



College Park Infant School



Guidelines for Handwriting

Statement

It is very important that pupils are taught to master the skills of handwriting and should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. The National Curriculum emphasises that letters should be clearly shaped and correctly orientated, accurately formed and consistent in size. Our handwriting programme encourages a pre-cursive and then a cursive style from the early stages of learning.

Handwriting Process

Reception Year

In the Foundation Stage focus is initially placed on the introduction and reinforcement of fine motor movements and pencil control that is necessary for the formation of letters.

Pencils should be gripped correctly and held effectively to form recognisable letters that are correctly formed. Each individual letter shape is taught with the lead-in and out stroke from the writing line (see Appendix 1). Practice is also provided for the upper case letters.

Several different activities are used to practise the letter strokes, for example, sand letters and rainbow letters.

Years 1 and 2

Within Year 1, the skills of joining letters is introduced with letters joining from the top. Within Year 2 the cursive form is further developed to the point where the handwriting style is joined and legible. Many children within College Park attain Level 3 handwriting as described in National Curriculum SATs documents.

By the end of Year 2 children should be able to underline the title of a piece of work using a ruler. Rubbers for erasing a mistake are used sparingly and at the discretion of each class teacher.

Handwriting and presentation

In order to develop a legible style, pupils should be taught:

- How to hold a pencil
- To write from left to right and top to bottom of a page
- To start and finish letters correctly
- To form letters of regular size and shape
- To put regular spaces between letters and words
- How to form lower and upper case letters

- How to join letters
- The importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning effectively.

Implements

Children begin with thick triangular pencils graduating to ordinary pencils as soon as possible. The pencil should be gripped loosely between the first finger and thumb, using the second finger as a rest. The non-writing hand should be used to support and guide the paper.

Children may even at a very early age have learned an inappropriate grip. It may be deemed necessary to change the grip. However, if their handwriting is clear, fluent reasonably legible and fast, attempting to change their grip may do more harm than good.

As soon as the child is ready to cope with the control of a pencil and understands how to use lines, formal writing practise should always be done on lined paper. When working in other books, line guides or teacher drawn lines may be used for children if necessary.

Visual models

The writing used for display and notices should be in the cursive form of writing appropriate to the age group. Writing should be as near to the children's height, whenever possible. It should be of a reasonable size and care should be taken that it is not too large. Typed labels for displays will on occasion include a cursive script font.

Seating

The seating of children for handwriting lessons is particularly important. When organising handwriting lessons ensure that all children are facing the board that is being used. Many children find it comfortable to slant their work to the side, away from their writing hand, so that they can see what they are writing. Left-handed children will need to be seated at the left-hand side of the table.

Differentiation

Children will be at different stages in their development of a clear handwriting script and it is important to differentiate handwriting tasks. Assessments are made by teachers for when to introduce the next process for each child. Support programs are used within each year group to develop handwriting skills. Hand-gym exercises are used to develop fine motor skills, whilst BEAM and a similar structured program within Year 2 are used to develop fine and gross motor skills in tandem.

These guidelines will be reviewed and evaluated by the English Manager in consultation with the teaching staff.

Guidelines reviewed and amended: January 2012

