

Highwood Primary School

Handwriting policy



This policy was reviewed in:	February 2023
It was ratified by the Governing Body on:	
The policy is due for review in:	February 2026

Handwriting Policy

Rational

Highwood Primary School recognises that even in this technological, computer literate age, good handwriting remains fundamental to our children's educational achievement. We believe that a flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity.

We have agreed five key stages, that underpin this.

1. Physical preparation for handwriting: gross and fine motor skills leads to mark making, patterns and letter formation (3-5 years)
2. Securing correct letter formation (5 -6 years)
3. Beginning to join, together with a focus on relative size and spacing (6-7 years)
4. Securing the joins together with a focus on break letters, legibility, consistency and quality (7-9 years)
5. Practising speed, fluency and developing a personalised style for different purposes (9-11 years).

Guidelines:

- At Highwood Primary School we follow Penpals (see attached for sequence of teaching)
- Early years children must have many opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills before formal handwriting is taught.
- Handwriting must be practised both discretely and in context.
- There should be weekly timetabled time to discretely teach handwriting.
- Choosing the writing implement best suited to the tasks is an important part of a handwriting education.
- Children should only be taught to join when they are forming letters correctly
- Children will earn a pen licence when they consistently demonstrate joined handwriting in their everyday writing.
- Parents should be given information on how we teach handwriting, especially the correct letter formation.
- Pupils work should clearly demonstrate progress in handwriting.

- Adults writing should model this agreed letter formation; adapted for the age being taught.
- As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. Children in Reception and Year 1 should start writing in wide lined half and half books.
- Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time.
- From **Year 2 upwards** 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 SEN

Teaching Sequence

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Next to teacher's writing
- Independence

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
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when issued by the Class Teacher). 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

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°. The right hand top corner of the paper nearer the body than the left. This develops a freer movement and makes possible the development of vertical writing or even a forward slant.
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

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 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 and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with National Curriculum expectations?