**Dromore Road**

**Primary School**



**Handwriting Policy**

**2018**

**AIMS**

1. To give children appropriate guided instruction and practise to foster an efficient, fluent, comfortable and legible handwriting style.

2. That the children will develop an awareness of the importance of handwriting as a means of communication and be motivated to write well.

3. That the children will derive pleasure and a sense of satisfaction in presenting a piece of writing for aesthetic and decorative values.

4. That the children should realise that they will use different handwriting skills, appropriate to the task and audience.

**CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

All teachers should be familiar with this handwriting policy and demonstrate good handwriting skills to their class on a regular basis.

* Handwriting is a motor skill so teachers’ priority will be to help children, from the very beginning, to learn consistent, correct movement and letter formation.
* The school have a ‘semi-cursive’ style of writing, which will meet the needs of children requiring a legible, fluent, fast hand for normal use in school, post primary and daily life.
* Careful observation is necessary to ensure that movements for creating and joining letters are being made correctly. Bad habits should be identified and corrected as early as possible.
* Short, regular practice sessions should be timetabled.
* Other learning experiences which assist the development of this skill need to be provided for children who are at the early stages of acquiring manipulative control e.g. tracing, use of scissors, manipulating clay and playdough.
* Ensure children have good light and the correct height of chair.
* A consistent terminology should be used to describe and discuss handwriting. Lower case letters will be referred to as ‘small’ letters, upper case letters will be ‘capital letters’. Exit strokes are ‘flicks’ (Year 1-3) but from Year 4 onwards letters will be referred to as ‘lower case’ letters and ‘upper case’ letters. The children will also make reference to ‘ascenders’ and ‘descenders’ as well as the ‘first’, ‘second’ ‘third’ and ‘fourth’ joins. The children will refer to letters that do not join as ‘break letters’. Appendix 1.
* Children should have adequate opportunities to recognise and use different styles of writing for different purposes – a) a fast hand for personal use, where the writing is for the writer only e.g. notes, brainstorms. b) a fast, neat hand for normal use, which is easily legible by other people. c) display purposes.
* Classrooms will have displays of well mounted writing from time to time to showcase handwriting skills.
* Key Stage 2 children will work towards a pen license which will be awarded when the teacher observes neat, correctly joined handwriting used consistently.
* During Key Stage 2, children may have the opportunity to refine this style by producing handwriting for special occasions, display work and other art work.
* At every stage children should be encouraged to assess their own writing with a view to improvement. Handwriting competitions such as Newry Show may be used to provide incentives and rewards.

Children need to be taught the posture, paper position and pen hold that will help them write comfortably, as individuals.

Correct movement is recognised by:-

* The tip of the pencil pointing towards the top left hand corner.
* Pencil should be held, between thumb and forefinger, supported by the middle finger, with a light but firm grasp. (allow for idiosyncrasies if writing is correctly formed, legible and fluent).
* Correct position of paper – tilted up to the left for right handed children; tilted to the right for left handed children.
* Slight flexing of hand knuckles, thumb and wrist, but no movement of finger knuckles. Hand should be on its side with main weight borne by forearm – the hand will only rest on page enough to steady it as it moves.

Common faults to identify and correct

* Flexing of finger knuckles (Right handed children)
* Pencil or pen held too near the point.
* Pen held too far from point – difficult to manipulate.

Practical rules to help left-handed children

* Place the paper to the left side and slant as necessary so the writer’s view is not obstructed and his/her arm can move freely.
* Use a soft pencil, and later on, a fibre tip pen to avoid smudging.
* Sit the left-hander on the non-writing side of a neighbour so they do not bump elbows.

Correction of errors

When using pencils, children will be encouraged to erase the mistake neatly and rewrite the word.

Children are not allowed to bring correction fluid to school so when using pen, they will correct errors by putting one horizontal line through the mistake and rewriting it above or immediately afterwards. Brackets will not be used.

If handwriting is an issue and intervention is required, the next steps may be to provide support through a sensory and motor skills support group. The teacher may need to record their concerns on a record of concern form and discuss with the SENCO. These children may avail of occupational therapy support to develop muscle strength and fine motor skills.

1. **Foundation Stage (Year 1 & Year 2)**

**Year One**

**Materials:**

Variety of blank paper, whiteboards, Nelson Handwriting Workbook Starter A and B, Nelson frieze and flash cards. Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book.

**Tools:**

Giant crayons, paintbrushes, large triangular pencils, whiteboard pens and rubbers,

pencil grips, sharpeners, chalk.

1. Activities to develop manipulative skills, hand to eye co-ordination and left to right orientation:

* Play using beads, blocks, jigsaws
* Cutting out activities with scissors
* Modelling with dough
* Free painting to encourage sweeping movements
* Finger plays and action rhymes.

Pre-writing and writing skills taught:

All skills will be taught using a multi-sensory approach – includes visual comparison, kinaesthetic awareness and a simple oral explanation (e.g. down, up, over)

* Practising writing patterns on white boards
* Creating/producing scribbles, lines and patterns using a range of writing tools
* Tracing, completing, copying and repeating writing patterns and individual letter formation including flicks in Nelson handwriting booklets, teacher prepared handwriting booklets, sheets and in their classwork books.
* Practising writing letters correctly and progressing to short words
* Becoming aware of spaces between words.

Emphasis will be on the correct point of entry, and the direction of the strokes of basis letters.

All exercises will be supervised so that children learn the correct point of entry direction/orientation and movement of letters.

Children will begin to appreciate that writing is a means of communication and has a set of standard symbols which they need to learn.

Teachers will demonstrate and encourage the correct pencil grip with all writing tools.

**Year Two**

**Materials:**

Variety of blank paper, whiteboards, introduction of wide lines – 15mm, teacher produced worksheets and Nelson Handwriting Workbook Starter C and Nelson Reinforcement Sheets. Nelson frieze and flash cards and Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software.

**Tools:**

Whiteboard markers, HB pencils, rubbers, pencil grips, sharpeners, large triangular pencils.

**Reinforcement of Y1 skills as required:**

* Correct pencil grip
* Left to right orientation
* Correct letter height including ascenders/ tall letters and descenders/ hanging letters
* Formation of upper case letters
* Formation of numbers and number names 0-9
* Practising writing letters correctly and progressing to short words
* Correct spacing between letters and words
* Increasing control over the shape, size, orientation and direction of letters
* Identifying and producing most uppercase (capital) letters and lowercase (small) letters, legibly
* Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

**Key Stage One (Year 3 & Year 4)**

**Year Three**

**Materials:**

Blank paper, wide lines – 13mm, whiteboards, Nelson Handwriting Booklet Workbook 1A and 1B, Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software.

**Tools:**

HB pencils, rubbers, sharpeners, whiteboard markers

Progression of Handwriting Skills:

* Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another (Letter family sets 1-4; Set 1- c, o, a, d, g, f, s, q, e. Set 2- i, l, t, j, u, y. Set 3- b, h, k, m, n, p, r. Set 4- v, w, x, z.)
* Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
* Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.
* Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another are best left unjoined as break letters.
* Introduce first join to letter sets 1-4
* Introduce second join to letter sets 1-3
* Introduce third join to letter sets 1-3
* Introduce fourth join to letter sets 1-2
* Introduce break letters.

**Year Four**

**Materials:**

Lined paper – 12mm, whiteboards, Nelson Handwriting Booklet Workbook 2A and 2B, Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software

**Tools:**

HB pencils (hexagonal preferred) and rubbers, whiteboard markers, sharpeners

Introduction of joined script:

* Practise printing all letters in upper and lower case and be aware of when it may be necessary to do so.
* Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another are best left unjoined as break letters.
* Teach first join
* Teach second join
* Teach third join
* Teach fourth join
* Practice using punctuation correctly.
* Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, for example by making sure that the down strokes of their letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are sufficiently spaced so that ascenders and descenders do not touch.

**Key Stage Two (Year 5, Year 6 & Year 7)**

**Year Five**

**Materials:**

Lined paper – 8mm, Nelson Handwriting Pupil Book 3, Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software

**Tools:**

HB pencil, rubbers, sharpener

Development of joined script:

* Continue to practise all joins and the break letters looking at consistency of sizing and spacing through regular practice sessions using joined script
* Reinforce and practise patterns, letter groups, words, paragraphs and short poems specifically chosen to practise rhythm, breaks and joins.
* Writing should ideally slope slightly to the right. Children should be encouraged to develop a comfortable style which is legible, uniform, consistent and is joined confidently

**Year Six**

**Materials:**

Lined paper – 8mm lined paper, Nelson Handwriting Pupil Book 4, Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software

**Tools:**

Berol Handwriting pens, HB pencils, rubbers, sharpeners

Development of joined script using handwriting pens:

* Children will practise patterns, letter groups, words, sentences and passages using pens
* Short, frequent handwriting lessons using pens will be needed to give the children adequate opportunity to develop the skill using permanent tools. Children will gradually make more use of pens as they are awarded their pen license.
* Children will revise all joins and work on fluency and speed
* The correct procedure for correcting mistakes will be taught as above.

**Year Seven**

**Materials:**

Lined paper- 8mm, Nelson Handwriting Pupil Book 5, Nelson Handwriting Resource and Assessment book. Nelson Handwriting software

**Tools:**

Berol Handwriting pens, HB pencil, rubbers, sharpener

Fluency of joined script using handwriting pens:

* In preparation for post-primary, children will be encouraged to continue to develop their skill in joined script and to increase their speed in preparation for increased writing demands.
* Development of a fast efficient everyday stroke
* They will have regular short practice sessions and be encouraged to take care with the presentation of their work. They will have opportunities to use their handwriting skills to produce colourful and attractive posters e.g. to publicise coming events in our school – Autumn Fayre, Fun day etc.

**REVIEW OF POLICY:**

A commitment should be made to the review and monitoring of the policy document within a three year cycle as required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of BOG) Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Literacy Co-ordinator) Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**

First join- diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of the next.

Eg. a to m, i to y, e to d.

Second join- diagonal join from the bottom of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

Eg. c to h, e to f.

Third join- horizontal join from the top of one letter across to the top of the next.

Eg. o to w, w to a, f to o.

Fourth join- join from the top of a small letter to the top of an ascender.

Eg. o to b, w to l, o to k.

Break letters- do not join - b, g, j, p, q, x, y, z, s

Ascenders- tall letters - b, d, h, k, l, f, t

Descenders- hanging letters- f, g, j, p, q, y