



Handwriting Policy

Handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. It is a skill that children rarely acquire spontaneously. Even with expert tuition, it usually takes some time to perfect. As the child progresses through the school the requirement to write legibly and fluently, at speed, increases considerably and the cost of being unable to do so also increases.

Writing is a complex task which involves a combination of different skills including the physical co-ordination required for handwriting. There is a need for automaticity and the component skills of joining letters and spelling need to be in place by 11 years of age. Creativity will suffer if the child has to focus on the mechanics of writing.

Handwriting is best taught directly by demonstration, explanation and practice. At Loyola, it is our aim that every child will develop a fluent, legible style of handwriting. Capital, lower case letters and numbers should be used appropriately and letter/ number size should be consistent. We provide opportunities for children to develop, practise and perfect skills and provide targeted support for any child experiencing difficulty.

Aims

1. To have a consistent cursive approach across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
2. To have a range of handwriting styles – written and typed, on display around the school.
3. Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in continuous cursive handwriting.
4. Children to develop fluency and speed whilst writing, so that eventually the children are able to write the letters with confidence and correct orientation.
5. To raise children's self-motivation and esteem through the establishments of best handwriting practise.
6. To establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets the standard.

Teaching and Learning

Style



To achieve these objectives we have decided to adopt a continuous cursive script which joins all letters as recommended by the British Dyslexia Association. This enables the child to progress naturally and quickly from learning to form a single letter correctly to using the mastered letters in a joined up script.

The rules of Continuous Cursive help:

- to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke.
- with the flow of Cursive Writing as letters naturally flow into each other, it is impossible to write separate letters without joining.
- form spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness
- developing a child's visual memory
- all children's writing skills regardless of academic ability

Teachers and Teaching Assistants will model the agreed style when modelling writing.

Our agreed cursive style is:

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

Posture

- Chairs and desks within a classroom must be matched to the child's age and height
- Insist on a correct, balanced seating position.
- Their feet and the feet of the chair should be resting on the floor.
- A right handed child should have their book slanted slightly to the left. A left handed child should have their book slanted slightly to the right.
- Always make sure that the hand that isn't holding the pen/pencil holds the paper.

Grip



The tripod grip is recommended and pupils should be discouraged from gripping the pen/pencil too tightly or pressing too hard.

Pens and Pencils

Children must always use good quality, sharp HB handwriting pencils.

Blue handwriting pens and fountain pens will be used in handwriting lessons in Prep and from Elements to Figures once pupils have received their pen licences.

Rubbing out will be discouraged from Prep in preparation for writing in pen.

Some boys may need adjustments to these guidelines. This will be agreed with the SENCO and details will appear on their IEP/ One Page Profile.

Paper

Age appropriate lined paper will be used for handwriting tasks.

Handwriting Lessons

Handwriting is to be taught in regular, short, focussed lessons.

Lessons will start with warm up motor skills exercises.

Teachers will model movements and vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil in handwriting lessons.

Teachers and Teacher Assistants will check that pupils are forming letters correctly and have correct posture and grip.

Children should be encouraged to self and peer assess their work.

In Key Stage 1 pupils will have a short lesson every day.

In Key Stage 2 pupils will have at least 1 lesson per week.

Best handwriting will be encouraged and expected in all subjects, by all teachers.

Inclusion

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be given support to help to achieve their optimum handwriting level and style.



Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with specialist equipment such as pencil grips or wider lined paper. Some pupils may use a different style of writing or use pencil or a different type of pen, but only if this is advised by the SENCO / OT and is included in the pupil's IEP/ One Page Profile. Intervention is available for children who experience significant difficulties to practice pre writing skills and fine motor coordination.

Assessment

It is an essential part of the policy to assess handwriting at several levels:

1. Whole school assessment.
2. Class assessment
3. Individual assessment
4. Self-assessment
5. Peer assessment

Whole school assessment and class assessment

1. Is the writing generally legible?
2. Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
3. Are the joins made correctly?
4. Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
5. Is the writing properly aligned?
6. Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with age appropriate objectives?

Please see <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk> for further advice and examples of handwriting style and joins (Route D).

Loyola Handwriting Scheme of Work

Kindergarten

Pupils will -

- Engage in pre-writing or 'writing-readiness' activities.
- Practise holding a writing or drawing implement correctly. (not always a pencil – crayon, chalk, felt tip, paintbrush)
- Practise and enjoy mark making using a variety of implements.
- Make large and small marks using fine and gross motor skills
- Make patterns such as wiggles, curves, straight lines, zig zags and circles.
- Practise drawing shapes within bigger shapes, keeping in the lines.



- Use Fine Motor Skills activities like those found in Funky Fingers and Dough Gym to strengthen hands and fingers on a daily basis.
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns in a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays and Ipads.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation for letter formation.

Reception 1 and 2

Pupils will be taught to –

- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib.
- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.
- To understand that letters are written on a base line and that all cursive letters 'start on the line and end with a hook'.
- Begin to form joined-up cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understand different letter families.
- Where appropriate, objectives for Pre Prep 1 will be followed.
- Children need to be provided with opportunities to hold a range of writing implements, using the tripod grip, before the muscle memory becomes fixed.
- Shoulder movements also need to be developed to encourage upper body strength.
- When letters and numbers are taught, correct formation must be insisted upon and corrected where necessary. Children should be taught to use continuous cursive letters as described in the Loyola Handwriting Policy.
- Writing Readiness activities include – threading, construction apparatus, pegboards, sewing, weaving, tracing, stencils, colouring, painting, scissor skills, experimenting with a range of implements (pens, crayons, pencils, chalk, interactive whiteboard, sticks, paints, water); using a selection of materials (shaving foam, mud, wet/dry sand, water) including malleable materials (play dough, clay, mod rock, plasticine), finger and counting rhymes.

Reception and Pre Prep 1

More formal teaching should take place in Reception / Pre Prep 1, with frequent, direct and discrete teaching taking place each day.

Letter formation should be modelled and handwriting activities should be supervised to ensure that pupils do not form habits that are unhelpful later. Correct letter formation is crucial. Pupils should be able to form letters and numbers correctly and confidently. Left-handed pupils should receive specific training to meet their needs where appropriate.



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Preparatory School

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Letters should be taught in groups according to how they are formed (not according to Jolly Phonics / Letters and Sounds Teaching Order – Phonics and handwriting should be taught separately).

Handwriting Families are:

Curly caterpillar – c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s, x

Long Ladder – i, j, l, t, u, y.

One armed robot – b, h, k, m, n, p, r.

Zig Zag – v, w, z.

Pupils should learn how to:

- Sit at a table correctly, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the correct place.
- Form capital letters and digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which family and to practise these.

Key Stage 1 – Pre Prep 1 and 2

Pupils should revise and practise correct letters formation frequently. Handwriting should still be modelled and activities supervised to ensure letters are formed correctly. Pupils should be taught to join letters correctly. This should be a natural and easy step as children have already learnt the necessary ‘flicks’ in the continuous cursive style taught from Reception.

Pupils should be taught to:

- 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.
- At Loyola the only letters left unjoined are capital letters.
- 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.

Lower Key Stage 2 – Prep and Elements

In Prep and Elements pupils will join their writing. It is expected that pupils will write in a joined, cursive style throughout their independent writing and across all areas of the curriculum. Handwriting should still be taught directly and with some supervision of activities, particularly for those children finding it difficult to form letters correctly. The aim of handwriting in Prep and Elements is to increase the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This will support the development of pupils’ composition and spelling.



Pupils should be taught to:

- Use diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters.
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.

Prep pupils will start to practise writing in pen in handwriting lessons. In preparation for writing in pen, Year 3 pupils are encouraged not to use erasers and are taught to cross out errors neatly.

In the beginning Elements boys will receive pen licences when their teacher feels they are ready to write in pen. Pen licences will be presented at Mass. Pen will be used in all subjects except Maths where pencil can be used. It is expected that all pupils will write in pen by the Whitsun Term in Elements.

Pupils will use blue handwriting pens or fountain pens. (No ball points/biros/friction pens).

Inclusion

Some pupils may use a different style of writing or use pencil or a different type of pen, but only if this is advised by the SENCO / OT and is included in the pupil's IEP/ One Page Profile.

Upper Key Stage Two – Figures and Rudiments

Children should continue to practise their handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it so that any problems with forming letters do not get in the way of the children writing down what they want to say. There will be less direct teaching of handwriting in Figures and Rudiments, although those children finding letter formation difficult may need support and supervision during independent handwriting activities. Neat, joined handwriting should be insisted on by all teachers in all subjects.

Pupils should be taught to write legibly and fluently and with increasing speed.

Intervention groups for handwriting may be formed or individual pupils may have focussed support depending on the needs of the child. If any member of staff has concerns about the handwriting of a child or of their own knowledge when teaching handwriting they must liaise with the SENCO for support.

Please see <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk> for further advice and examples of handwriting style and joins (Route D).

C. Payne (March 2018)