



## Handwriting Policy

### Introduction and Context

When communicating ideas in writing it is important that children use a handwriting style which is neat and legible. The importance of handwriting should not be under-estimated. It is vital that children can write quickly, comfortably and legibly as it is a skill needed in many curriculum areas. Children's self-esteem is also heightened when they are able to take pride in their handwriting.

### Aims of the Handwriting Policy

Through the adoption of this Policy at Rothersthorpe CE Primary School, we aim to:

- (a) Instill in children the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- (b) To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed, through (i) having the correct pencil grip, (ii) forming all letters correctly and (c) knowing the size and orientation of all letters.
- (c) To develop a joined, confident handwriting style that is clear, legible and fluent, which will free the writer to write and not worry about letter formation.
- (d) To instill a positive attitude towards handwriting.
- (e) To present work in a neat and orderly fashion, appropriate to the task.

### Teaching Time

- In the Foundation Stage there should be daily mark making activities
- In KS1 and LKS2 there should be a minimum of 2 x 15 minute lessons a week
- In UKS2 there should be 1 X15 minute lesson a week
- Some pupils who find handwriting difficult may need further intervention

### Model used: The Nelson Handwriting Scheme

At Rothersthorpe, we use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme to help children develop their handwriting. The Nelson Handwriting Scheme by Oxford Owl introduces letters in line with the DfE 'Letters and Sounds' document and makes curriculum links to phonics and spelling. Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practiced using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalized.

The Nelson Scheme includes pattern practice and motor skills work, combined with three levels of differentiated activities for all abilities. Resources include pupil books; on-line interactive demonstrations and activities; workbooks; assessments.

The Nelson handwriting font can be installed into Microsoft Word using the online teaching software. The software demonstrates perfect letter and join formation and includes video warm-ups to develop motor skills plus pencil grip and posture.

A model of the handwriting style should be displayed in all classrooms. In addition, posters around the school environment should also model expectations for handwriting and presentation.

## Letter formation as per the Nelson Scheme is as follows:

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Four Joins

1. to letters without ascenders e.g. in, am, on
2. to letters with ascenders e.g. ab, ch, il
3. horizontal joins e.g. o a, wo, og, wi
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders e.g. wh, ob, al

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

### The use of books and paper

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. Children should start writing in plain books, then as their handwriting improves into exercise and handwriting books.

**Reception:** Children should use plain books with pencil lines drawn or printed on, (approx 2cm apart).

**Year 1:** Children start the year using wide lined English exercise books and large squared Maths books. Handwriting books should be introduced at the appropriate time depending on the child's ability.

**Year 2:** The majority of children should be ready to start the year on narrow lined English books and medium squared Maths books. Children should use unlined paper from time to time so that they can apply skills and consider issues of presentation and aesthetics.

### Teaching Sequence

- Hand and finger strength
- Physical preparation (Physical literacy)
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence

For the order of teaching letters and joins see Nelson Teacher's Books/Oxford Owl on-line.

## **Techniques for teaching letter formation**

- Model good handwriting all the times
- Demonstrate
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pens
- Write in the sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on the chalkboard
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you
- And many, many more.....

## **Get Ready to Write – Seating and Posture**

Attention to posture and seating arrangements is important. To this end, all teachers need to ensure the following are in place:

- The 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
- Children should be encouraged to sit up straight and not slouch
- Height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- tables should be free of clutter
- Rooms should be well lit
- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners.

**Pencil Grip:** Children should write with a pencil, (or a pen when appropriate), with a rounded nib. Pencils should be reasonably sharp. A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil.

**For right-handers:** Hold pencil lightly between thumb and forefinger 3cm away from the point. The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left. Use the left hand to steady the paper.

**For left-handers:** Hold the pencil lightly between the 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 degrees. Use the right hand to steady the paper. NB, it is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide.

## **Inclusion, SEND and Equality**

Children who display specific difficulties with handwriting will have these addressed through a range of resources and interventions such as, slanted writing boards, rubber pencil grips, using alternative writing media etc. Individual cases may be referred to the SENCo where necessary. All children should be supported to achieve their best.

## **Assessment**

All teachers have high expectations of children in regards to handwriting and presentation of work in books, and will encourage children to take pride in their work. Children's writing and presentation in books will be monitored by class teachers on a daily basis. Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Subject Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly. The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?

- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the New National Curriculum criteria and assessment without levels?

### **The Role of Teachers and School Staff**

All members of staff, (including teaching assistants, supply teachers, and students), are provided with appropriate handwriting models and are expected to promote the agreed handwriting style by their own example.

### **The Role of Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children's writing at home from an early stage. The EYFS and KS1 staff play an important role in communicating this, to ensure that parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children by using only capital letters for the beginning of their names.

**Handwriting Policy written by Headteacher, Mrs. Nicola Fountain and agreed by Staff and Governors of Rothersthorpe CE Primary School  
June 2016**

Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude. Use it before cursive handwriting lessons and during the refreshing and can be done even in a crowded class. If it's manageable, let your students jump in place first.

# APPENDIX 1



Push palms



Pull hands

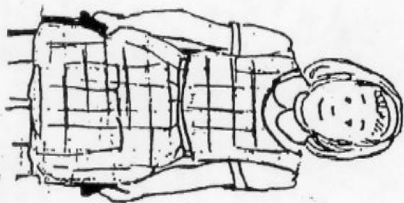
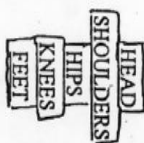


Hug yourself tightly

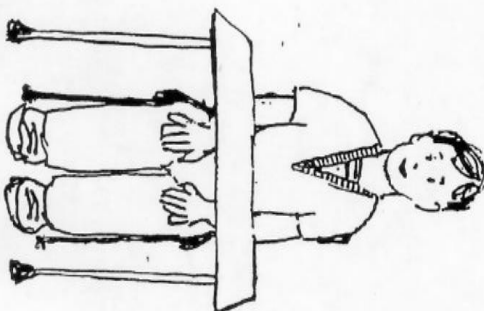


Reach high, one hand, then other  
Reach - make circles in the air

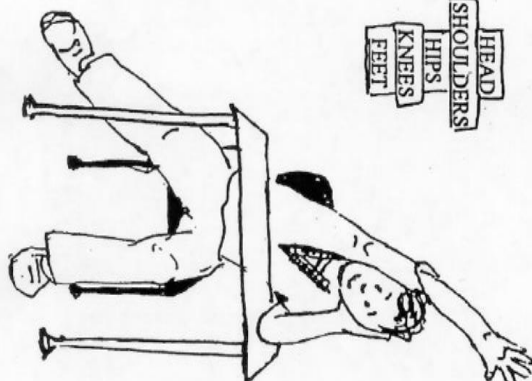
## ★ BLOCKS



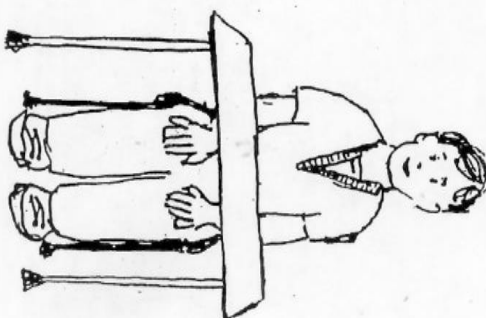
Pull up on chair



\* Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!