

## St Helena's CE Primary School

"It is our responsibility to learn and achieve our dreams as a family."

Opening minds, widening horizons and developing a better world

### Handwriting and Presentation Policy

*Valuing Compassion, Community, Endurance, Friendship, Hope, Respect, Thankfulness, Wisdom*

#### Aims

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation to communicate meaning effectively
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
  - Having a correct pencil grip
  - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
  - Forming all letters correctly
  - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

Research has shown that there is a relationship between HOW a child writes and WHAT they write.

#### Teaching time

There should be a **daily, discrete** handwriting lesson **for every child** as well as time to apply their skills across the curriculum.

Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention.

Specific faults should be identified as soon as they occur, dealt with one at a time and the way to change should be made explicit to the child either by demonstration or by some other means. Praise should be given whenever appropriate and as often as possible.

#### Model used

We use the Read, Write, Inc. Handwriting Scheme (see appendix 1, in a separate folder on the V Drive, for the letter formation and instructions). Children must be taught individual letters first so that **they see them as individual units BEFORE learning to join**.

#### Techniques for teaching letter formation and joined handwriting

- To support fluent movement, handwriting patterns can be very helpful encouraging children to work from left to right

- Model good handwriting all the time by visual demonstration, manual guidance and prompts. Some children can imitate movements made on the SMART board but others will need a teacher alongside. Some will remember from only one demonstration but others may need many.
- Demonstrate as the child watches and listens
- Talk through the process using the RWI language (see Appendix 4, folder on the V Drive)
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air whilst holding their writing tool
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

### Getting ready to write

#### **Seating and posture**

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

**See appendix 2 for warm up exercises.**

#### **Pencil grip**

- Children should write with a reasonably sharp pencil. A pen will be introduced with a rounded nib when appropriate.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil for some children with SEND.

*For right handers*

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

#### *For left handers*

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

#### Paper and erasers

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease.

Children should start writing on plain paper then as their handwriting improves lined exercise books should be introduced.

In the EYFS adults will have erasers available for their use with children.

In KS2 children will be actively discouraged from using an eraser. Errors will be crossed out with one ruled line.

#### Early Years

Before starting to write formally children need to acquire a range of perceptual and motor skills. Gross and fine motor control exercises and games will be an essential part of the children's learning to build shoulder and finger strength and flexibility.

Pre-writing activities - see Appendix 3 for Handwriting 1<sup>st</sup> Move advice

Does the pupil have sufficient pencil control/co-ordination to begin to form letters?

Adult demonstrate the following then ask the child to imitate freehand

- horizontal lines, left to right, both straight and wavy
- straight scribble
- round and round scribble
- a diagonal cross
- a horizontal/vertical cross
- an anti-clockwise circle

- a clockwise circle
- a vertical line in a downward direction
- a vertical line in an upward direction

There will be a designated area in the classroom where all children will write on a variety of materials, plain paper, lines, whiteboards, chalkboards with a variety of pens, pencils, paint and chinks. Outside, the children will enjoy big scale writing on the playground using chinks and large paintbrushes.

## **Year 1**

Children should start the year as above. **When they are ready**, they should move on to wide lined exercise books. Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time and then used throughout the child's primary career.

## **Year 2 - 6**

The majority of children should be ready to start the year in narrow lined books. For some children they will need to continue on wide lined books until ready and for a small number of children, particularly those with SEND it may be necessary to use an A4 plain book.

All KS1 and 2 children should be allowed to use unlined paper and line-guides *from time to time* so that they can practise applying their skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

Children will be rewarded for their effort and perseverance at mastering legible and neat handwriting used across the curriculum. All adults will have the highest expectations for every child during every writing opportunity. If their writing is not presented as well as they can, then the children will be asked to re-do the work at another time.

## Assessment

Senior leaders will monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly. The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly formed, shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the letters slanted/ sloped correctly (in particular ascenders and descenders need to be parallel)
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the National Curriculum?

## Y5 and Y6

Are the children writing with fluency and speed?

Two kinds of handwriting -

- one is good quality and neat and is used for more formal purposes when the occasion demands.
- the other is a fast note taking hand which is used when time is of the essence but it is still legible.

### Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons - the adult must circulate, monitor and intervene. Adults also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the left handed child sitting in the correct place at the table?
- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Is the paper correctly orientated?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the National Curriculum.

### Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Remember to use **Look - Say - Cover - Write - Check**

The child:

Looks at the word carefully

Says the word

Covers the word so that it can't be seen

Writes the whole word from memory

Checks the word is written correctly

If not, repeat.

## Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be evaluated annually.

Appendix 1 is a separate RWI handwriting programme available on V drive and website.

## Appendix 2

- EYFS - 1<sup>st</sup> Move - Handwriting
  - Developing Early Writing - Section 3 - Handwriting
- <http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/developing-early-writing>  
[http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/fonts/sas/pri\\_lit\\_dev\\_wrtng\\_005501.pdf](http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/fonts/sas/pri_lit_dev_wrtng_005501.pdf)

## FINGER EXERCISES FOR WRITING

**Flicking a ping pong ball** strengthens the forefinger (or long finger) and thumb

**Playdough** is a great way to exercise fingers. Encourage children to use both hands to make 'pots' or 'nest' and then to roll small balls to put 'eggs' in the nest or 'peas' in the pot. Rolling out playdough is excellent [http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/fonts/sas/pri\\_lit\\_dev\\_wrtng\\_005501.pdf](http://www.sassoonfont.co.uk/fonts/sas/pri_lit_dev_wrtng_005501.pdf) for developing wrist muscles.

**Posting** coins in a money box exercises the thumb and index finger. Once children can do this one coin at a time, encourage them to hold two coins in their hand and to post them in the money box one at a time without letting the other coin fall. Challenge them against the clock.

**Crumpling** tissue paper into tiny balls using one hand and throwing them into a bin, exercises the fingers against the thumb. Keep a score of 'hits'.

**Cutting out** requires the child to coordinate the thumb, middle finger and index finger. Don't expect them to cut out along a line. Practise snipping a thin 'worm' of playdough or a thin cardboard strip to make tiny 'sweets'. This is the simplest task as the scissors only need to open and close once. Then progress to wider card where the children have to make two cuts before the strip is cut. When the child can make two consecutive cuts then introduce cutting along a line.

**Holding a small piece of paper under their 'ring' finger and little finger**, can they waggle their thumb, index finger and middle finger without letting the paper slip? Many children find isolating the Tripod fingers very tricky.

Placing **Pegs** around an egg box exercises index finger, middle finger and thumb.

**Tearing** paper requires children to use their tripod fingers. First tear it into strips and then tear the strips into squares (use the squares for collage).

**Rolling** a tennis ball up one leg across the tummy and down the other leg using a 'walking motion' with the fingers is a great hand exercise. Have races to see who can do it without dropping the ball.

**Tapping** each finger of the writing hand in turn against the thumb.

**Thumb pulls/ tug-of-war-** make an "O" by touching thumb tip to tip of index finger. Do the same with the other hand, then link both "O's" together like a chain. Try to have a tug-of-war to pull them apart. Try using the thumbs with other fingers to do the same thing. This can also be done with a partner.

**Rubber band rings-** put small rubber bands (for hair) on the fingers like rings. Then they have to use their thumb to get the "rings" off without help from the other hand.