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Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S.
Cursive Handwriting Policy

Introduction

A fluent, cursive and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. This is an entitlement that needs skilful teaching if each individual is to reach their full potential at primary school.

Aim:

Our aim is that the children will be able to write clearly, fluently and quickly so that they can cope with the everyday demands of life and school. The British Dyslexia Association suggests that advantages to using cursive script are that:

- Making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q)
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling

The children are taught Cursive Script through purposeful guided practice. They foster a comfortable and legible cursive handwriting style. Children in Junior and Senior Infants are taught in conjunction with the 'Go With The Flow' Programme. They will learn good control and co-ordination in both large and small movements, learning how to handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils, for pre-cursive writing.

Throughout the rest of the school, handwriting practice will take place using the same scheme mentioned and handwriting copybooks. Each class teacher will spend Term 1 focusing and revising correct Pencil/Pen Grip along with correct letter formation. A display board in the school will exhibit progression through the school on a termly basis. There is a model for individual letters which will be available for all children to view in classrooms. See Appendix 1 and 1 (a).

Objectives

- To understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate their meaning clearly
- To take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of achievement
- To be able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively
- To use their skills with confidence in real life situations
- To develop a fluent, joined and legible style of writing where letters are accurately formed and consistent in size, and ascenders and descenders are in proportion and predominantly parallel
- To enable children to achieve correct letter movement for both left and right-handed writers.

Junior Infants:

Sept & Oct Children are involved in pre-writing activities to develop their fine motor coordination skills, manipulative skills and hand-eye co-ordination.

From November Children practise forming letters using a variety of materials, such as sand and paint. Children learn the letter shape. The correct pencil grip will be taught. See Appendix 2 for rhymes and Appendix 3 for Channelling folder diagrams. A SET member will give In Class Support weekly.

Differentiation according to a child's developmental stage will be of paramount importance in Junior Infants.

In Term 3 The SET along with the Class teacher will engage in station teaching where one of the stations will be Cursive Writing and the further development of.

Some children may be ready to 'join' earlier than others who may require more general hand co-ordination activities. SET may support those having difficulty in 'Cracking Cursive' Group.

From Sept 2019 All lower case letters will be taught in Junior Infants and joining of letters will start when ready.

Senior Infants:

Sept & Oct Revision of lower cases letter takes place.

From Nov. Upper case letters will be taught.

Children who require more support will be identified and helped through station teaching with SET intervention year round. Pencil grip will be reinforced and where necessary, corrective rubber pencil grips for those needing them will be used.

By the end of the year It is expected that all children will be writing in Cursive Script. Handwriting is taught frequently and discretely through direct teaching so that pupils form letters correctly and confidently.

First Class:

First Class will consolidate the cursive script and will focus on refining joins and overall presentation of handwriting. By the end of First Class it is expected that all children will be joining words with confidence and control.

Second Class onwards:

Term 1 will revise letter formation and joining. Children will have regular handwriting practice throughout the year using the 'Go With The Flow' programme. With practise, legibility will be increased, consistency and quality of their handwriting will improve.

Curriculum advice:

Pupils should be taught to:

- ✓ sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- ✓ begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place

- ✓ understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these
- ✓ form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- ✓ start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- ✓ write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters
- ✓ use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

NOTE: *Children who have not yet developed a fluent handwriting style in independent writing by the end of First Class will be placed on an individual handwriting program.*

Left-handed children

Left-handed children may experience more difficulty with handwriting than right-handed children.

As long as support is given, there is no reason why the left-handed child should not achieve fluent legible handwriting. Left-handed children should be seated to the left of any right-handed child, but not with their left to a wall or other obstruction. There must be sufficient space to the left of the left-hander to enable them to place their paper in a comfortable position.

Young left-handed children tend to hold their pencils close to the lead and thus cover their writing with their hand. This means that although they know there are spaces between the words, their writing appears without any. Teachers are to ensure that the pencil grip is high enough from the paper to leave a gap, yet remain comfortable. This can be achieved, if needed, by using the corrective rubber pencil grips.

Teacher's Handwriting

The teacher's handwriting is the model for the children. All teachers should aim to produce quality writing at all times. It should match the school style at all times. When a teacher is demonstrating handwriting they will take the left-hander into account and ensure that the demonstration allows the child to copy movements accurately.

SET

SET should use the school style when writing in the children's books so that the models offered to the children are consistent.

Worksheets / Whiteboard work

This should match the style and stage of development of the class level.

Displays

There should be a model for letter formation accessible to children at all times. Displays should also reflect the cursive script. Some displays may use print as a model for how text looks in books.

A.E.N.

At Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. we teach handwriting skills to all children, whatever their ability. Teachers will need to be sensitive to the needs of children with Additional Educational Needs and to genuine developmental needs. Children with fine or gross motor problems will have opportunities for extra support in a small group. Work can be adapted as necessary. Children with AEN may attend groups such as Fine Motor Stations or *Cracking Cursive.

Handwriting Implements

- **Junior Infant & Senior Infants** - Variety of suitable implements e.g. crayons, pencils, large felt pens, sand trays.
- **First, Second, Third & Fourth Classes:** Pencils, crayons, felt pens where appropriate to the work.
- **Fifth and Sixth Classes:-** Handwriting pens or cartridge pens for all children for all class work once Pen License has been issued. No ink in Maths books. No biros or gel pens are to be used.

See Standardisation of Work document Appendix 4.

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

The policy will be supported, developed and implemented by all staff members under the guidance of the designated English Co-ordinator:

(b) Timeframe: 3 years beginning June 2019.

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure its optimum implementation. We aim to review this policy 3 years from time of implementation. During this time any issues arising or minor modifications which need to be made can be dealt with at staff meeting level.

Those involved in the review will be :

- Principal
- Post holder
- Class teachers
- BOM / DES

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its next meeting.

Signed :..... **Date:** Tues June 18th 2019

Michael J. Hunt

Chairperson B.O.M.

Signed :..... **Date:** Tues June 18th 2019

Neil Cadogan

Principal.