**Freeland CE Primary School**

Handwriting Policy 2022

Teaching handwriting is a priority.

Children need to learn to write cursively with efficiency and speed, without having to think hard about **how** to formulate letters and join their writing by the time they go to secondary school.

By the age of 8, most children have adopted a pencil grip, formed a style and developed habits which are hard to change. It is essential that they have been taught the correct habits by this stage. It is in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 that these should be taught: teachers in this part of the school should regularly check that children are learning the right habits from the start, such as holding a pencil correctly.

**What is cursive handwriting?**

The main features are:

* Each letter starts on the line
* Pupils keep the pen or pencil on the paper giving a very fluent style
* Pupils eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking
* The automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas, for example spelling, grammar, style, content and syntax.

What are the benefits of continuous cursive handwriting?

* It is beneficial to all pupils, including those with dyslexia, as the continuous motor movement means they do not have to think about the order of the letters.
* As each letter begins at the same point on the line there is less opportunity for pupils to reverse letters.
* The motor memory in a pupil’s hands and fingers help him/her to learn new spellings as each word is made up of one movement.
* Natural spaces occur between words automatically.
* Fluency established by early use of joined up letters helps pupils express ideas in written form more easily.
* Improvements in spelling as the hand motions required to form the words encourage muscle memory. At the same time the natural flow helps the process become automatic.

Methodology

* An active multi-sensory approach should be used at all stages.
* Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the style is very important.
* A mixture of whole class, small group and individual teaching is needed for all children to achieve.

**Writing Position**

Maintaining a good writing position is an important component to correct letter size, formation and spacing.

**TOP TIPS**

1. Sit comfortably with good posture.
2. Lean forward slightly.
3. Feet should be flat on the floor.
4. Both arms should be resting on the table while you work.
5. Use a correct pencil grip.
6. Be certain that your grip is not too tight or too loose.
7. If you are a right handed writer, position the paper so that the top is slanting to the left.
8. If you are left handed writer, position the paper so that the top is slanting to your right.

# Other fundamental issues which must be taught to children

* Pencil must be sharp before you use it.
* Pencils less than 8 cm long should be discarded.
* All four chair legs must be on the ground – children should not be rocking.
* When writing books should be fully open, not folded over. Children should be sitting in such a way that their books are not overlapping another child’s book when they are writing.
* A clutter free table is required with adequate space for a number of children to write.

# A few technical terms to teach children

* The word **cursive** means joined.
* The correct name for the joining bits between letters is **ligatures**.
* The technical name for a tail is a **flourish.**
* The technical word for handwriting is **calligraphy.**
* The letters b, d, h, k, and l are called **ascenders**. The top of the letter should reach very close to the top of the line (it shouldn’t touch!). The letter **t is not an ascender.**
* **t** is an unusual letter – a three quarters letter, rather than an ascender
* The letters g, j, p, q and y are called **descenders**. The flourish (the tail) of these letters goes below the line.

# Key points about joining letters

* All small letters start and finish at the bottom
* Capital letters should not be joined with the rest of the word.
* Letters that end at the top join horizontally: o r v w x
* Letters that end at the bottom join diagonally: a c d e h i k l m n u t
* The letters g. j, f and y are to be looped.
* Capital letters should not be huge. They should be no higher than ascenders.
* All letters should have a lead in stroke.

# Teaching methodology & time each week

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

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff should focus closely upon the formation of correct habits. They should closely observe what children do with a writing implement and teach children the correct conventions to follow.

* In the foundation class frequent opportunities are needed for child-initiated writing. These should be established within a rich and stimulating play-based learning environment. Alongside this there should be short, focused, whole class handwriting sessions using print. In the Summer term, and if children are ready, cursive handwriting will be modelled and taught.
* In Year 1, three 15 minute handwriting sessions are needed each week, focusing on letter formation. If specific children are ready, cursive handwriting will be modelled and taught.
* In Years 2 to 6, two 15 minute handwriting sessions are needed each week using continuous cursive. It may also be useful to create other opportunities for the children if and when appropriate. One specific issue should be concentrated on in each session. Looking at more than one issue is potentially confusing to the children.
* Children will use a handwriting book for handwriting lessons **but** transfer of skills should be expected.
* Children from Year 3 should always use a pen for their writing.
* When a teacher is teaching handwriting, modelling should be done using 4 lines as in the children’s handwriting books.

**Other Guidance**

*Displaying words* - All notices, displays, titles and signs in the classroom and around the school should be in joined script if they are hand written. The more examples of cursive script there are around the school environment – including word joined word processing – the greater the assistance pupils receive to appreciate this writing convention.

*Marking* - When they are writing comments in a children’s book, teachers should always write in cursive that the children can read. It is crucially important that children can read their teacher’s handwriting: if it isn’t legible to the child, what kind of message is being communicated?

*Modelling* - The teaching of handwriting is essentially a non-creative activity which involves training, tracing, copying, and practicing. It is essential that children watch their teacher demonstrating how to formulate and join letters. Having done so they should try to emulate the teacher’s model.

*Self/peer-assessment* - Children should then be taught to compare their results very critically with what the teacher has written. Older children can also be taught to peer assess. Alongside this, teachers should continually find and share the very best examples produced by children.

**Teaching Handwriting (15 minutes)**

* Begin the session with a short warm up (1-3 minutes).
* Then using 4 drawn lines on the whiteboard or using IWB model to the children how letters should be formed and joined using guidelines set out below.
* Give children time to practice the letters and joins – reminding them of posture and positioning.
* Teacher to ‘live mark’ books during the lesson modelling/correcting in books.
* Children to self or peer assess.

Formation of letters should be taught in the following order:

Group 1: Straight line continuous cursives i, l, t, z

Group 2: Forming curves starting continuous letters c, a, d, g, o ,q, As above more complex e s,

Group 3: Forming tunnel continuous cursive letters b,h,m,n, p, u Information from teachhandwriting.co.uk

Group 4: Forming top exit continuous cursive letters r,v,w,x

Group 5: Forming hooks lines and loops f,j,k,y

First joins: Continuous cursive bottom letter joins ai, but, ch, ck, er, sh, th, ip, ig

Second joins: Continuous cursive bottom to ‘c’ shaped letter joins as,ea,ed, ing, sat,ss

Continuous cursive bottom ‘e’ letter joins be,her,ie,men,se

Third joins: Continuous cursive top e letter joins ere, oe, re,ure, ve, we

Fourth joins: Continuous cursive top letter joins oa, oh, oi, on, oo, or, ou, ov, ow, oy, wh

Capital letters never join lower case letters.

**Progression Across the School**

**In Foundation Stage we begin by**:

Developing good gross and fine motor control including how to hold a pencil correctly.

Pattern formation (spirals, zigzags, waves)

Introducing a language to talk about shape and movements

Introducing the letter families

Ensuring letter formation is perfect using printed handwriting

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Long ladder family:  i, j, l, t, u , v, w | One armed robot family:  b, h, k, m, n, p, r  numbers: 2, 3, 5 | Curly Caterpillar family:  c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s  numbers: 0, 6, 8, 9 | zigzag family:  v, w, x, z  numbers: 1, 4, 7 |

**In Year 1 we begin by:**

Revising the letter families taught in Foundation Stage

Continuing to develop good gross and fine motor control

Once the child’s letter formation is accurate and the teacher assesses the child as being ready, joins are then introduced (joining two letters together using vertical and horizontal joins) in, am, ab, ch, oa, wo, wh, ob

Once a child is ready, cursive handwriting will be introduced and taught, in preparation for Year 2.

**In Year 2 we begin by:**

Consolidating the letter families taught in previous years

Teaching horizontal and vertical joins to ensure continuous cursive is being used by all of the children

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First join; un um ig id ed eg an or in gung | Second join; ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk | Third join; od pg re ve oon oom | Fourth join; wl vl of ff fl flo |

**In Year 3 we begin by:**

Consolidating joins taught in Year 2

Teaching main letter joins: in, ine, ut, ute, ve, vi, ok, oh, you, oi

Joining to and from letters:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| s: sh, as, es | r: ri, ru, ry, er, ir, ur | a: oa, ad, as, ai  (with ascender eg h/descenders eg y): ha, ta, fa, al, ay, ag | e: ee, ea, ed, (practicing horizontal join toe): re, oe, fe | o: ow, ov, os, (with ascenders eg l /descenders eg g): ot, ol, ok, og, od | y: ky, hy, ly | u: fu, wu, vu (practicing horizontal join to u) |

**In Year 4 we begin by:**

Revising joins taught in Year 3

Teaching joins:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Main letter joins:  ning, ping, ting, cod, ake, ome, are, fla, flo, fle, who, wha, whe, inly, ick, uck, ack, fte, fir, fin | Silent letters:wra, wri, kni | Double letters:  tt, ll, oo, pp, ss | Spacing:  ew, ev, ex | Proportions:  th, ht, fl | Punctuation:  ! ? ” ( ) £ |

**In Years 5 and 6 we begin by:**

Revising prior learning from Years 3 and 4

Recap harder letters and words :I, y, g, q, b, p, k, v, s, r, f, z, x, yell, eye, jaw, jay, gag, going, quay, queen, kept, vans, rest, fox, zoo, oxen, fuzzy

Children to work on dictation materials with a focus on speed and accuracy.

Where possible, teachers should try to tie in spelling patterns using ‘Spelling Shed’ with some handwriting practice each week.