



Handwriting Policy

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Rationale

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. If they have difficulty, this will limit fluency and inhibit the quality and quantity of their work. It is important that the child's handwriting becomes a skill that requires little effort and thought so that creative and physical energy can be focused on the content of writing, and cognitive load can be reduced.

Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed
- Eventually produce the letters automatically in discrete and independent writing

Teaching and learning

- Handwriting is taught regularly and systematically in classes, groups or individually as appropriate.
- In Foundation children are taught letter formation using the Little Wandle formation and patten guidance
- In Years 1 - 4 formal handwriting sessions take place three times a week
- Correct pencil hold and letter formation are taught from the beginning and handwriting is frequently linked with spelling
- When marking or writing comments, members of staff use cursive handwriting as appropriate

Provision for emergent writers

Children who are not yet ready to write need to be provided with a range of pre-writing activities. Suggested activities to support these children can be found in [Developing early writing: Part 3 Section 3 'Developing handwriting'](#).

Involvement of parents

We believe our parents play an important role in developing children's handwriting. An information leaflet for parents will be given to all Foundation parents suggesting how they can help at home. This leaflet includes the letter formation and patten guidance used in the Little Wandle phonics programme. This is provided in the appendices*.

The use of handwriting patterns

Handwriting patterns can be taught as part of a handwriting lesson or incorporated into other areas of the curriculum as a pleasurable and creative way of practising handwriting movements. A good example of this is to use them as decorative borders around pictures, poetry or other written work.

Letter formation and whole school alphabet

Teaching the correct formation of letters should be given highest priority. This should be achieved by all pupils before any attempt is made at joining. An alphabet showing the starting point and direction of each letter is provided in the appendices* from *Developing early writing: Part3 Section 3 'Developing handwriting'*.

The alphabet in stroke related groups

Shape families are used to introduce the letters of the alphabet and are sorted into 4 main movement groups. Children should understand which letters belong to which handwriting families. The alphabet organised into stroke-related groups helps to aid teaching with 'The 'c' Set' being taught first and 'The 'z' Set' being taught last. The four groups are:

The 'c' set (Curly caterpillar letters)

Anti-clockwise round exemplified by the letter c

c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f s

(Numbers 0, 6, 8, 9)

The 'l' set (Long ladder letters)

Down and off in another direction, exemplified by the letter l

y, i, j, l, t, u.

The 'r' set (One armed robot letters)

Down and retrace upwards, exemplified by the letter r

b, h, k, m, n, p, r

(Numbers 2, 3, 5 follow a clockwise direction)

The 'z' set (Zigzag letters)

v, w, x, z

(Numbers 1, 4, 7)

An example of school style

An example of our handwriting style can be found in the appendices. This alphabet should be followed and encouraged across the whole school.

When joining is taught and our approach

We believe we need to 'keep it simple, do it well'. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice. The needs of emergent writers must be met primarily then the focus can move to correct letter formation and then onto joining and fluency. A suggested sequence for teaching can be found in the appendices. Below is a sequence of skills that should be followed depending on the stage of the child.

How handwriting is taught throughout the school

EYFS

In the Foundation Stage children take part in activities to develop gross and fine motor skills and recognition of patterns. The emphasis at this stage is with movement. Letter formation (starting at the correct entry point and then moving in the right direction) learned at this early stage becomes automatic and has a profound influence on later fluency and legibility. To aid movement, close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of writing space. We follow the letter formation outlined by Little Wandle. To encourage correct letter formation a 'patter' is used to aid memory. Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in their hand. Gross motor skills are developed through sky writing letters, making patterns in the air and making different body shapes and actions. Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting etc. Pencil control is developed through tracing, creating patterns etc.

Stage 1

Pupils at Stage 1 develop a legible style, whilst still developing fine and gross motor skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. This is achieved by developing a comfortable and efficient pencil grip, finding a convenient position for their page and by practising handwriting in conjunction with independent writing. Children move onto thin pencils when appropriate although pens can be introduced at any point to encourage writing. Correct letter orientation, formation, proportion are taught within literacy lessons, phonics teaching and more formal practice.

In Year 2, for those that are ready, basic joins are introduced.

The four basic handwriting joins (diagonal and horizontal joins to letters with and without ascenders) are practised and the only letter that does not join according to our school style is the letter 'x'.

Stage 2 (usually year 3 and 4)

The children now need to consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. By the end of this stage children should be using joined handwriting at all times unless other specific forms are required e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. It is anticipated that all children will be writing in pen by the end of this stage.

Stage 3 (usually year 4)

This stage is used to consolidate learning for those children who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will now develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years.

Inclusion

The vast majority of children will progress to write legibly and fluently. However, some children need more support with this and the provision should be tailored depending on the stage they are at. This could include a target on their Individual Education Plan, a fine and gross motor intervention such as 'Learn to Move' or simply having more access to extra resources and time to develop these skills. Other areas to consider are posture, lighting, angle of table,

correct pencil grip etc. More information about our handwriting intervention can be found in the Appendices.

Left Handed Pupils

At least 10% of the population are left handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left handed pupils and make appropriate provision which may include some of the following:

- Ensuring that left handed children sit on the left of right handed children so their arms don't collide
- Left handed children usually need to have the paper slightly to the left of centre to their body and should be encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so they can see what they have written
- Ensuring a left handed writing mat is provided if needed
- An awareness that it is difficult for left handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models to them. Teachers should demonstrate letter formation to left handed children on an individual or group basis even if the resulting writing is not always as neat

Assessment procedures

Teacher assessment of handwriting is very important in ensuring children's progress towards legible, joined handwriting. However, it is not seen as valuable for children to handwrite a piece of writing to make a 'snapshot' judgement. Instead, the on-going assessment of handwriting when it naturally occurs within the curriculum is of most benefit as is the provision being made within the classroom based on these assessments.

Suggested activities to increase speed and fluency

This does not usually take place until the end of Stage 2 and into Stage 3

- Dictation within spelling
- Rewriting a piece of work they are proud of in their best handwriting for display

Resources and equipment in school

- Sloping surfaces
- Sand trays
- Roll 'n' write
- Pencil grips
- Left handed scissors in each classroom
- Left handed rulers
- Learn to Move intervention
- Fine Motor and Gross motor resources can be found in FS and KS1 classrooms

Handwriting using a variety of media

Children should be exposed to a variety of tools to mark make and write with from a young age. There should not be an age limit on pens or on the use of ICT to support their writing. Instead, all patterns and handwriting should be encouraged and guided whatever their preferred use of media

Monitoring

The handwriting skills developed in this policy must be applied to all pieces of writing the children do. Teachers ensure the application of handwriting skills by:

- Reminding children of standards of writing and presentation at the beginning of lessons across the curriculum
- Comparing handwriting in handwriting books with writing in other books across the curriculum
- Ensuring children improve the presentation of final draft written work if it falls below school expectations
- Literacy leader to monitor handwriting and presentation in books from across the curriculum regularly and provide feedback to teachers
- Teachers model good handwriting skills during shared and guided writing. They follow the handwriting policy when writing comments in children's books

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Date effective | July 2021 | Approval | LGB |
| Maintenance | SLT | Role/responsibility | Lisa Keys - Literacy Lead |
| Date of next review | November 2022 | Date of last update | November 2021 |

Appendix 1

Leaflet to parents providing information about how they can help develop handwriting at home.



How to help your child's handwriting at home

At Damers First School we believe that handwriting is a movement skill that is best taught by demonstration, explanation and practice. Ultimately we want our children to develop a legible and fluent handwriting style. Before they can get to this point there are a few vital skills that need to be in place alongside positive encouragement and celebration of their writing. This leaflet hopes to show you some of the things you can do to support your child at home.

Foundation

The emphasis at this stage is with movement. Close attention is given to pencil grip, correct posture, the positioning of the paper and the organisation of writing space. Fine and gross motor skills are being developed through the use of:

- Gross motor skills are developed by using their fingers to sky write letters and patterns in the air and making letters with their body.
- Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting and tracing.

Foundation/Key Stage 1

Building on these early skills, children are encouraged to develop a legible style. Children are taught to form their letters in the following formation groups:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <u>The 'c' set (Curly Caterpillars)</u> | c | o | a | d | g | q | e | f | s |
| <u>The 'l' set (Long Ladders)</u> | i | l | t | j | u | y | | | |
| <u>The 'r' set (One-armed Robots)</u> | h | n | m | r | b | p | k | | |
| <u>The 'z' set (Zigzag Letters)</u> | v | w | x | z | | | | | |

Children are encouraged to use a variety of media to write with. When ready basic joins are taught alongside phonics teaching where digraphs (2 letters 1 sound) are written as one unit e.g. 'ch' and letters that do not join are identified.

Year 2/Key Stage 2

The children now need to consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. By year 3 most children should be using joined handwriting at all times. Fluency and speed are built up through practice.

Attached is a copy of the alphabet showing the correct starting point and direction of each letter and a copy of the cursive script we use in school to help you encourage this at home. Provision should be provided for left-handed children and if you are concerned with your child's handwriting please see your child's class teacher who will be happy to talk things through.

The four basic handwriting joins

- *diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ai ar un*
- *horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g. ou vi vi*
- *diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ab ul it*
- *horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g. ol wh ot*

Alphabet showing starting point and direction of each letter



Little Wandle patter to accompany letter formation

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space. | Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy. | Curly around the cat. | Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet. | Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk. | Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings. | Round the goat's face, up to his ear, down and curl under his chin. | Down, up and over the helicopter. | Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot at the top. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All the way down the jellyfish; dot on its head. | Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner. | All the way down the lollipop. | Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose. | Down the stick, up and over the net. | All around the octopus. | Down the penguin's back, up and around its head. | Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end. | From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow. |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail. | From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger. | Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick. | Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top. | From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again. | Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. | Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round. | Zip across, zag down and across the zebra. | |

Appendix 3

Alphabet showing our school style of handwriting.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Appendix 4

Suggested sequence for teaching

Single letters

- c a d g q o
- e s f
- i l t
- u y j k
- r n m
- h b p
- v w x z

Joins

Introduction of four basic handwriting joins

- un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung
- ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti
- ink unk
- od pg re ve oon oom
- wl vl of ff fl flo

Further practise of the four handwriting joins

- in ine
- ut ute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es
- ri fu ry
- oa ad as
- ee ea ed
- ow ov ox
- ky hy ly
- ha ta fa
- od oo og
- er ir ur
- ai al ay
- o you oi
- re oe fe
- fu wu vu
- ot ol ok
- ai al ow ol
- ning ping ting

- oc od oo
- ake ome are
- fla flo fle
- who wha whe
- ie in il
- inly ky ny
- ap ar an
- ick uck ack
- he
- we
- re
- fte fir fin
- wra wri kni
- ii ll tt rr nn mm cc oo dd ss ff ee
- ew ev ex
- th ht fl
- ac ag af

Appendix 5

Suggested Pattern for letter formation

This chart shows the oral patter for the formation of lower case and capital letters.

| Long ladder family | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>l</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down and flick. |
| <i>i</i> | Start at the top, come down and flick. Lift and dot. |
| <i>t</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down and curve. Lift and cross. |
| <i>u</i> | Start at the top, come down and curve. Go back up, come back down and flick. |
| <i>j</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down and curve to the left. Lift and dot. |
| <i>y</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down and curve. Go back up, come all the way down and curve to the left. |
| One-armed robot family | |
| <i>r</i> | Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over. |
| <i>b</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up and go all the way round. |
| <i>n</i> | Start at the top, come down, bounce back up, go over, down and flick. |
| <i>h</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up, go over, down and flick. |
| <i>m</i> | Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over. Down, bounce back up and over. |
| <i>k</i> or <i>k</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce half-way back up. Loop. Slope and flick. |
| <i>p</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down. Lift. Slope and flick. |
| <i>p</i> | Start at the top, come all the way down, bounce back up and go all the way round. |
| Curly caterpillar family | |
| <i>c</i> | Make a curve. |
| <i>a</i> | Make a curve, go up to the top, come back down and flick. |
| <i>d</i> | Make a curve, go all the way up, come back down and flick. |
| <i>o</i> | Make a curve, go all the way round. |
| <i>s</i> | Make a curve, slope, make a curve back again. |
| <i>g</i> | Make a curve, go up to the top, come all the way down and curve to the left. |
| <i>q</i> | Make a curve, go up to the top, come all the way down and flick. |
| <i>e</i> | Start with a loop then make a curve. |
| <i>f</i> | Make a curve, come all the way down, curve to the left. Lift and cross. |
| Zig-zag monster family | |
| <i>z</i> | Go across, slope, go back across. |
| <i>v</i> | Slope down, slope back up. |
| <i>w</i> | Slope down, slope' back up. Slope down again and slope back up. |
| <i>x</i> | Slope. Lift and slope across. |

L Start at the top, come down and go across.
I Start at the top, come down. Lift. Across at the top. Lift. Across at the bottom.
T Start at the top, come down. Lift. Across at the top.
U Start at the top, come down. Curve back up.
J Start at the top, come down. Curve to the left. Lift. Across at the top.
Y Slope down, slope back up. Lift. Come down from the point.

R Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Go all the way round and slope.
B Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Go all the way round and all the way round again.
N Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Slope and straight up.
H Start at the top, come down. Lift. Start at the top come down. Lift and across in the middle.
M Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Slope down, slope up and straight down.
K Start at the top, come down. Lift. Slope in, slope out.
P Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Go all the way round.

C Make a curve.
A Slope to the left. Lift back to the top. Slope. Lift. Across in the middle.
D Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Go all the way round to the bottom.
O Make a curve, go all the way round.
S Make a curve, slope, make a curve back again.
G Make a curve. Lift and go across.
Q Make a curve, go all the way round. Lift and slope across.
E Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Across at the top. Lift. Across in the middle. Lift. Across at the bottom.
F Start at the top, come down. Lift. Back to the top. Across at the top. Lift. Across in the middle.

Z Go across, slope, go back across.
V Slope down, slope back up.
W Slope down, slope back up. Slope down again and slope back up.
X Slope. Lift and slope across.