

Brackenagh West P.S. **Handwriting Policy**

Aims

- To understand that guidance on handwriting is subjective to each individual.
- To use a well-formed, cursive style of handwriting.
- To raise attainment for all pupils in handwriting through a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.
- That we are consistent in the way in which we form individual letters by following the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance.
- That we are consistent in the way in which we join letters i.e. it must be remembered that some letters **never** join:
 - * All capital letters
 - * g, j, x, y and z
- That we follow the Cambridge Penpals Handwriting guidance for 'Joining letter sets' which builds on letter formation in Foundation stage with no joining letter sets to the teaching of joins throughout each year group.
- That teachers and support staff use all opportunities to model the agreed cursive style of handwriting when writing on the board or marking work.
- Where appropriate, teachers, support staff and pupils use all opportunities for writing as handwriting practise, regardless of subject.

Foundation Stage

- In the Foundation Stage we teach children to form letters once stage 1 sounds have been taught.
- We encourage children to practise letter shapes as they paint, draw and record, and as they write, e.g. their names, labelling their work, making cards and writing notices.
- As the children begin to form recognisable letters they chant the corresponding sound for each letter as they write.
- We try to provide opportunities to write meaningfully, through word-time, Fred fingers or hold a sentence.
- By the end of the Foundation Stage, children should be able to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

Resources: Penpals Foundation 2 CD ROM, a variety of writing tools and papers

Key Stage 1

- In KS1 the children undertake formal handwriting practice weekly.
- The children practise their handwriting using a pencil/whiteboard & marker.
- They practise correct letter formation according to the school's agreed letter formation using the ICT resource 'Penpals for Handwriting' as necessary.
- Cursive handwriting starts in P4 using the ICT resource 'Penpals for Handwriting' for guidance, as necessary.
- Where possible, children are to practise handwriting in conjunction with the 'Read Write In' literacy programme..
- When required, advice will be requested from Occupational Therapists or other relevant agencies to help with specific individual problems.
- Handwriting targets are to be included in IEPs where relevant.

Resources: Penpals Year 1 and Year 2 CD ROM, especially lined handwriting books.

Key Stage 2

- In KS2 the children are taught formal handwriting practice, with an emphasis on short, sharp and focused sessions.
- The children in P6 and P7 will practise their handwriting using a blue/black pen if the class teacher feels that they are ready, otherwise they will continue to use a pencil.
- In P4 and P5 children continue to practise correct letter formation according to the school's agreed letter formation using the ICT resource 'Penpals for Handwriting Units' as necessary. The emphasis is on building upon the joins established in KS1.
- The emphasis is on ensuring consistency in size and proportion and using joined writing for all writing except where other special forms are required e.g. labelling a diagram.
- In P6 and P7 we assume that handwriting skills should be established and that children should have their own developed cursive style. However, in reality this is not always the case. Children in P6 and P7 will have opportunities to revisit the basics, as necessary, and work on the presentation side of their handwriting in class and in afternoon sessions. Children should also be given opportunities to practise handwriting in conjunction with spellings.
- When required, advice will be requested from Occupational Therapists or other relevant agencies to help with specific individual problems.
- Pen Licences will be given to P7s when they are proficient enough to write in pen all of the time.
- Handwriting targets are to be included in IEPs where relevant.

Resources: Penpals Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5/6 CD ROM.

Common Approaches

We aim for all children to be using a pen by the end of KS2.

All children in KS2 will practise their letter formation when copying their spelling lists.

Materials

Pens/Pencils

Pencils are provided by the school where necessary.

In KS2, blue/black handwriting pens will be available from school or may be provided from home. Gel pens are not to be used in exercise books.

Paper

In KS1 and lower KS2, some children may require special paper with a line drawn through the centre of each line. In KS2, children practise their handwriting on normal lined paper or in books, so that the transition from handwriting practice to writing in other curricular areas is easier.

Posture

Children should be encouraged to sit up straight with their feet on the floor. The non-writing hand must be used to steady the book or paper.

Pen Grip

The pen or pencil should be gripped comfortably between forefinger and thumb with the second finger below to steady it. If you pick up a pen which is lying on the table in front of you with its nib towards you in line with your forearm, you instinctively pick it up in the correct grip.

Guidance for Left-handers

Special rules apply for left-handers. They should sit on the left-hand side of double desks or tables. They must be able to rest their left forearms on the edge of the desk. The book or paper must slope in line with the left forearm. As writing is completed down the page, the paper must be moved away from the body in the same line.

The aim is to keep the left arm in much the same position at all times to avoid the elbow being cramped by the chest. Moving the paper away from the body prevents writing becoming cramped at the foot of the page. The right hand must be used to control the movement of the page.

The left hand should end up below the line of writing to avoid smudging and to give a clear view of what is being written. Children should be discouraged from hooking their left hand above the line of writing to avoid smudging.

Guidance for Right-handers

Right-handers do not face the same problems as left-handers, but many children will find it helpful to slope the paper slightly and to move it away from the body as the page is completed.

Checklist for Teachers

If a child's handwriting is to develop into a pleasing and consistent style, it is helpful to examine each piece of writing in the light of the following criteria:

1. Shape
Are all letters properly formed and clear?
2. Joining
Are as many letters as possible joined consistently?
3. Slope
Is the slope of letters consistent? Letters should either be all perpendicular or all sloping (predominantly a forwards slope will be used.)
4. Evenness
Are letters of a consistent and reasonable size? Capitals can be too big, tall letters too tall, small letters too small.
5. Floating and Sinking
Do letters sit on the line? Words sometimes float above or sink below the writing line. This happens because the writing hand is not moving steadily across the page.
6. Particular Letters
Which letters are really well formed? Which ones need careful practise?