

MEADFURLONG SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

Updated May 2002

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At Meadfurlong Middle School we believe that:

- Pupils should be taught to take pride in their written work and should produce high quality presentation when appropriate. However, handwriting and presentation used in notes and first drafts will be quite different from that produced for publication and display purposes. The content of children's writing should take priority at the planning, drafting, revising and proof reading stages. However, at no time should it be unreadable!
- Pupils should be taught correct letter formation, size and orientation in both lower and upper case, and then how to join letters to produce joined up writing that is fluent, legible and speedy.
- Joined up hand writing should increasingly be used for most work, although in years 5 and 6, children should be taught correct printing techniques, and encouraged to use this style for appropriate tasks e.g labelling diagrams.
- Pupils should be taught correct posture, paper position and grip to help them with their handwriting.
- **Posture**
- Pupils sitting comfortably with feet flat on the ground and body upright but tilted slightly forward on a chair suited to table height.
- **Paper Position**
- Paper slanted to the left (right-handed) or right (left-handed) at approximately 25 degrees.
- **Grip**
- Firm but relaxed grip, with writing implement held between the thumb and the first finger, resting against middle finger.
- **Left-handed children**
- Writing from left to right is more difficult for left handed children. They should, therefore, be given more attention so that they do not pick up bad habits of position, posture and pen hold, which will deter a fast fluent and legible hand.
- Make sure they sit on the left of right-handed children.
- Ensure paper is tilted clockwise (approx. 25 degrees) so that they can see what they have written.
- Some left-handed children require a higher seat position so that they can view their work clearly and prevent their elbow locking into their side as they work across the paper.

- To prevent smudging, they should be taught to position their fingers about 1.5cm away from the end of their writing implement. Also, the pencil should sit in the 'V' between the thumb and forefinger, sitting parallel to the thumb and the wrist should be straight.
- Good spelling and good handwriting often go together. Whilst the skills of spelling and handwriting need to be taught separately, it is beneficial to practise previously taught spelling patterns/strings etc in handwriting lessons.

In order to achieve this we aim to provide:

1. Short, regular handwriting lessons – once, twice or three times a week, depending on the year group and needs of the children (**OUTSIDE OF LITERACY HOUR**)
2. Handwriting lessons with a clear focus, using objectives listed in the NLS document in order to ensure continuity and progression.
3. Opportunities for pupils to produce short pieces of work in their best handwriting for display purposes (Linked to handwriting lessons, occasional literacy lessons and other curriculum areas.)

Children should use pencil for notes, first drafts etc, but should use a good quality handwriting pen, not biro, for presentation purposes. However, in Year 4, and for a few children in other years, it may be more appropriate for them to use pencil for all types of writing.

Please note – NLS Developing Early Writing has an excellent section on handwriting.