



Lacewood Primary School

Handwriting Policy and progression Document

At Lacewood Primary School we follow the Martin Harvey method for teaching handwriting along with programs such as “Squiggle while you wiggle” and “Letter-join” for reinforcement and consolidation activities. This means that we do not follow a bought ‘scheme’; rather we use a consistent approach of teaching handwriting throughout the school using Martin Harvey’s guidelines and clear terminology.

The approach progresses through the school with an emphasis being placed on the use of consistent language

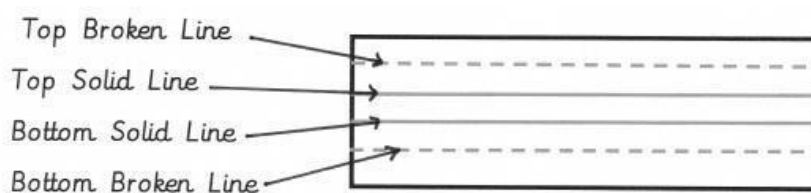
Prior to a handwriting session, staff will ensure that the children are prepared to write by...

BBC – Bottom Back in Chair

TNT – Tummy Near Table

Six feet, two hands – chair and child feet plus one hand to write with and one hand to hold the page still.

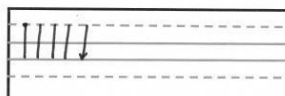
During a handwriting session, staff will remind children of the following key elements of letter formation and where letters sit on the line by...



Short Lines



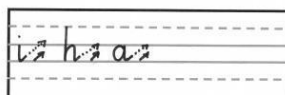
Tall Lines



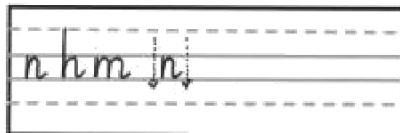
Tail Lines



North-east Joining Line
or
Diagonal joining stroke



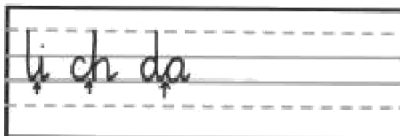
Narrow bridges



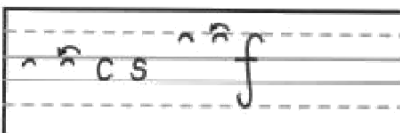
Letters with triangles



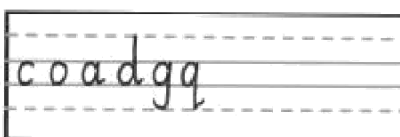
Joins with triangles



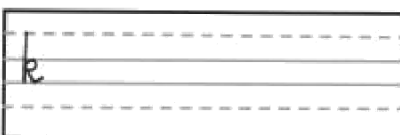
Coat hanger hooks



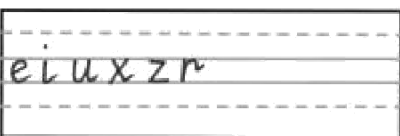
Egg shapes in the coat hanger letters



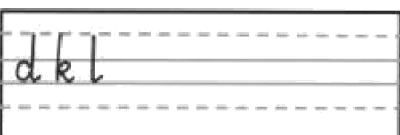
Shoe lace k



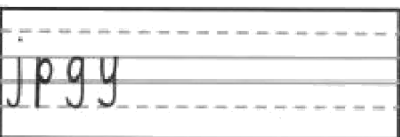
Small letters



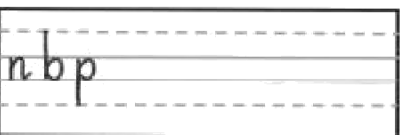
Tall letters



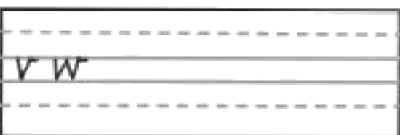
Tail letters



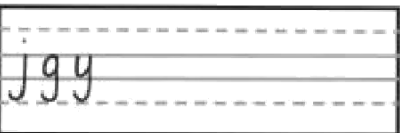
Narrow letters



Letters with sharp points

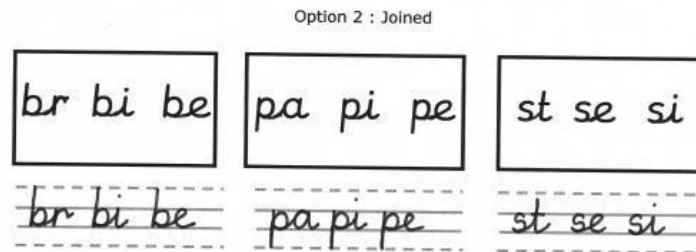


Narrow curved tails



All staff will refer to the document '**Achieving Excellence in Handwriting**' (see shared: learning toolkits: handwriting) for clarification on letter formation, positioning on the line and joining.

The letters b, p and s will be joined using option 2:



Structure and progression through school

EYFS

In EYFS we focus primarily on the gross and fine motor skills development needed to support the confident and competent handwriting fluency needed as children progress through school.

In FS1 pupils focus on gross motor physical development and co-ordination, developing core strength and upper body arm actions to support this, alongside generic provision that is aimed at physical development such as outdoor water play and mark making on vertical surfaces etc.

As pupils develop their gross motor skills through FS1 and FS2, we then support them in developing fine motor skills and finger dexterity to enable them to hold and manipulate a variety of hand held tools, including pencils. We offer a wide range of opportunities to explore hand held tools and also offer focussed activities, such as dough disco, to support hand and finger agility and dexterity.

Once pupils are ready to access the RWI phonics program we use the handwriting phrases and techniques from that program to teach letter formation. Alongside this, in FS2 we plan opportunities for pupils to explore, refine and rehearse a range of handwriting patterns – including some that prepare them to access the Martin Harvey scheme – such as concentric circles, waves, reverse arches etc.

At the end of FS2, any child who has not mastered correct pencil grip will be identified and targeted for further handwriting intervention support in Y1.

Key Stage 1

During the initial phase, children in Years 1 and 2 will have a minimum of 3 handwriting sessions per week. This may rise to daily sessions if class teachers feel that the children would benefit from a brief intensive period.

Sessions will be no longer than 20 minutes and will always start with a warm up activity taken from the Achieving Excellence document.

Handwriting practice will be on pre-printed guidelines and will be kept in individual handwriting folders.

Key Stage 2

During the initial phase, children in Years 3-6 will have a minimum of 3 handwriting sessions per week. This may rise to daily sessions if class teachers feel that the children would benefit from a brief intensive period.

Sessions will be no longer than 20 minutes and will always start with a warm up activity taken from the Achieving Excellence document.

Handwriting practice will be on pre-printed guidelines and will be kept in individual handwriting folders, progressing on to plain paper using guidelines and paper clips. All practice sheets will be kept in individual handwriting folders.

Left Handed Writers

All children, who are writing with their left-hand, are identified and added to class tracking information. This information is shared and reviewed with SLT in data meetings and also during transition to new classes to ensure any intervention support required can be planned and provided.

At Lacewood we recognise that teaching a child to write with his or her left hand is not just the opposite from teaching how to write right-handed. Languages that are written left-to-right, like English, are more difficult to write with the left hand. A right-hander writes away from his body and pulls the pencil, while a left-hander must write toward his body and push the pencil.

If a left-handed child is only permitted to write with the left hand but not taught how to write, the child may develop a needlessly uncomfortable, inefficient, slow, messy way of writing that will be a lifelong hardship. Therefore, it is especially important for parents and teachers to understand how to teach and support left-handed children to write correctly.

The most important factors are:

- **The position of the writing paper.**
- **The position of the arm and wrist.**
- **The grip on the writing instrument.**
- **The correct seating position.**

The "hooked" style of writing that is often seen in left-handers (see Figure 1) results from lack of proper training. This is not how a left-hander should write. Left-handers adopt this posture because they are trying to see what they are writing and not smear what they have just written with their hand, while maintaining a right-slant to their letters. These problems are better overcome by paper positioning and pencil grip (with the understanding that a right-slant is not mandatory, that upright or left-slanted letters are acceptable) (REFS: Clark 1959:7; Szeligo et al. 2000).

hook style, (c) MK Holder

Figure 1. "Hooked" writing

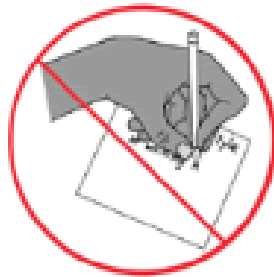


Figure 1. "Hooked" writing

Position of Paper

For a left-handed child, the paper should be positioned left of the child's midline, and tilted so that the top right corner of the paper is closer to the child than the top left corner (see Figure 2). The paper is placed so that the child's hand is to the left of, and away from, the body at the start of the writing line, and ends the line with the hand closer and in front of the body or slightly to the left of midline. The angle that the paper is tilted will vary according to individual children. The important thing for the child to remember is to keep the arm perpendicular to the bottom of the page (see Figure 2). The wrist should be straight (not bent). And the writing hand should be below the writing line.

Teach left-handed children to remember three things as they learn to write:

- Grip the pencil ~ 2.5 cm (1 inch) to 3.8 cm (1.5 inches) from the point,
- Tilt paper so that arm is at right-angle to bottom edge of the paper.
- Write with the hand below the writing line and the wrist straight.

Left-handed writing, (c) MK Holder

Figure 2. Proper posture, paper position, and grip for left-handed writing

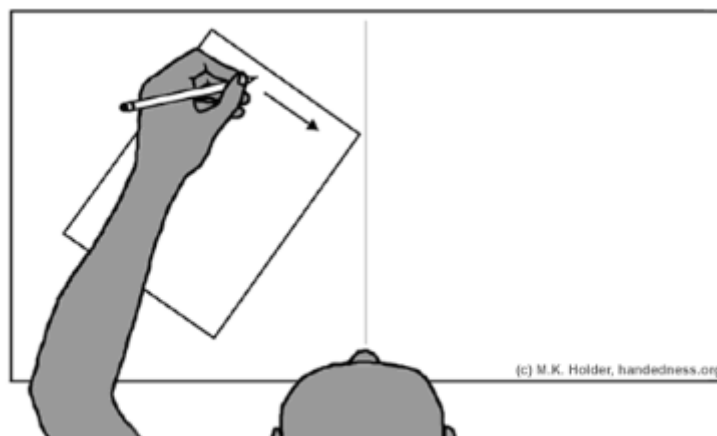


Figure 2. Proper posture, paper position, and grip for left-handed writing

Pencil / Pen Grip

Left-handed writers need to grip the writing instrument far enough back from the point to be able to see what is being written, and also to not smear what has just been written. Teachers and researchers recommend the child grip the pencil around 2.5 cm (1 inch) to 3.8 cm (1.5 inches) from the point (REFS: Gardner 1945; Cole 1955; Clark 1959).

If the child tends to hold the pencil too close to the point, the teacher should make a mark on the pencil at the right distance, to remind the student where to grip the pencil. The wrist should be fairly straight, not bent sharply. A common problem for all young children learning to write is gripping the pencil too tightly, making writing tense and tiresome. Usually the child learns to relax his or her grip as writing develops, but teachers can remind students to hold the instrument gently. Frequent practice and letting the child write large letters, also helps children learn to relax their grip. The child will tend to naturally reduce the size of the writing as s/he attains better motor control (Clark 1959).

Mirror Writing

Mirror writing is writing left-to-write languages (like English) backwards AND also reversing the letters so that the writing only appears normal when held up to a mirror and the reflection viewed (see Figure 3).

Mirror writing, (c) MK Holder

Figure 3. Example of Mirror Writing

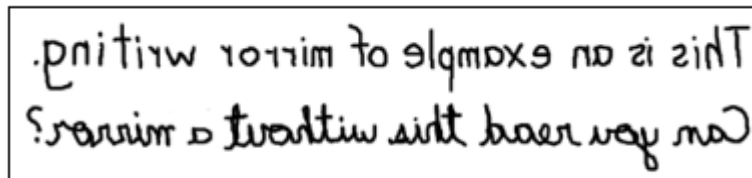


Figure 3. Example of Mirror Writing

If a left-handed child has a tendency to mirror write, the teacher can help him or her overcome this by making sure the child always begins writing on the left side of the page. This can be done by placing a mark on the left side of the child's paper showing which side to start writing from. If the mirror-writing persists, the teacher can try other strategies to help the child establish the correct direction and orientation of the letters. For instance, the child can be instructed to slowly and carefully copy text from a correctly written page. If the child has trouble even copying text, the teacher can have the child trace over correctly written words (in either case, remembering to mark the starting point on the left side).

Letter formation for left-handed children

A a

B b

C c

D d

E e

F f

G g

H h

I i

J j

K k

L l

M m

N n

O o

P p

Q q

R r

S s

T t

U u

V v

W w

X x

Y y

Z z

References Cited

Clark, Margaret M. 1959. Teaching left-handed children. (NY: Philosophical Library, Inc.)

Cole, Luella. 1955. Handwriting for left-handed children. (Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing Co.)

Gardner, Warren H. 1945. Left handed writing instruction manual. (Danville, IL: The Interstate).

Szeligo, F., B. Brazier, and J. Houston. 2003. Adaptations of writing posture in response to task demands for left- and right-handers. *Laterality*, 8(3): 261-276.

Holder, M.K. 2003. Teaching left-handers how to write. Handedness Research Institute papers. URL: handedness.org/action/leftwrite.html

