



Struthers Primary Handwriting Policy

Rationale

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns.

The development of this fluid style when mastered allows children to apply their energy into the content of their writing as opposed to the formation of the letters themselves. Handwriting skills are taught weekly and systematically throughout the school.

At Struthers Primary School our **aims** in teaching handwriting are:

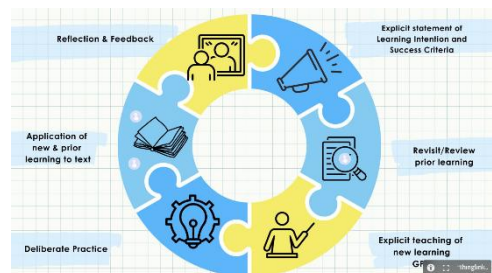
- To enable children to write in a consistent, well presented, and legible format.
- To have a consistent handwriting approach across early, first and second level when teaching handwriting.
- To make sure all children know the difference between lower- and upper-case letters.
- To ensure pupils develop an effective and comfortable pencil grip.
- To make sure all pupils know the starting point and movement for each letter in line with the Penpals letter families.
- To ensure pupils begin joining letters from Primary 2 onwards, considering size and presentation.
- To share the importance of clear and neat presentation to communicate meaning effectively across the curriculum.

Whole School Expectations

Explicit Taught Lesson

Children should experience an explicit taught handwriting lesson each week. This lesson should follow the teaching and learning cycle:

- Explicit statement of learning intention and success criteria.
- Review/revisit prior learning.
- Explicit modelling of new letter formation/join.
- Deliberate practice – whiteboard and pen practise or sensory activity.
- Application of new learning – Jotter task using 'Penpals Handwriting Practice Book'.
- Reflection and feedback.



Pencil Grip and Positioning

Children will be taught to hold a pencil correctly.

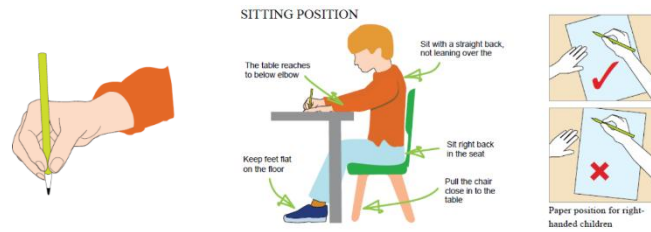
Children should be encouraged to use a tripod pencil grip, where the pencil is gripped between the index finger and the thumb. The middle finger is then used to support the underside of the pencil, please see the following video for reference: [CLICK HERE](#). Those children who are still adopting a less functional writing grip should be corrected and reminded, they may benefit from additional strengthening activities. Children should also be encouraged to try writing aids such as pencil grips to assist in developing the optimal pencil



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hold. Children will also be encouraged to adopt the correct writing position. Please see images below:



(Children who are left-handed should reposition the paper the other way and sit to the left-hand side if seated next to a right handed child).

(Children with mobility challenges are encouraged to lie flat on the floor, helping them develop pencil grip skills before progressing to activities that require full-body balance.)

Modelling Handwriting

Handwriting and letter formation should be modelled by the teacher in all handwritten material – modelling, teaching, handwritten environmental print and in written feedback on children's work.

Letter Formation and Movement

Below is the formation of each of the lower-case letters which should be used. All letters should be taught with ligatures in preparation for joining. Please note, with the exception of the letters f, i, j, t and x, all lower-case letters should be formed without lifting the pencil from the paper:



In Primary 1, children should have the opportunity to practise letter formation and handwriting through a range of multi-sensory activities incorporated into their learning experiences. Suggested activities could be as follows:

- laminated letter cards
- gel or paint bags
- creating letters in different media such as dough, paint, foam, wool, pipe cleaners etc.
- whiteboard practice
- sand trays



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Progression Across the School

Teachers should plan and teach handwriting in line with the Penpals Scope and Sequence document.

In Primary 1, all children will receive a daily handwriting session for 10-15mins, this will be taught in correspondence when teaching phonics and introducing a new letter/sound.

In Primary 2, children will begin by revising letter families. During term 3, cursive handwriting will be introduced. Our aim is that by the end of Primary 2 children will be forming all letters correctly and joining in a cursive script.

In Primary 3, adults will model cursive writing from the beginning of the year. The children will be encouraged to continue the development of basic joins which they should transfer into all their independent writing. They will also continue to link their handwriting to their phonic development as they learn to write sounds using a cursive writing style.

In Primary 4, children will complete the introduction of basic joining letter sets. They will continue to develop their use of cursive handwriting building upon the skills they have developed. Our aim is for children to be focusing on developing letter and word spacing, consistency and fluency by term 4.

In Primary 5, 6 and 7 children will be expected to use cursive handwriting in all areas of the curriculum. Children will continue to learn more complex joining letter sets and will now be establishing a fast, fluent and legible style of handwriting. Those children whose writing is neat and legible may be encouraged to use handwriting pens. If any child is not on track to reach these expectations, they will receive additional support through small group intervention groups.

Marking and Assessment:

During handwriting sessions and independent work, incorrect pencil grip and letter formation should be identified and corrected immediately. Consistent feedback on posture, spacing, and line use is also essential to support progress.

Regular monitoring through jotter checks and marking ensures skill development is tracked.

In Primary 6 and 7, children may receive a Pen Licence certificate upon mastering handwriting skills, recognising personal achievement. They are then encouraged to write in pen if they feel comfortable and demonstrate sustained legibility and presentation.

Criteria for attaining a Pen Licence

Bronze Certificate:

- All letters are formed correctly and are easy to read.
- All numbers are formed correctly (0-9)
- All letters are written on the line with clear spaces between each word.
- All work is dated, titled and underlined with a ruler.
- Titles use capital letters correctly.
- Illustrations in jotters are drawn neatly in pencil and coloured with care.
- Writing is beginning to be joined naturally.

Silver Certificate:

- You must have achieved the bronze award already.
- All letters are consistent in size and direction (e.g. all of your 's' look the same)
- Writing is consistently joined.



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- Letters are joined appropriately.
- There is a clear distinction in size of capital letters and lower case.
- Punctuation is the correct size in relation to the text.

Gold Certificate:

- You must have achieved the bronze and silver award already.
- Writing has a consistent style which is neat, joined, legible and personal to you.
- Presentation in ALL of your jotters is at the highest standard.

Your teacher will submit your jotters to Mrs Clark to review your work for this award.