

St Paul's First School **Handwriting Policy**

Here at St Paul's First School we create a safe, secure and happy community which allows our children to thrive. We achieve optimum progress by recognising, developing and challenging the individual talents of every child. Our children are motivated, well rounded members of society who take pride in their achievements and care for themselves, others and the wider community and environment.

Safeguarding

St Paul's First School is committed to the health, safety and well-being of every child. We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us. Handwriting is a movement skill and best taught by demonstration, explanation and practice.

A pupil who finds handwriting difficult uses more of his/her mental capacity to write, allowing less time for creativity and thus makes it harder to focus on spelling.

Teaching the correct formation of letters must be given the highest priority by every member of St Paul's staff. Correct letter formation should be achieved by all pupils before an attempt is made at joining.

Cursive Handwriting

Research shows that there are many advantages to writing in a cursive style. Improved spelling and a more fluid style, meaning that it is easier to concentrate on the content of the writing, are the most prevalent advantages. Learning the basics through a handwriting scheme mean that an individual style can then develop.

The Multi Sensory Learning Handwriting Rescue Scheme

Here at St Paul's First School we are using the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme as a tool to teach fluid cursive handwriting. This scheme will be taught from Year 1, with Reception Class using a pre-cursive font as a lead into fully cursive handwriting, with every letter starting on the line. The structured exercises link similarly formed letters together and then combine the letters to form regular word patterns. Each individual letter is practiced in varying degrees of size and then gradually joined. Lastly, words with common patterns are practiced to reinforce learning. As a school we are also using 'Handwriting for Windows' as a tool to use with the class interactive whiteboards in order to develop handwriting after the scheme. Teachers will be using this as a common

aid for handwriting practice in the classroom. As a school we teach looped ascenders and a curved x.

Good Handwriting

Good handwriting is based on the following conditions (as recommended in the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme):

- Similar letters being of equal size and proportion.
- The length of the long vertical strokes (ascenders) and (descenders) above and below the base line, being no more than twice the height of small letters.
- Capital letters being no higher than the ascender strokes, and not joined to the lower case letters.
- All letters being 'seated' and starting from the base line.
- To avoid 'b' and 'd' confusion the learning of these letters has been kept well apart. The structure of the scheme is not alphabetical, but in letter family groups e.g. b,h,k.

Continuity, Progression and Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SENCO.

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned to the right for left-handed pupils.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

When pupils are considered ready, they will be issued with a pen licence certificate and provided with a Parker fountain pen to use for all writing activities. Printing will be used on maps and in labels in science lessons.

Foundation stage

Pupils will be provided with a range of pre-writing activities and equipment. When the pupil is ready to be introduced to letter shapes, this will be done in a small controlled group to ensure correct letter formation using the correct pencil grip. There is a dedicated writing area in the classroom. Children are introduced to cursive writing and are taught that each letter starts on the line.

Year 1

Year 1 will be introduced to further patterns and shapes including straight lines, clockwise and anti-clockwise circles. Repeat patterns will be a feature of Year 1 progression. Pupils are taught handwriting each morning on entry to class and practise during registration. The teacher or TA circulates to ensure correct pencil grip and letter formation. The pupils are introduced to cursive handwriting and as appropriate, the teacher will teach the class using the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme.

Years 2 - 4

Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught using the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme Follow Scheme Book 1 in Year 2 and then onto Book 2 in Years 3 and 4. Speed, fluency and legibility are built up through daily practice. By the end of Year 3 all pupils should be able to join handwriting using a cursive style. Patterns will continue to be practised to encourage fluidity. The use of 'Handwriting for Windows' is used to support and consolidate the MSL Handwriting Rescue Scheme.

Computing

The growth of word processing has increased awareness of the importance of presentation and the variety of fonts available. The school's chosen font for labelling, captions, instructions, letters to parents is Handwriting for Windows but pupils are encouraged to use a range of fonts and select the one best fit for the purpose. A cursive handwriting font is used in the Foundation Stage.

Assessment

Pupils' handwriting will be assessed systematically and also as part of their free writing assessment task.

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