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| **WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE SUCCESS OF ALL** |

**Handwriting Policy**

**Rationale**

At British Forces School, Naples, we aim for all pupils to develop legible, fluent, efficient joined-up handwriting. Even in this technological, computer-literate age, handwriting remains an important skill, fundamental to our pupils’ educational achievement.

**Aims**

* To enable all of our pupils to develop a neat, legible, correctly formed speedy handwriting style.

* To develop accuracy and fluency in handwriting so that children can concentrate on what to write.
* To provide equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve success in handwriting.
* To help pupils understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letter forms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.
* To adopt a progressive, consistent style of handwriting throughout the school.
* To help our pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

**Principles**

As a school, we use the cursive Nelson Handwriting Scheme (Appendix A) which provides a progressive approach from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 using a range of high-quality materials including teacher guides, pupil books, assessment materials and a digital font.

In addition, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and English National Curriculum Programme of Study have clear guidance on statutory and non-statutory handwriting requirements in each year group (Appendix B).

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught as it is not a natural skill. Effective teaching of handwriting will be achieved through teacher modelling and continuous assessment of the pupils’ development through observation to ensure they are forming letters correctly. A consistent approach is taken across the school so pupils experience coherence and continuity across the years. This is particularly important as they will develop at different rates.

In a handwriting session, teachers/ learning support assistants cannot possibly get around all of the class and check their progress. Instead it is recommended that the they choose a small group of pupils to work with so they can provide direct feedback.

Teachers and learning support assistants in Years 1-6, including supply teachers, are required to use neat, joined cursive handwriting for all handwriting tasks when marking, making comments and writing on the board.

Handwriting should be taught explicitly in short, frequent sessions where pupils practise a particular set of letters. It should be modelled by the teacher/learning support assistant then supervised. However, handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons.

Where possible, handwriting practice should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns.

**Development of the learning and teaching of handwriting**

EYFS

From entry, pupils in the EYFS take part in a variety of activities to develop their gross and fine motor-skills and recognition of pre-cursive patterns as part of continuous provision. This list is not exhaustive, but details some of the possible activities which can be used. A list of further activities can be found at Appendix C.

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| Gross motor skills | Fine motor skills | Hand eye coordination | Pencil grip |
| * Ribbon sticks. * Dancing – shoulder/arm movements. * Throwing and catching large and small balls. * Climbing frame. * Swinging. * Chalking, * Painting on a large scale with brooms. * Interactive plasma screen activities. * Skywriting with both hands. * Children make patterns on each other’s backs. * Making letter shapes in damp sand trays. | * Dough Disco. * Using glue spreaders * Chopping and peeling. * Small construction toys – pliers, screwdrivers, hammers etc. * Sieving, pouring- sand and water. * Squashy balls. * Finger rhymes (develops finger flexibility). * Tearing paper/ folding paper. * Pegging things on a washing line. * Puppets including finger puppets. | * Sand, water and paint play. * Using tools such as scissors, rolling pins, tweezers etc. * Threading and lacing. * Using tongs. * Jigsaws: inset and simple puzzles. * Fishing: magnets and paper clips. * Hammering golf tees into pumpkins. * Peg boards: patterns and pictures. * Post boxes – posting letters. * Computers: using a mouse and key board. | * Tweezers (sequins). * Threading beads. * Sprinkling coloured sand, glitter, salt etc. * Pencil grips and triangular pencils (but their use must be monitored as they can be misapplied). |

Pupils should begin to learn how to hold a pencil correctly, then how to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. The basic letter formation with accompanying rhymes, can be found at Appendix D. ABC does pencil grip posters can be displayed in writing areas to show progression in grip; examples can be found at Appendix E. In addition, Nelson Handwriting Workbooks 1-4 take pupils through the stages of pattern making to letter formation. When ready, pupils are given opportunities to practise handwriting on lines.

Year 1

Pupils will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multisensory activities. Nelson Workbooks 5 and 6 are for children aged 5-6 and are designed for pupils who are ready to move onto a joined script but have not yet developed the necessary transferring skills to work from the Red Level Developing Skills Book. The content of the Red Level Developing Skills book is translated into a workbook format and split over two books for children who need extra support of working on the page.

Pupils consolidate correct letter formation and are taught the correct seating position at the table, pencil grip and posture. Pupils are taught how to join letters. Links are made between the letters that create different ‘handwriting families’. Handwriting should be taught discreetly and discussed within and linked to phonics and spelling sessions.

Year 2

Pupils consolidate joining and learn which letters are left unjoined. Developing Skills Book Yellow, aimed at children who are 6-7, provides further practise of the four handwriting joins. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower case letters appropriately and using correct spacing between words.

Years 3-4

Nelson Book 1 is for pupils who are 7-8. They will practise the joins and ascenders and descenders in proportion. Writing on a slope is introduced. Nelson Book 2 (ages 8-9) focuses on consistency in forming joins, height of letters etc. Speedwriting is introduced.

Years 5-6

More advanced handwriting techniques will be taught. Lessons will focus on consolidating quality and consistency or handwriting. Nelson Book 3 (ages 9-10) and Nelson Book 4 (ages 10-11) revise elements of joining and introduce grammar including adding punctuation, paragraphing and editing.

**Technical terms to explain to the pupils**

* The word ***cursive*** means joined.
* The technical word for handwriting is **calligraphy**.
* The letters b, d, h, k and l are called **ascenders**. The letter t is not an ascender.
* The letters g, j, p, q and y are called **descenders**.

**Frequency of handwriting lessons**

Research shows that children make the most progress when they have short, focused handwriting sessions.

EYFS Frequent opportunities for child-initiated writing, and development of gross/ fine motor skills through high-quality continuous provision. Short focused handwriting sessions totaling 30-45 minutes per week.

Year 1-2 Three, 15-minute handwriting sessions per week.

Year 3-6 Two 15-minute handwriting sessions per week.

These timings are only a guide. At the start of an academic year, or a new term, it is quite acceptable for staff to spend more time than this on handwriting in order to make ‘quick, positive gains’ for the pupils which result in them being motivated to write due to the improvements they have made.

**Pens and pencils**

Pupils are encouraged to start handwriting with a soft pencil. Chunkier, triangle pencils are used initially before progressing to a standard pencil. When fine motor skills have been established and pupils are writing in a consistent cursive script, they will gain their pen licence whereby they will be allowed to write with a black fibre-tip handwriting pen.

**Handwriting paper**

As motor skills increase, then the size of writing should decrease. Pupils need to use the correct sized paper for their stage of handwriting development. Nelson Handwriting has specific sized paper for each stage. Examples of the correct paper can be found at Appendix F.

**Book Height of letter (mm)**

Workbooks 1-3 12 mm – reducing to 10mm in Workbook 3

Workbooks 4-6 10 mm – reducing to 8 in Workbook 6

Developing Skills, Red Level 8 mm

Developing Skills, Yellow Level 7 mm

Book 1 6 mm

Book 2 5 mm

Book 3 4 mm

Book 4 4 mm – reducing to 3 mm

**Left-handed writers**

At least ten per cent of the population is left-handed – a slightly higher proportion of these are males. There are a few simple strategies which can be employed to support left-handed writers:

* Model letter formation, skywriting etc. specifically, for left-handed children, with your left hand.
* Make sure that left-handed pupils sit on the left of right-handed pupils to avoid their writing arms clashing.
* Put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins, as some left-handed pupils mirror-write from the right.
* Left-handed pupils usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of the center of their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written.
* Experiment with seat height – some left-handed pupils may need a higher seat to view their work clearly and to prevent the elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.

Additional guidance about how to support left-handed writers can be found on p19 of the Nelson Handwriting Teacher’s Book.

**Seating and posture**

Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably.

* Ensure that they have a good pencil group – use commercial pencil grips only if other means have failed.
* Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch.
* Check that tables are large enough for the children not be jostling each other’s arms.
* Check that the height of the tables and chairs allows children to sit comfortably, with their thighs horizontal and their feet flat on the floor.
* Rooms should be well lit.
* Tables should be free of clutter.

**Pencil grip**

Pupils should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allowed the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pencil/pen nib.

*For right-handed writers*

Grip the pencil lightly with your index finger and thumb about 3cm away from the nib. Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil. Paper should be placed to the right and titled lightly to the left-hand side and steadied with the left hand.

*For left-handed writers*

Grip the pencil lightly between the thumb and the index finger about 3cm from the nib. Rest the pen on the knuckle of the middle finger. The hand should be kept below the writing line. Paper should be titled slightly to the right at about 20-30 degrees and steadied with the right hand.

**New children joining the school**

On entry into school, teachers need to complete an assessment of the pupil’s current handwriting in order to start them at the correct stage in the Nelson Handwriting programme. Children who join the school with established fluent joined handwriting will be allowed to continue with their current style of handwriting.

**Inclusion**

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including children with special educational needs, will be given one-to-one support to help achieve their optimum handwriting level. Interventions will also be put into place as necessary.

**Handwriting and displays**

Displaying good quality examples of handwriting in the learning environment of the school is important and can have a big impact on the children’s knowledge and development. Notices, information labels on display boards, drawer labels and signage should be in joined script. The Nelson Handwriting Font has been installed on all teachers’ computers and is available on a machine in the ICT suite and can be used to create cursive text.

**Assessment**

It is important to establish ways of assessing handwriting at several levels:

* whole school assessment,
* class assessment,
* individual assessment,
* self-assessment.

Whole school and class assessment of handwriting and presentation assessment will be monitored as part of the book scrutiny process by the Senior Leadership team and English Subject Leader.

To assess the progress of individual children it is necessary to observe them as they write, as well as studying their finished writing. Criteria for individual assessments include:

* Does the child adopt the correct posture?
* Does the child hold the pen/pencil correctly?
* Does the child use the correct movement when forming and/or joining letters?
* Does the child reverse or inverse any letters?
* Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
* Is the writing easily legible?
* Is the pupil’s handwriting development in line with the guidance in the EYFS Framework/ National Curriculum?

Each Developing Skills book contains Check-ups to assess the individual progress of each child. Each Resources and Assessment book contains an assessment section with resource sheets designed to be used as placement tests, general assessment and self-assessment.

The ‘Getting ready to write’ flap at the front of each Developing Skills book is intended to remind pupils how to prepare themselves for writing. The checklist on the reverse of this gives a list of criteria to help pupils focus on, and check critically, particular aspects of the writing they have done.

June 2019

Review in June 2020

Annexes:

Annex A **Nelson handwriting guide**

Annex B **Statutory Framework for the Early Years and English National Curriculum reference to handwriting**

Annex C **Possible activities to develop motor control**

Annex D **Basic letter formation and accompanying rhymes for EYFS**

Annex E **Copy of ABC Does (Alexander Bryce-Clegg) Pencil Grip development**

Annex F **Handwriting paper for each stage Appendix A – Nelson handwriting guide**

**Appendix B – Statutory Framework for the Early Years and English National Curriculum reference to handwriting**

**Appendix C – Possible activities to develop motor control**

**Appendix D – Basic letter formation and accompanying rhymes for EYFS**

**Appendix E – Copy of ABC Does (Alexander Bryce-Clegg) Pencil Grip development**

**Appendix F – Handwriting paper for each stage**