



HANDWRITING POLICY

(non-statutory)

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At Newlands we believe handwriting is very important in developing pupils' self esteem, pride and ability to communicate effectively. Pupils will be taught to develop a style of handwriting that follows the conventions of written English, which is fluent, joined and legible.

Pupils should develop an awareness of the importance of presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively. We recognise the need for a consistent approach from the Foundation Stage to Year 6. The following guidelines promote a consistent approach, aimed at improving handwriting progression at Newlands School.

Introduction

Handwriting is an essential movement skill that contributes to the production of work and the composition of children's writing. It must be actively taught, not simply practised. From Reception year, pupils are taught handwriting as part of the Literacy curriculum through discrete weekly lessons, reinforcement sessions and application in all areas of the curriculum.

As pupils learn the flow and pattern of words, without having to take their pen or pencil off the paper, the shape of words becomes an automatic movement thus reinforcing correct spelling patterns.

The following guidelines are aimed at providing a consistent, structured approach across the school, ensuring all staff are aware of where children have come from and what they are aiming for.

Statutory Requirements

Primary Framework for Literacy (Strand 12 - Presentation):

Foundation Stage (ELG- 'writing'):

- write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others.
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Year 1:

- Write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.
- Write with spaces between words accurately.
- Use the space bar and keyboard to type their name and simple texts.

Year 2:

- Write legibly, using upper and lower case letters appropriately within words, and observing correct spacing within and between words.
- Form and use the four basic handwriting joins.
- Word process short narrative and non-narrative texts.

Year 3:

- Write with consistency in the size and proportion of letters and spacing within and between words, using the correct formation of handwriting joins.
- Develop accuracy and speed when using keyboard skills to type, edit and re-draft.

Year 4:

- Write consistently with neat, legible and joined handwriting.
- Use word processing packages to present written work and continue to increase speed and accuracy in typing.

Year 5:

- Adapt handwriting for specific purposes, for example printing, use of italics.
- Use a range of ICT programs to present texts, making informed choices about which electronic tools to use for different purposes.

Year 6:

- Use different styles of handwriting for different purposes with a range of media, developing a consistent and personal legible style.
- Select from a wide range of ICT programs to present text effectively and communicate information and ideas.

Progression Year 6/7:

- Review the legibility and neatness of their handwriting.
- Set personal targets to improve presentation, using a range of presentational devices, on paper and on screen.

APP Handwriting Progression

Level 1:

Most letters correctly formed and orientated.

Spaces between words.

Upper and lower case sometimes distinguished.

Use of ICT, e.g. use keyboard to type own name.

Level 2:

Letters generally correctly shaped but inconsistencies in orientation, size and use of upper/lower case letters.

Clear letter formation, with ascenders and descenders distinguished, generally upper and lower case letters not mixed within words

Level 3:

Legible style, showing accurate and consistent letter formation, sometimes joined.

Early morning tasks could be an appropriate time for children to practise and reinforce their handwriting.

First steps

From the Foundation Stage, pupils are taught cursive letter formation with entry and exit strokes. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils will be starting to join letters and this skill will continue to be developed across Key Stage 2. Individual programmes of support will be provided where appropriate to support children with SEN.

Using a range of multi-sensory methods to promote the letter formation will aid children's handwriting skills, promoting letter patterns and helping to embed these patterns to memory. Handwriting will form part of the daily phonics session when new sounds are introduced.

Starting points may include:

- Skywriting using both hands to embed the fluency of the letter shapes.
- Making the letters with their bodies.
- Creating letter patterns on their peers' backs or palms.
- Writing with fingers in sand trays or paint trays.
- Mark making or creating lines with different tools.
- Drawing circles clockwise and anti-clockwise.

Whilst children should be given opportunities to produce letter patterns across an entire line to encourage fluency of movement, this should be used sparingly as letters can become hurried and inaccurate. Patterns in short, word-length chunks are best.

Joined up writing

Pupils should begin joining up writing once they can confidently and accurately reproduce each letter as taught in the handwriting sessions. The correct procedures for joining must be taught and modelled by the teaching staff.

Joined up writing increases the writing speed allowing pupils to produce more in a given time. This also aids note taking, correct spellings of words as well as improving their presentation skills.

Provision for SEN pupils

There is a range of equipment and resources available in school for pupils who require additional support with their handwriting. Please speak to the school's SENCO regarding such issues.

Assessment

Once every term pupils should complete an independent piece of writing that will be used to inform the teacher's APP judgement. This piece of writing will also be used to assess pupils' handwriting. Targets for groups of children can then be covered in the taught sessions.

Pupils at Newlands will be taught the conventions of written English including:

- 1) The 'tripod' grip should always be encouraged and taught from the start. Larger pencils are available in school to help pupils who may find this grip difficult initially.
- 2) Left-handed writers should use the same 'tripod' grip. They should sit to the left of right-handed pupils to avoid elbow clashing. Their paper will need to be turned to the right, rather than the left to enable better sight of their work.
- 3) Children will be taught cursive letter formation with entry and exit strokes from the Foundation Stage. Once letters are correctly and confidently formed, pupils will be taught and encouraged to write joined up. This is expected at the end of Key Stage 1 but may occur earlier or later depending on the individual pupil.
- 4) Words must be spaced regularly here and the size and shape of letters must also be accurate, with no mixing of lower or upper case letters within a word.
- 5) Ascenders and descenders should be clear and parallel. Light purple handwriting books are used throughout the school to help pupils create these letters accurately.
- 6) Handwriting Implements:
All pupils will use pencils to write with (excluding multi sensory implements where appropriate).

Children whose handwriting is consistently joined and presented to a high standard will be awarded a 'pen license' by the Head teacher in Celebration assembly. This license will give pupils the right to write in pen in all their work **except** their maths books. Maths books must always be written in pencil. Black ink is to be used throughout the school. Errors must be crossed out with a single, straight line.

- 7) Children who come to Newlands part way through a year with a different, but equally acceptable style of writing should not be made to change their style provided their writing is joined, well formed and legible.
- 8) In Years 5 and Year 6, children should begin increasing the speed of their writing. Example activities can include:
 - 'Mad Minute Cursive' for 1 to 3 minutes – writes sentences against the clock and improves on personal best times.
 - Number of letters/words written per minute.
 - Use a variety of things to write such as: "the red fox jumped over the lazy dog" or "pack my box with five dozen lacquer jugs" - every letter once.