

# St. Martin's Catholic Primary School



## Handwriting Policy.15

*This policy should be read in the light of our:*

- ❖ **Our Mission** to foster the personal development and academic achievement of each child by providing a caring and creative environment that adheres to the foundations and values of the Catholic Faith.
- ❖ **Our Vision** to inspire all to lead, through love and service, the life of purpose and excellence that God wants for us.

Approved by Committee:

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June 15

Approved by FGB

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July 15

Next Review date:

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March 18

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## **Handwriting Policy**

### **Aims**

As a school our aims in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes by;
  - Having a correct pencil grip.
  - Forming all letters correctly.
  - Knowing the size and orientation of letters.
  - Be able to write quickly and be legible.
  - Use their skills with confidence in real life situations.

### **Teaching time**

There should be a minimum of 2 x 15 handwriting lessons each week as well as time to practice.

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

### **Assessment**

Phase leaders in team meetings and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- 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 Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

## **Individual assessment**

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

- Is the child's posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

## **Order of Teaching and learning**

### **Foundation**

Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters (with ascenders/descenders) in the cursive style- most of which are correctly formed.

Learn letter formation using shape families

Long ladder letters      *l i j t u g*

One-armed robot letters    *r b h k m n p*

Curly caterpillar letters    *c a d e g o q f s*

Zigzag letters              *z v w x*

Supporting activities

- tracing patterns
- tracing
- copying over (letters, numbers and words)
- copying under (letters, numbers and words)

## **Year One**

Begin to write most letters, correctly formed and orientated, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip.

Write with spaces between words accurately.

Begin to form and use the four basic handwriting joins.

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. *in, on, un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung*
2. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. *as, ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk*
3. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. *on, od pg re ve oon oom*
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. the 'eb' in *z-eb-ra wl vl of ff fl flo*

- Practise capital letters

## **Year Two**

Write legibly using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing within and between words.

Further practise of all above skills.

Supporting activities

- Match and copy captions
- Trace and copy patterns
- Copy words
- Copy sentences
- Write out menu
- Copy poem
- Alphabetical ordering

## **Year 3**

Further practise of the four handwriting joins

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)

- ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter e)
- ow ov ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- od oo og (practising joining from the letter o)
- er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay
- o you oi
- re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
- fu wu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
- ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
- ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)

### **Supporting activities**

- copy words
- copy sentences
- copy poems
- match questions to answers

### **Year 4**

- ning ping ting
- oc od oo
- ake ome are
- fla flo fle
- who wha whe
- ie in il
- inly ky ny
- ap ar an
- ick uck ack
- practise writing with a slope

- he
- we
- re
- fte fir fin
- wra wri kni (silent letters)
- ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee
- ew ev ex (spacing)
- th ht fl (proportions)
- ac ag af
- Capital letters
- Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘

### **Supporting activities**

- Copy words, sentences, poems
- Trace and copy
- Copy tongue twisters
- Copy instructions

### **Years 5 and 6**

- Practise consistency and size of letters
- Practising using a diagonal joining line
- Practising leaving an equal space between letters
- Practising joining to the letter y
- Practising using a horizontal joining line
- Practising the size and height of letters
- Practising joining from the letter i
- Practising joining to and from the letter v
- Practising consistency in forming and joining letters
- Practise speedwriting
- Practising crossing double tt on completing the word
- Practising joining to and from the letter e

- Practising joining to and from the letter w
- Practising printing
- Practising drafting and editing
- Practising joining to the letter t
- Ensuring letters are consistent in height and size
- Practising with punctuation
- Practising break letters
- Practising joining from the letter m
- Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height
- Practising spacing within words
- Developing fluency
- Practising printing
- Practising forming and joining the letter f
- Practising presentation
- Revision of all skills
- Looking at different handwriting styles

### **Teaching Sequence**

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing ( highlighter )
- Under teacher's writing ( directly under words- write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence

### **Techniques for teaching letter formation**

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen or dotted letters
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard

- Wax resist letters
- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in Plasticine
- Roll Plasticine to make 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

### **Pencil grip**

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced in Y6) with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

### *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

## **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.

## **Inclusion**

Specific needs of left-handed pupils

When you know that a child is left-handed and is experiencing difficulty with their handwriting, please use the suggestions and techniques below to find out if changing their body position, paper position, pen hold or hand position for writing, or changing the equipment they are using helps resolve their difficulties. The best equipment are pens that slide across the paper easily.

Writing with the left hand is not the same as writing with the right hand. Although left-handed writers should not be made to feel different they do have different needs from right-handed writers in developing their handwriting skills. These are often overlooked and need to be actively taught.

- Left-handed writers have to push the pen across the page towards their body. This is a tiring and awkward movement. Instead of the flowing outward movement of the right-handed writer, where the elbow can move outwards, for the left-handed writer the movement towards the body tends to make the elbow come into the body, restricting movement and creating tension.
- If the hand is hooked over the top of the writing, the writing can be smudged and the hand will tire quickly. Also, if the hand covers what has been written the left-handed writer will have to stop more frequently to review the content of what he has written, whereas a right-handed writer can maintain the flow of writing whilst reviewing what has been written.
- However, with support there is no reason why left-handed writers should not achieve a fast, fluent and legible hand.

## **Body position**

The left-handed writer should:

- Sit with light coming from the right-hand side (if the light is coming from the left the child will be working in the shadow of their hand).
- Sit on a slightly higher chair than a right-handed writer; this enables them to see over their hand more easily and gives their arm and hand more freedom of movement.
- Sit slightly to the right of the desk space, giving them plenty of room to their left.
- Try to sit on the left hand side of right-handed writers – then their paper and elbows will not clash.
- If the child's body is stiff or hunched in any way, this will create tiredness and possibly pain. The most usual explanation for this is incorrect positioning of the paper (See: Positioning the paper for the left-handed writer).

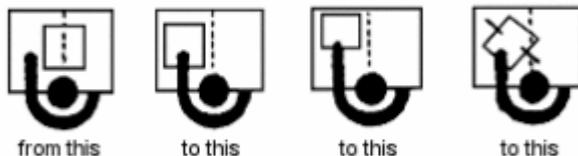
## Equipment required

- Experiment with different types of pens to find out how they affect the child's writing. Some people find attaching a 'pencil' grip can help, especially if the pen/pencil is slippery.
- Try to write on a pad of paper or something similar that will provide a smooth surface that will 'give' a little. At school we often use Dry Wipe Boards and paper that has a shiny/smooth surface.
- Some children find it easier to write on a sloping surface. Sloping writing boards are commercially available, but a ring binder turned sideways with the spine at the top can be effective for some people.

## Paper position

- Probably the most significant factor in helping to promote better handwriting is to look at the position of the paper. The following guidance will be helpful when working with your child.
- Place the paper alongside the child on the left, push the paper away from them slightly and turn the paper so the top is angled to the right towards the table (see Figure 1). Placing the paper like this allows freer movement and enables the writing to be more vertical (severely sloping writing is harder to read). It also enables the hand to be positioned below the writing, giving a more comfortable position, so your child can see what they are writing, and it avoids smudging.

Figure 1: Correct positioning of paper for left-handed writer



- For those left-handed writers who have developed a 'hooked' hand position (hand above the writing line) and who find it difficult to try to change to a position with the hand below the writing, there is one method of 'hooking' which is better than others.

The paper is placed as for right-handed writers, the writing wrist is on edge rather than flattened, and the wrist should flex during writing. A smooth pointed pen (e.g. ball point, roller ball) should be used rather than fountain pen to prevent digging into the paper on downwards strokes.

## Pen hold and hand position

- Does the child complain that it hurts to write for any length of time?
- Do they have to stop frequently when writing?
- Would they like to write faster?
- Does the way they hold their pen restrict the movement of their hand and arm, or results in their letters being distorted?
- If the answer is 'Yes' then they may need to experiment with different ways of holding their pen to find a way that works best for them, avoiding the problems above. Although it is important to experiment to find what is best for them, some left-handed writers can develop some very inappropriate pen holds.

- Children need to aim for their fingers, wrist and arm to move freely and loosely. Left-handed writers have a tendency to grip the pencil too tightly if they are not sitting correctly and the pen-hold is awkward.
- The traditional way of holding a pen is called a tripod grip (figure 3). The thumb and first finger are placed gently on either side of the pencil and the middle finger goes underneath. This way everything can move freely as you write. The left-handed writer should be encouraged to:
  - Try to hold the pen so that their first finger is nearer the pen point than their thumb - this allows quick changes of direction that writing needs, with the thumb nearer the point there is less control over the pen. Also it may be easier to hold the pen/pencil slightly further away from the point than a right-handed writer.
  - Generally the best position for the wrist is the hand slightly rotated towards to paper from the on-edge position (but avoid rotating too much). Children will need to find the position which is most comfortable for them.
- One alternative pen hold (Figure 4) - placing the pen between the first and middle finger and resting on the thumb - can be just as effective as the tripod grip.

Figure 3: Traditional correct pen hold

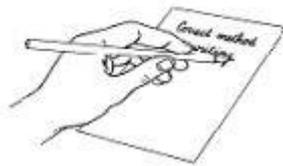


Figure 4: Alternative pen hold

