

# Hill Top Academy



*'Every child, Every chance, Every day!'*

## Handwriting Policy

Hill Top Academy

Compiled by Mrs N Clark: September 2019

This policy was reviewed by Governors 24/09/2019 and agreed that it be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis

To be reviewed: September 2022

## **Hill Top Academy Handwriting Policy**

### **Aim**

At Hill Top Academy, cursive handwriting is taught with a sequential and progressive approach. Children are introduced to this style from the early years as it is considered to be the most natural development of children's earliest attempts at writing. Teachers and Support Staff are expected to model this handwriting style.

Handwriting is a taught skill and it is important that teachers are seen to put a high value on teaching and sustaining good handwriting. We believe that children's self-esteem and pride in their work can be raised by good quality presentation.

Our aim in this policy is to teach children correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly and by the end of KS2 to begin to develop a distinctive style.

### **Teaching and Organisation**

We seek to fulfil the requirements of the New Curriculum. The scheme of work follows a progressive structure, which Teachers follow to ensure that specific objectives for groups of children and individuals are covered in order to ensure progress.

We use the Letter-join handwriting programme throughout academy to model cursive script to the children. Teachers use Letter-join resources which include editable sheets, Interactive Whiteboard resources and an i-pad app.

It is important for teachers to set a good example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, IWB or when marking children's books. Teachers strive to model cursive script and use the appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style. Children are expected to show care for their work-books, present their work with care, date work, underline where necessary and not make any marks on the covers.

Joined up writing will begin in Year 1, when it is assessed that the children are consistently forming letters correctly.

### **A typical handwriting session typically includes:**

- A quick physical warm-up to prepare the body (arms, shoulders, elbows and fingers) for handwriting.
- A reminder of the Helpful Handy Hints for Handwriting, ensuring readiness to write.
- A clear description of the skill being taught.
- Teacher modelling using the visualiser, Interactive whiteboard or whiteboard.
- Children to practice using the skills modelled by the teacher.
- Where possible, instant praise or correction of the children's work.
- An element of evaluation – how have we coped using the skill taught?

### **Handwriting in the academy time-table**

Handwriting is taught frequently and regularly throughout the academy. Children participate in at least one explicit handwriting practice session per week. However, it is recognised that, especially in the early stages of learning, children will learn faster from short practice sessions than from longer weekly sessions.

A number of regular sessions each week lasting approximately fifteen to twenty minutes are ideal to sustain handwriting development and improvement, the number of which depends on the needs of the class.

Longer sessions could also be used when handwriting teaching is being linked to another skill such as spelling.

Throughout the academy, phases decide how the provision of handwriting teaching input and practice is provided in their classes.

### Guidelines for Good Practise linked to Handy Handwriting Hints

- Prior to the start of the lesson, the room needs to be organised accordingly. It is suggested that all children face the board/Interactive Whiteboard.
- Correct posture with the child sitting comfortably with feet flat on the floor with body upright (BBC – Bottom, Back, Chair).
- The paper should be positioned to a comfortable angle and moved up as the page is filled.
- Adequate space is needed so that the children are able to write without their elbows touching.
- Correct light in order to see without eyestrain.
- Pencil grip should be firm but relaxed. The children need to be aware that they should not grip so that their hand aches but need to be able to apply some pressure.
- Handwriting sessions should be short and regular.

### Handwriting and Text in the Environment

- A model cursive alphabet will be on display in each classroom.
- Handy Hints for Handwriting will be on display for easy reference.
- Teaching and support staff will model cursive script, when writing in front of the children.
- Foundation Stage: To use **Letterjoin Air 8 (pre-cursive script)** in class displays. Displays to incorporate writing patterns such as zig zags or curly shapes.
- Key Stage One: : To use **Letterjoin Air 8 (pre-cursive script)** used alongside other fonts that do not contradict the handwriting being taught to the children. Letterjoin 8 to be introduced in Year 2.
- Lower Key Stage Two: Children introduced to a variety of different fonts although care is taken not to confuse children by contradicting handwriting taught. Letterjoin 8 to be used on handouts/displays.
- Upper Key Stage Two: A large range of fonts to be used in classroom display. Letterjoin 8 to be used for resources,

### The language of Handwriting

In order for staff to communicate precisely with one another and with our pupils we need to be familiar with the vocabulary of handwriting. We all use the same words in front of the children when talking about handwriting.

Vocabulary to aid letter formation:

- Long ladder letters
- One-armed robots
- Curly caterpillar letters
- Zig zag letters
- Up and down
- Start on the line
- Round in a curve
- Hook
- Right to the top, nearly to the top (long ladder letters)
- Up in a loop
- Up and over
- Dot (i, j)
- Kick (k)
- Down under
- A little way over (r)
- Cross the t
- Slope down, hook and lift - go to the top and slope back down (x)

## **Line guides**

In handwriting sessions children will work in books ruled with handwriting lines. These will be introduced in Year 1. For presentation work (including Big Writes) lines guides are in use as appropriate to handwriting ability.

## **Pencil/pen grip**

All children should be taught to hold their pencil or pen comfortably and appropriately. Without this, a child will find it harder to develop a quick and efficient (fluent) style of writing. The pencil should usually be held between the thumb and the first finger and should rest on the middle finger. It should be held about 2-3 centimetres from the point to avoid covering the writing. We provide practice and support to help children to do this.

## **Posture – BBC (Bottom, Back, Chair)**

Children need to be sat in appropriate positions where they can see the board. Left-handers should not sit on the right of right-handers. They should be sat 'comfortably', making sure that they are doing the following: feet flat on the floor, chair tucked under the table and arms placed on the table.

## **Paper Position**

The paper should be slanted parallel to the writing arm, and positioned for the right-handed child just to the right of the centre of the body and for the left-handed child just to the left of the centre of the body. The paper should be at a comfortable distance from the edge of the table top allowing the table top to support the writing arm. Children should be encouraged to move the paper **up** as writing progresses down towards the edge of the paper. Children should be taught to hold the paper still with their non-writing hand.

## **Crossing out errors**

Children should be taught to cross out mistakes in their writing with one, single line.

## **Left-handed provision**

To ensure that left-handed children are not disadvantaged when writing, a range of strategies will be employed. Letter formation and skywriting will also be completed with the left hand to provide these children with a model. Left-handed children will sit on the left of right-handed children to ensure that their arms do not clash, and they will also be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written. To avoid smudging their work, left-handed children will be encouraged to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of the writing implement, and their wrist should be straight. As writing from left to right is more difficult for left-handed children they should be supported to ensure that they do not learn bad habits of position, posture, pen hold which will deter them meeting the aim of developing a fast, fluent and legible handwriting style.

## **Scheme of Work**

### **Foundation Stage**

Children will develop the fine and gross motor skills needed for handwriting as part of the Early Years Curriculum.

Activities will develop gross motor control for example, rolling hoops and running with a hoop, ribbon movement, chalking, painting on a large scale, writing in sand and using the Interactive White Board.

Activities to develop fine motor control, e.g. tracing, colouring within guidelines and pictures, pattern work, using glue spreaders in small pots, painting with the tips of fingers, cotton buds, play dough and threading.

All these will develop spatial awareness 'PE on paper'.

In addition to practising letter formation in a range of contexts, children will begin to work in group and individual sessions on handwriting. Children will be taught the movement of each of the four letter families. They will visit each series of letters on a termly rotation basis.

Families:

1. Long ladders (down and off in another direction) – l, l, j, t, u, y.
2. One armed robots (down and retrace upwards) – b, h, k, m, n, p, r.
3. Curly Caterpillars (anti-clockwise round) – c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s.
4. Zig Zag letters- v, w, x, z.

### **Year 1**

Children will revisit all letters, in their appropriate families to reinforce and practise formation.

When this is secure, children will begin to work on baseline joins:

in, un, um, am, ine, ime, an, ar, aw, ir, hu, ti, ki, du,

ey, ay, ip, up, it, nt, ent, ant, ill, all, ib, if, ub, th, ck, ch.

Children will also be taught:

- the formation of capital letters
- the formation of digits 0-9

All children will write in pencil.

In Key Stage 1, joining will be used to reinforce the work completed through phonics and spellings.

### **Year 2**

Children will continue and practise the joins started in Year 1. The focus to begin with will be on diagonal joins, first to the letters without ascenders then those with. Once the children are confident with this, they will be encouraged to apply these skills to their independent writing.

As appropriate the children will be introduced to horizontal joins (top joins), first to letters without ascenders and then those with:

op, ou, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re, fe, fu, fi, ob, ol, wh, rk, rt, ot, of, fl, ft.

Children will also be taught to:

- write capital letters and digit s to the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.
- to use finger spaces correctly between words that reflects the size of the letters.

Children will continue to write in pencil and will progress to writing with pen at the teacher's discretion (they will obtain a pen licence through neat handwriting).

### **Year 3/4**

Children will practise and consolidate the joins introduced in Year 2. They will also be taught about the way to present their work in books. They will be encouraged to use a joined script in their independent writing to enable them to build a fluent and clear style.

Children will be taught to increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters are clear.

Year 4 children will continue to build on their work from Year 3 and be taught more about a variety of presentation methods through Literacy lessons. In addition to using and practising the known joins, children will also be taught more complicated anti-clockwise joins in handwriting sessions:

ac, ca, da, ha, ad, ag, ea, ed, va, wa, oa, oo, od, fa, fo.

Children will continue to write in pencil, with the majority progressing to writing in pen (they will obtain a pen licence through neat handwriting).

### **Year 5/6**

In handwriting sessions, children will learn and practise patterns involving all three joins.

They will reinforce previous work, especially considering the spacing and size, distinguishing ascenders and descenders, reinforcing that the capital letter is not joined.

Children will be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed.

All children should be writing in pen by this phase.

### **Special Educational Needs/Additional Support**

In addition to this progression, provision will be made for children with Special Educational Needs. This will include individual/small group sessions at the appropriate level, use of pencil grips and opportunities to practise using a range of media

(I-pads).

This policy was reviewed by Governors on 10/01/2017 and agreed to be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis

Signed: 

Principal



Chair of Governors

Dated: 08/10/2019

Reviewed September 2019

To be reviewed September 2021

# Handy Hints for Handwriting

## You will need:

- To have a nice, sharp pencil or a working pen to begin.
- To do a quick warm-up to prepare your bodies for writing.
- To sit correctly – Remember BBC (Bottom, Back, Chair).
- To hold your pencil correctly.
- To position your paper correctly.
- To put a line through any mistakes that you make.
- To use your lines correctly.
- To make all your tall letters the same height.
- To leave finger spaces between words.
- TO TRY YOUR VERY BEST!



BBC

