



Park Hall Infant Academy

Handwriting Policy

At Park Hall Infant Academy, we recognise the need for children to develop a neat fluent style so that they are able to communicate in writing fluently and clearly. This meets the school aims as it allows pupils to strive for excellence and take pride in the presentation of their work.

Aims of this document:

- To present clear guidelines for the teaching of handwriting at Park Hall Infant Academy.
- To ensure that teaching expectations are consistent throughout the Academy.
- To provide children with a fluent, neat and legible style of writing which they can be proud of.
- To ensure all children have success in developing their handwriting.
- To use handwriting as an aid to spelling success.
- To enable the children to derive pleasure from developing an aesthetically pleasing writing style.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is developed progressively throughout the Foundation Stage, with provision matched to children's developmental needs and informed by the Prime Education Framework. Gross and fine motor development, phonics and handwriting are closely linked throughout Nursery and Reception.

Nursery

In Nursery, the focus is on developing the strength, coordination and control needed for future handwriting, alongside developing children's confidence and enjoyment of mark-making.

Children will have regular opportunities to develop gross and fine motor control through:

- Physical Development activities which develop balance, coordination, strength and posture.
- Large-scale movements, including air writing and pattern making.
- 'Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle'.
- Dough Disco and other dough activities.
- Threading, construction, tweezers, pegs and other small-tool activities.
- Painting, colouring, drawing and pattern making.
- Success with Scissors and other activities which develop hand and finger strength.

Children will begin to develop early handwriting skills by:

- Developing an increasingly controlled pencil grip.
- Making lines, circles, shapes and patterns.
- Developing a preference for a dominant hand.

- Beginning to copy and form letters, particularly those in their name.
- Writing their own name with increasing independence.
- Beginning to represent sounds in their writing.

Handwriting is linked to RWI phonics. Children are introduced to letter formation through the RWI letter rhymes and practise movements through multi-sensory and large-scale activities before applying them to paper.

By the end of Nursery, children will be developing the ability to:

- Use a mark-making tool with increasing control.
- Form some recognisable letters and taught sounds.
- Write their own name.
- Make attempts to represent sounds in words.
- Draw and copy simple shapes, lines and patterns.

Reception

In Reception, children build on the physical and early writing skills developed in Nursery. Handwriting is taught explicitly alongside RWI phonics, with a focus on accurate formation, pencil control and increasing fluency.

Children will continue to develop gross and fine motor control through:

- Physical Development activities which develop strength, balance, coordination and posture.
- Large-scale movements, pattern making and 'Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle'.
- Dough Disco and activities using small tools and construction materials.
- Threading, cutting, painting, colouring and other activities which develop precision and hand strength.

Handwriting teaching will focus on:

- Developing an effective pencil grip and appropriate posture.
- Accurate formation of lower-case letters using the RWI letter rhymes.
- Correct formation of capital letters and digits 0–9.
- Developing consistent letter size, orientation and positioning.
- Applying phonics knowledge when writing sounds, words, captions and sentences.
- Using lines and writing guides where appropriate to support control and accuracy.
- Developing increasing fluency, independence and confidence in writing.

By the end of Reception, children will be developing the ability to:

- Hold a pencil effectively for fluent writing, using a tripod grip in most cases.
- Form recognisable lower-case letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Form capital letters and digits 0–9 correctly.
- Apply correct letter formation when writing words.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.
- Use handwriting skills with increasing fluency, control and independence.

Handwriting activities in KSI are undertaken as whole class activities to:

Regular, timetabled handwriting sessions are provided to ensure that children develop secure and fluent handwriting skills. From the outset, we aim to make the physical process of writing enjoyable, helping children to develop confidence and see themselves as writers.

Mnemonics (memory pictures) are used to support children in visualising letter formations and joins before writing them independently. Handwriting is taught and practised under the guidance of a teacher to ensure correct formation and prevent the development of habits that may be difficult to correct later.

Children are not asked to copy letters or words without guidance, as the focus should remain on developing accurate letter formation and joins through purposeful practice.

Handwriting is taught progressively through three stages. The online checklists for each letter are available in the Handwriting files on Read Write Inc. Phonics Online and are used to support consistent teaching and progression.

Reception

Stage 1a: Children practise correct letter formation within the letter families and the corresponding capital letters.

Stage 1b: Children learn where to place the letters on the writing line.

Key Stage One

Stage 2: Children learn a mature style of writing that will lead to joined- up writing and introduce formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.

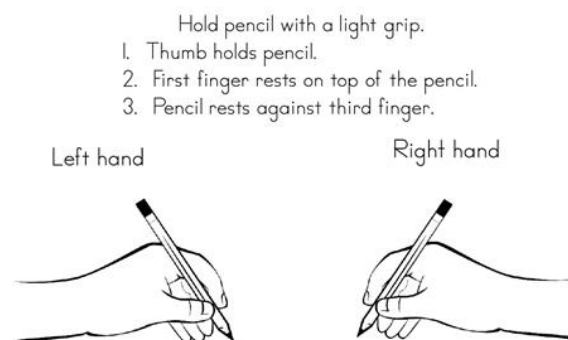
Stage 3: Children learn the two basic joins: the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal) and the two variables for each join.

Children are taught to use the Read Write Inc. 'Jam Sponge' analogy to support their understanding of letter size, proportion and positioning on the writing line. Where additional support is required, highlighters may be used to provide visual guidance, helping children develop greater accuracy and consistency in their handwriting.

Handwriting position

Teach children that when you use the handwriting signal they automatically go into the perfect handwriting position:

- feet flat on the floor
- bottom at the back of the chair
- body one fist from the table
- shoulders down and relaxed
- back leaning forward slightly
- left/right hand holding the page
- left/right hand ready in a tripod grip.



We sing our 'Handwriting Checklist' Song to remind children to ensure that they are using the correct pencil grip and posture.

Left Handed Children

Supporting Left-Handed Writers

We recognise the importance of providing appropriate support for left-handed children to ensure they develop a comfortable, efficient and fluent handwriting style. Teachers will ensure that left-handed pupils have equal opportunities to develop their handwriting skills through appropriate modelling, resources and classroom organisation. The following strategies will be implemented to support left-handed writers:

- Modelling: Teachers will model letter formation, sky-writing and other handwriting techniques using both their right and left hands, ensuring that all children can clearly observe and replicate the correct movements.
- Seating arrangements: Where children are seated alongside a right-handed partner, left-handed pupils will be positioned on the left to prevent their writing arms from clashing and to allow sufficient space for comfortable writing.
- Paper positioning: Children will be encouraged to position their paper slightly to the left of their body's midline and at a comfortable angle to support natural hand movement and visibility.
- Writing implements: Appropriate writing tools will be provided to ensure smooth movement across the page. Children will be supported in developing a comfortable pencil grip that allows them to see their writing clearly.
- Hand and wrist positioning: To minimise smudging and promote effective handwriting, left-handed children will be encouraged to:
 - Position their fingers approximately 1.5 cm from the tip of the writing implement.
 - Hold the pencil in the 'V' between the thumb and forefinger, with the pencil resting approximately parallel to the thumb.
 - Maintain a straight, relaxed wrist rather than hooking the hand above the writing line.
 - Use their right hand to steady the paper while writing.

Identifying Hand Dominance in EYFS

Identifying children's emerging hand preference during the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is essential to ensuring that appropriate support is provided from the outset. Practitioners will observe children's hand use during a range of activities and provide suitable resources, including left-handed scissors and pencil grips, where appropriate. Teachers will ensure that left-handed children receive accurate modelling of letter formation and are seated appropriately to support their handwriting development.

As some children may not establish a consistent dominant hand until around the age of five, practitioners will continue to monitor hand preference throughout EYFS and beyond, adapting provision to meet individual needs. Children will not be encouraged to favour a particular hand before a natural preference has emerged.

Readiness for Writing

Year 1 will continue to develop the skills learnt in the Foundation Stage through RWI and targeted interventions where appropriate.

Those children who require further support will be offered:

- resources such as sand trays, pencil grips, triangular pencils, weighted pencils and writing slopes
- pre-writing activities to develop gross and fine motor control.

Where additional support is required, highlighters may be used to provide visual guidance for letter formation, size and positioning, helping children to develop greater accuracy and consistency in their handwriting.

Handwriting and Reading

- Children are exposed to a variety of print styles through their reading.
- Classroom displays and resources will be written using Nelson font (NTPrecursivefk) or Sassoon Primary Infant where possible.

Handwriting Assessment

Handwriting is assessed through ongoing teacher observation during handwriting lessons and independent writing activities. Teachers monitor children's letter formation, starting points, pencil grip, posture and paper positioning to ensure that correct handwriting habits are established and maintained. Assessment informs targeted feedback, individual handwriting targets and additional support where required.

Feedback, Assessment and Home Learning

- During handwriting lessons, teachers provide ongoing verbal feedback and praise as they monitor children's progress, reinforcing correct letter formation and celebrating improvements.
- In line with the Read Write Inc. handwriting videos, children are encouraged to select their favourite letter formation, identify two aspects they have done well and recognise one area for improvement. This supports self-assessment and encourages children to take ownership of their handwriting development.
- When marking children's written work, teachers identify letters that require further practice by modelling them in green pen at the bottom of the page. Children are encouraged to revisit and practise these letters to improve accuracy and consistency.
- Children receive weekly handwriting practice as homework to consolidate the letters and joins taught during the week and develop fluency and confidence.
- During Parent Consultations, teachers share the specific letters and formations that children need to practise, enabling parents and carers to support their child's handwriting development at home.
- Children's efforts and achievements in handwriting are recognised and celebrated through a range of rewards, which may include house points, stickers, stamps, certificates or special pencils.

Parental Involvement

We recognise the important role that parents and carers play in supporting children's handwriting development. We aim to establish a consistent approach between school and home through regular communication, guidance and opportunities for practice.

- Home learning: Parents and carers are encouraged to support their child with weekly handwriting homework, which consolidates the letters and joins taught in school and provides opportunities to develop fluency and confidence.
- Parent Consultations: Parents and carers have opportunities to review their child's books ahead of Parent Consultations. Teachers will share individual handwriting targets, including specific letters or joins requiring further practice, to support continued progress at home.

- Guidance and support: Parents and carers will be provided with guidance on correct letter formation and joins, in line with the school's handwriting approach, to ensure consistency between school and home.
- Celebrating progress: Parents and carers are encouraged to recognise and celebrate their child's handwriting achievements, promoting a positive attitude towards writing and encouraging continued improvement.