

Handwriting Policy

Dalystown N.S.

The staff, principal and students identified handwriting and presentation skills as an area to work upon. Adhering to high expectations has always been imbedded in the ethos of our school and will continue to be so.

The primary purpose of writing is expression and communication. The ultimate aim of the curriculum is that each child would develop a legible, fluent and personal style of handwriting. (English curriculum p.52) As handwriting is a skill it will require practice at regular intervals. Short but regular practice is recommended. Children will develop handwriting skills at different rates. In Dalystown NS we encourage the use of the cursive style print in the Junior classes and develop upon this in the middle and senior classes. We seek to enable the children to develop their own style and a legible style for use throughout their lives.

Aims

The policy aims:

- to ensure good letter formation from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.
- to ensure that all children are using the correct pencil grip
- to ensure legibility of all writing to ensure consistency in letter formation from class to class

Writing guidelines

- Preparation: pre-writing activities in Infant classes include scribbling, colouring, rainbow colouring, channelling, tracing, copying, patterns, mazes and activities to help develop fine motor skills
- Pencil grip: Pick up the pencil between the thumb and index finger, flick it back and place the middle finger underneath. Most letters are formed without lifting the pencil off the page, for a few letters (t, i, j, x, F, K, Q, X) two movements will be required, For H, three movements will be required.

Hold pencil with a light grip.

1. Thumb holds pencil.
2. First finger rests on top of the pencil.
3. Pencil rests against third finger.

Left hand



Right hand



- Posture: Sit at a table with both feet on the floor. Pull the chair in and sit up straight. The non-writing hand should steady the paper.
- Paper angle: Keep the paper/copy to the right/left of your body, depending on whether writing with the right/left hand. Angle the paper/copy, more if writing with the left hand. Place the writing hand below the writing line.
- Practice (letter formation is clearly illustrated and an alphabet reference may be provided for pre-cursive and cursive scripts).

Self Assessment

A set of classroom handwriting questions might be adopted to support pupil self assessment:

- Did I leave equal spaces between words? Did I leave slightly larger spaces between sentences?
- Did I make all tall letters and CAPITAL letters the same height?
- Did I put all full stops sitting on the bottom line?
- Make sure all capital letters are the same height?
- Make sure all spaces between words are the same size?
- Make sure the tails of g, f, j and y are the same?
- Make sure d and t are not as tall as b, h, k and l?

Writing instruments

The writing instruments that the children use will depend on their readiness.

- Junior Infants- triangular shaped pencils.
- Senior Infants- triangular shaped pencils.
- 1st Class -transition from a HB triangular pencil to a normal HB pencil.
- 2nd/3rd Class-HB pencil and the use of red pen for ruling the copies, titles, dates, underlining, correcting and editing. Pencil is used for all other work.
- 4th Class -In 4th Class children work towards earning a pen licence which is achieved by a continued high standard of handwriting. Once they achieve their pen licence they are encouraged to use a pen for writing exercises.

- The use of pen is continued in 5th and 6th Class, as long as the children have earned and kept their pen licenses.

SEN Children

Children with SEN will be encouraged to follow the cursive style. However, if cursive writing is proving very challenging other methodologies will be used such as script handwriting, the Handwriting Without Tears programme and Speed up programme. We will also encourage all children to engage in typing skills using the iPads, as an alternative to handwriting (if the need arises).

Success Criteria

The practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

- consistent teacher observation of pupils' handwriting in copybooks at school and also in homework
- displays of the children's writing in the classrooms and school
- positive feedback from staff, students, parents and inspectorate

Dalystown NS adopted this whole school approach to cursive handwriting. In order to establish this new approach effectively the staff collaboratively decided to introduce The Go with the Flow programme.

Junior/Senior Infants: Go with the Flow A & B

1st/2nd Class: Go with the Flow C & D

3rd/4th Class: Go with the Flow E & F

5th/6th Class: Go with the Flow G & H

Roles and responsibility of the policy

The Board of Management and staff of Dalystown NS have been responsible for supporting, developing, implementing and evaluating this policy.