Posture

Poor posture can be a root cause of common handwriting difficulties such as pain or fatigue and will present as a reluctance to write, poor presentation or legibility, slow writing speed and reduced output.

POSTURE GUIDELINES

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table

AND

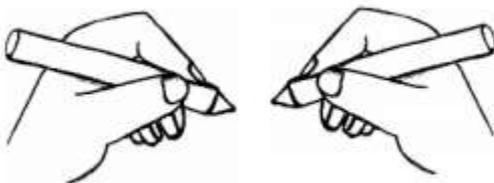
- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered

Pencil

Children and adults can be seen to use a wide range of different pencil grasps, often because they have not learnt differently or as compensation for postural instability elsewhere. An inefficient pen/cil grasp can cause discomfort, impacting motivation, fluency and legibility and create difficulty in sustaining speed.

A dynamic tripod grasp, with the pencil held between thumb and index finger with the middle finger supporting is considered optimal as it provides stability, but allows the precise movements needed to form letters.

To be effective, this grasp must be supported by a stable wrist resting on the writing surface and positioned below the writing line.



PENCIL GRASP GUIDELINES:

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.

- Consider corrective action using adaptive grips or specialist writing tools, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between finger tip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.

Paper

Correct paper position is vitally important during the early years of handwriting development as bad practice can lead to compensatory strategies, such as a hooked-wrist in left-handers, that are difficult to remedy in later years.

TILT

When writing, the wrist and hand will naturally step along a path across the paper, but at an angle to the body. The writing paper should ideally be positioned so that the hand follows this natural path.

For a right hander the top left corner of the paper is angled down to the left.



For a left-hander, the opposite is best, having the top right corner angled down to the right.



PAPER GUIDELINES:

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;

Teachers are aware of the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

Capital letters

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 Writing and Phonics sessions.

The Learning Environment

In all classes, pencil pots with suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Classrooms are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, word lists and dictionaries. Both print and cursive writing models are used throughout displays and working walls.

Handwriting difficulties

Visual stress-Ocular motor (eye movement) difficulties tend to be fatiguing, especially when having to be focussed on an extended writing task. If a child rubs their eyes frequently or complains of headaches when writing, it can be a sign of visual acuity or ocular motor difficulties. An eye test will detect visual acuity difficulties, but other factors can make the eyes work harder than they need to, causing fatigue.

The teacher will be able to identify the best measures for each child, but ocular motor difficulties or other literacy difficulties such as Dyslexia should not be ignored, as left unaddressed will tend to demotivate children to writing regardless of lighting levels.

Recommendations:

- Over-emphasize spaces between words (Make the spaces large enough so that they can't go unnoticed).
- Have the student read the words out loud when writing and say the word "space" when there is a space.
- Consider width of writing area: Some students will have greater success with intermediate versus primary paper based on development of hand skills. It is often easier to produce smaller movements when writing than larger movements.
- Consider highlighting lines or using single/double/triple lined paper.
- If the student has trouble starting on the left side of the paper, place a piece of green tape along the left side of the desk and a piece of red tape along the right side of the design to signal GO and STOP. Similarly, marker lines on the left and right side of each paper can be used.
- Use a physical spacer such as a lolly stick, finger, eraser, or small post-it note.
- Have the student use a slant board to raise his visual field.
- Try a pencil grip or triangular pencil aide to change pressure.
- Provide a model for the child to copy from rather than from the board.
- Try a variety of writing paper which includes extra blank space between lines or have the student skip lines.
- Place a model of the letters typically reversed on the table for easy reference.

Resources

Resources are available in Staff Only folder 'Handwriting.' Our handwriting style should be displayed in every classroom and available on tables for children to refer to. Use the water, boat and sun visual to support your teaching and as a visual reminder for pupils.

The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practice this with their children at home.

Order to teach (see appendix for RWI rhymes)

How handwriting is taught throughout the school (in each year group)

Progression of the teaching of handwriting is based on RWI, Handwriting Stages; see additional guidance for examples of each step for foundation stage and KS1

Foundation Stage

National Curriculum Expectations-

➤ *To use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are formed correctly.*

Step 1

- In RWI lessons and in other learning opportunities, pupils are introduced to each letter shape through the use of a mnemonic.
- These are used to help pupils visualize the letter before the pupils begin to write it.
- The letter shape is modelled by the adult while saying the pure sound and mnemonic. Following this, the letter shape is modelled while saying the pure sound.
- Pre cursive handwriting, adults should model and allow children to practise adding lead-ins and lead-outs to letters, which then ensures the letters start and finish in the correct place for writing to be joined.
- The adult ensures, all pupils have the correct 'tripod grip' before they practise forming the letter shape with a pencil. This should initially be on plain paper until the letter shape is recognisable. Pupils should be supported to develop a strong 'mind' picture of the letter formation.

Step 2

- In lessons, pupils should learn how to place their letters on the line appropriately. Pupils should use wide-lines paper or books with wide lines.
- It is important that the adult now models the pre cursive letter formation on the line so that they can demonstrate and explain how the letter should be placed on the line correctly
Note: the size of the letters may vary from letter to letter.
- Mnemonics should continue to be used to help pupils visualize the letter.

Step 3

- Pupils should develop their letter formation by now focusing controlling the size of the letters and therefore additional lines and visual prompts are introduced e.g. sun, board, water. This is based on *Phonics Handwriting Stage 1b*.

'Boat' letters: a c e i m n o r s u v w x z

'Water' letters: g j p q y

'Sun' letters: b d h k l t f

Year 1

National Curriculum Expectations-

- *To sit correctly at a table, feet flat on the floor, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.*
- *To begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place*
- *To form capital letters*
- *To form digits 0-9*
- *To understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these*

Step 2

- In addition to RWI lessons, in Year 1, pupils have weekly handwriting lessons.
- **In handwriting lessons**, pupils will continue to develop their understanding of the different size of letters in relation to one another by practising them in letter groups rather than by letter size; 'around', 'down', 'curly' and 'zigzag.'
- Pupils practise the individual letter shape using the **cursive principles including lead ins and lead outs in the order listed below.**

'Around' letters: a d g c o q

'Down' letters: l h k b t j m n p r t u y

'Curly' letters: e s f

'Zigzag' letters with all other letters: v w z x

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- In handwriting lessons, pupils are taught capital letters and the difference between capital letters and their matcher lower case letter.
 - Links to the boat, water and sun letters should be made to support pupils visualizing the size of the letters.

Note: Pupils in Year 1 may progress onto 'Step 6'

Year 2

National Curriculum Expectations-

- *To be able to form individual letters correctly, so establishing good handwriting habits from the beginning.*
- *To revise and practise correct letter formation frequently.*
- *To write with a joined, cursive style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.*

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- **In lessons**, adults continue to model the letter shapes using the schools adopted cursive letter shapes with lead in and lead out (individual letters), and when writing more than one letter, teachers model using the adopted joined cursive script. Pupils are expected to begin to join the letters, following the introduction of the joins.

Note: This may have already begun in Year 1

- In Year 2, pupils continue to have weekly handwriting lessons.
- **In handwriting lessons**, pupils will be introduced/recap the two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal).

In further handwriting lessons, it is advised that handwriting and spelling are taught alongside one another to promote this being a transferable skill. All handwriting skills should be modelled during the writing of spelling words.

If adults identify pupils needing additional practise of a specific handwriting skills, teacher re-model, explain and teach as necessary.

Note: This might take the form of 1:1 practise, group or whole class practise to ensure pupils expectation of handwriting remains consistent.

When pupils achieve a neat, legible and joined cursive script with lead in and lead outs, pupils can be awarded their pencil or pen license. (See handwriting policy, celebration of handwriting.)

Key Stage Two

Year Three and Four

National Curriculum-

- *To use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined*
- *To increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting*

In Year 3 the majority of pupils will:

- continue to use joined cursive handwriting throughout their independent writing
- develop writing fluency, speed and stamina
- produce writing that sit appropriately on the line.

In Year 4 the majority of pupils will:

- use joined cursive script
- write ascenders and descenders in the correct place and on the lines.
- have automaticity (e.g. not having to think about formation)

Year Five and Six

National Curriculum-

- *To write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:*
 - *choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters*
 - *choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.*

In Year 5 and 6 the majority of pupils will:

- use a consistent size and spacing
- write with a cursive, legible, accurate style
- have an awareness of the following three speeds of writing:
 1. Speed one: slower, neat writing for letters and presentation.
 2. Speed two: Fast and legible everyday writing that others can read.
(*This is the style that is used most regularly*).
 3. Speed three: Very fast note writing - not very tidy but can be read by the writer.
- Pupils choose the writing implement that is best suited for the task
(*e.g. a pencil for quick notes, a pen for letter.*)

When to teach

EYFS and Year 1 – taught explicitly every day and practiced through practical and fine motor activities.

Year 2 – Taught 3 times a week and practiced daily e.g. during morning tasks

KS2 – Weekly taught lesson approx. 20 minutes linked to spellings. Refer to the **additional guidance for examples of each step for boosters or interventions where additional practice is needed.**

Assessment

This is an effective way of giving students the knowledge of elements of good handwriting and so enable them to make improvements in their own writing. At the end of every half term students should write a few lines or a pangram (a sentence that contains all 26 letters)

e.g.

The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

This will also allow staff to identify successes and areas for development.

All students are expected to record an assessment sentence every half term, in the back of their books. The outcomes of the assessment pieces should inform future handwriting practice lessons and possible targets for individuals or 1:1 or small group interventions, this will be regularly monitored by the writing team and the senior leadership team.

Achievements

In Year 1, when children are writing all letters accurately and cursive, where all ascenders and descenders are consistent and sizing is accurate with capital letters being distinguished, they will achieve their perfect pencil – this should be awarded in Wizard assembly alongside a certificate of achievement.

During the final year of KS1 when children are writing all above letters accurately and cursive or have been doing it consistently for a period of time with their perfect pencil, where all ascenders and descenders are consistent and sizing is accurate with capital letters being distinguished, they will achieve their perfect pen – this should be awarded in Wizard assembly alongside a certificate of achievement.

In lower KS2 when handwriting is presented in a neat and controlled way with letters written in a consistent size and ascenders (letters which raise above the line) and descenders (letters which descend below the line) clearly formed, children will receive their pen licence. This means they will be able to write using a handwriting pen (pencil will always be used for mathematics). This should be one provided by the school to ensure it is black ink and consistent. This should also be given alongside a certificate.

Once a child has earned their pen licence this will stay with them as they move into a new year group (for example from Year 3 to 4), where the expectation for the high standards of handwriting presentation will be clear.

If you feel a child is showing success in their handwriting and are ready for their perfect pencil/perfect pen and certificate then please send them to share their writing with the year lead or a member of the writing team to agree.

The aim is for all children to achieve success in their handwriting and be writing at a consistently high standard in black ink as they progress through to KS2. Where there are concerns in a child's progress in their handwriting practice please seek advice from the writing team or a member of the SEND team.