



FIVE STONES

Learning Federation

**Five Stones Learning Federation
Handwriting Policy**

Adopted: September 2020

Review: September 2021

Five Stones Learning Federation Handwriting Policy

Vision

"Life in all its fullness"

Our vision guides us in all that we hope to be, enabling every part of our community to grow and develop. This means growing in body, mind and spirit in order to flourish and experience the joy and hope of, 'life in all its fullness' (John 10.10).

"Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible." Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association.

Aims

At Five Stones Learning Federation, our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- To have a consistent approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- Children to understand the importance of clear, concise, legible handwriting and presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Develop a fluent, joined handwriting style by Year Two (exceptions to this are children with specific motor difficulties)
- To ensure that handwriting becomes an automatic act so that pupils are able to concentrate on higher order writing skills
- Children to take pride in their work
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays/resources
- To have a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting

Statutory Requirements

Statutory requirements for the teaching and learning of English are laid out in the National Curriculum English Document (2013) which details specific requirements and expectations for the teaching of handwriting from Year 1 to Year 6. At EYFS, requirements and expectations for writing development are detailed in the Physical Development and Literacy section of the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

Handwriting in the classroom

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught; it is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting; it is our hands that the kinaesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter. Therefore, from Reception to Year 6, handwriting practice is undertaken daily to support automaticity.

Discrete teaching requires clearly structured and focused teaching and learning. It involves explanation, demonstration and practice of the skill of handwriting. Effective teaching of handwriting can be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly, especially when they are first learning letter formation in Early Years Classes. The skill can then be applied or used in contexts across the curriculum. Discrete teaching can help to prevent poor handwriting by clearly indicating the relationships between letters and the relationship of each letter to the writing base line.

In the discrete teaching of handwriting, each lesson should have a clear and simple focus (e.g. the correct formation of a single letter, revision of a group of letters such as those requiring clockwise movements or introduction of a particular aspect of joining). Letters will be taught following the sequence of sounds and symbols taught in phonics lessons. Children will use a standard HB pencil, well sharpened. When a member of the SLT deems a child ready, they will be issued with a pen license. This can be revoked if handwriting falls below standard.

An effective handwriting policy is based on a style that is quick and easy to learn. It should be neat, legible and fast. Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content. At Five Stones Learning Federation, we start with pre-cursive handwriting and move onto cursive handwriting in Year 1. In Early Years and Key Stage 1, the sequence of letters is closely linked to those taught in phonics, while handwriting remains a stand-alone lesson.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children will access a range of learning opportunities to develop essential prewriting skills. Movements to enhance gross motor skills, such as 'squiggle while you wiggle', dancing and climbing will be taught through adult led sessions. These activities encourage shoulder and hand strength which support writing. Children in Early Years will also develop their fine motor skills through activities completed in the learning environments, such as threading, cutting, and manipulating malleable materials in adult lead activities, such as Dough Disco.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder. These will support the development of their shoulder, elbow, wrist stability and bi-lateral use of their hands. They will also develop control of writing implements and develop hand eye co-ordination and fine motor strength.

Children will learn to sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib. They will hold a pencil using a tripod grip for writing and will be encouraged to correct errors in grip.

In Reception children will start to form individual letters in the correct direction using pre-cursive writing. Initially starting on plain paper and then moving onto writing letters effectively on a line once fluidity is developed. Capital letters and numbers will also be taught once children are confident with lower case letters.

Lower case letters:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s
t u v w x y z

Capital letters:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z

Numbers:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, building on the Foundation Stage, pupils primarily focus on word formation based on letter families, focusing on correct orientation, formation and proportion of lower case and capital letters. Children will be reminded of sitting in the correct position so that they are comfortable and ready to write. The letter families are:

- long ladder letters (l, i, j, t, u, u)
- 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)

Once children have achieved the above, they then begin to join two and three letters using cursive letter formation. This coincides with the sequence of sounds taught during phonics and children are encouraged to say the sounds as they write them. Children will start using some diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters.

Lower case letters

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w
x y z

Key Stage 2:

In Key Stage 2 pupils speed, fluency and legibility are built up through handwriting practice, which takes place daily. Children use joined handwriting for all writing unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, note taking, poster etc - appropriateness to the task being paramount.

The Joining Style

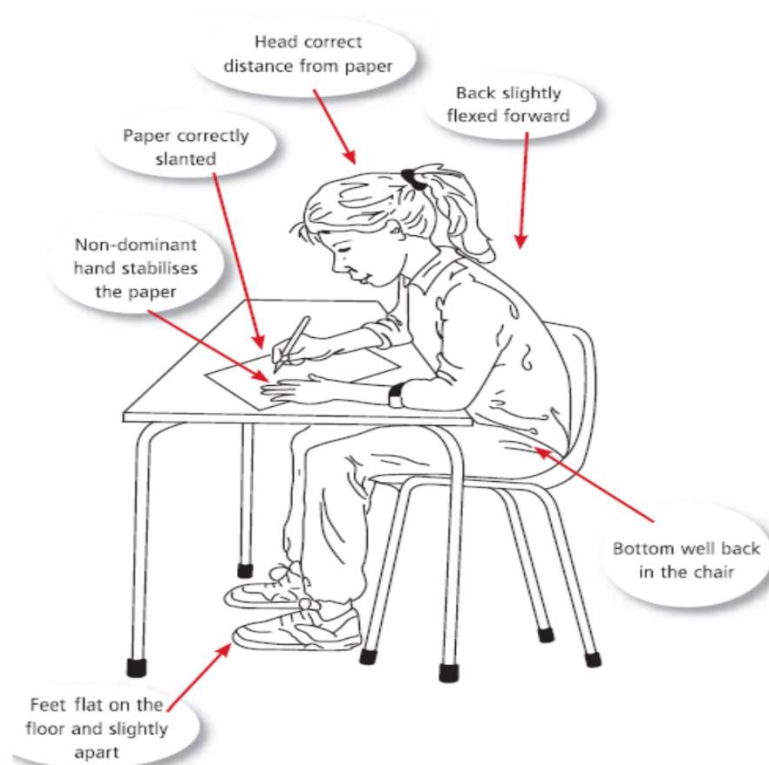
"Joins between letters are only worthwhile if they increase the speed, rhythm and ease of writing without reducing legibility."

There are 4 basic joins:

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. in, on, at
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. at
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders e.g. on
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. eb

Posture

- Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right-handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right.
- Always make sure that the hand which is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper.



Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children will have the opportunity to develop their handwriting skills of legibility and fluency. However, some children may need more support or group programme. These children will be implemented and monitored closely by the class teacher. Outside agencies, such as Occupational Therapy would be consulted as necessary.

It is recognised that it is essential for all children, especially those pupils with specific learning difficulties, to be closely observed when learning the correct formation of individual letters. This will ensure that posture, pencil grip and pressure, formation and placement are monitored and supervised to avoid the development and reinforcement of unhelpful habits.

Pupils who experience difficulties in fine motor movement will be given lots of opportunities to develop control through rehearsal with large body movements.