



برایت رایدرز سکول  
BRIGHT RIDERS  
SCHOOL

## HANDWRITING POLICY

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## **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 in our hands that the kinesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter.

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 BRS we use Macmillan Graded Handwriting Series** to support our teaching of handwriting. Handwriting should be taught alongside phonic and spelling knowledge at all stages.

**Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.**

## **Handwriting Principles**

- Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It should be modelled by the teacher then supervised. Children should be self/peer assessing, looking for consistency
- Where possible, it should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings
- When ready, pupils should be practicing on the lines they are going to use in their writing books
- High expectations of writing are needed. Children need to repeat work that is not satisfactory
- In Grade 5 children can gain a 'pen license' for correct formation of letters, consistent fluidity and correct joins. This is re-set at the beginning of each year
- Teachers need to model good handwriting always, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books.

## **Handwriting in the Foundation Stage (KG1, KG2)**

Good handwriting relies on secure motor control and hand-eye coordination. Children in the Foundation Stage should learn handwriting through movement with the actual writing of letters as the ultimate aim. Children will:

- Engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination
- Use one-handed tools and equipment
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movement
- Manipulate objects with increasing control
- Begin to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines
- Begin to form recognizable letters
- Use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognizable letters, most of which are correctly formed

**Throughout the Foundation Stage**, children need lots of opportunities to develop:

- Physical control through large-scale movement such as outdoor play. Balancing, climbing, marching and moving to music.
- Manipulative skills such as using tools, cooking utensils and scissors.
- Fine motor control and hand-eye coordination, through activities such as jigsaws, threading, cutting and manipulating 'small world' equipment.

The key movements underpinning letter formation should be introduced through large-scale movements, from the shoulder.

In the earliest stages children should make the movements symmetrically using both arms. Once the movement is firmly established in kinesthetic memory, it can be reduced in scale using activities such as sky writing, using sticks in sand etc. and then reduced further in art activities using felt tip pens, crayons and chubby pencils.

### **Reception**

- Pre-writing stage
- patterning
- Individual letter formation
- Word formation based on letter groups

**The National Curriculum English Programmed of Study** provide guidance on teaching handwriting:

**KG 1 pupils should be taught to:**

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Become aware of the formation of lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Become aware of the formation of digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these
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**KG 2 pupils should be taught to:**

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practice these
- Make links with phonics and spelling

**Grade 1-2 pupils should be taught to:**

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left not joined
- 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 do not touch.

**Grade 3-5 pupils should be taught to:**

- Write legibly, fluently, with increasing speed and personal style by:
  - Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether to join specific letters
  - Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task (e.g. quick notes, letters)

**Letters left not joined**

It should be noted that breaks between adjacent letters which are left not joined are part of cursive handwriting and this is indicated in the requirements for Years 2-6. The rule for children is that when a letter is made which finishes with the pen facing “the wrong way” then the pen is lifted, and writing begun again. Letters not joined (e.g. ‘y’ followed by ‘a’) are placed as close to each other as possible.

It is sensible to leave the following letters not joined:

*b g j q y s*

### Joined up handwriting style

At BRS we introduce joined up handwriting at an early stage of a child’s development: from Year 1 upwards.

Learning a series of early rhythmical movements can help children with specific learning difficulties improve their fine motor coordination.

### Advantages

- The motor memory of the child’s hand and fingers helps them to spell as each word becomes one movement and not many
- Children can write at a faster pace
- Lessens the chance of reversing letters
- Spaces between words become more obvious
- Upper and lower-case letters are clearer.

Each letter pattern links to a family of letters:

Pattern	Value of Pattern
<i>rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr</i>	<i>r n m h p b k</i>
<i>cccccccccccccccc</i>	<i>c o a d g q e</i>
<i>uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu</i>	<i>i u y l t</i>
<i>vvvvvvvvvvvvvvvv</i>	<i>v w x</i>
<i>llllllllllllllllll</i>	<i>i u y l t a d</i>
<i>rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr</i>	<i>r n p m h</i>
<i>oooooo</i>	<i>co oo oa og od</i>
<i>llllllllllllllllll</i>	<i>i l u m h</i>
<i>No special pattern</i>	<i>f j s z</i>

### **Supporting individual children:**

- Children should be encouraged to use the correct pencil grip and sit with a good posture.
- Left handed children should sit to the left of right handed children to avoid their writing arms from bumping each other. The angle of the paper depends on the handedness of the pupil. Left-handers should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip, prevents them smudging their work with their writing hand and allows the pencil to move more freely. A left-hander may also benefit from holding the pencil higher up.
- Some children with specific difficulties may benefit from using a sloping surface and special equipment e.g. triangular pencil grip for a short period of time.
- It is important to use appropriate writing materials at each stage of writing development.
- A sharp pencil is essential for all early handwriting activities.
- Fluent and neat writers should move on to pen from Grade 5 upwards.
- Children need to see good examples of handwriting in classroom displays.
- Children should practice their handwriting skills in grade appropriate handwriting books.

**Teachers are advised to refer to the resource book: MACMILLAN GRADED HANDWRITING SERIES to support the teaching of handwriting progressively and at the appropriate stage for the pupils in their class. Key pages have been scanned into the handwriting folder on the teacher's server. Copybooks and workbooks are also available to teachers as resources and good models, but it must be emphasized that teachers modelling handwriting and observing as pupil's form letters and join is crucial to successful learning, ensuring pupils acquire the appropriate skills.**