

Handwriting Policy for Scoil Íde

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 help develop speed, accuracy and writing fluency.
- To ensure uniformity and consistency in letter formation from class to class.
- To provide children with a relevant life skill.
- To develop and improve fine motor skills in the early years.
- To facilitate the neat presentation of all written work.
- To help in the improvement of spelling.

General Writing Guidelines

Before any writing begins make sure children are sitting comfortably, they are holding their pencil lightly and that they have most of the forearm of their writing hand resting on the table.

They are encouraged to have the correct pencil grip. The pencil is held between thumb and first finger with the middle finger placed behind for support.

The left hand should be placed flat at the edge of the copy.

For left handers, writing from left to right can be difficult. If the child is left-handed they should hold the pen or pencil at least 2 cm away from the tip so that they can see what you are writing.

Junior Infants

- Children in Junior Infants are encouraged to draw.
- They complete various prewriting patterns and exercises to strengthen fingers and hands
- These patterns will also create awareness of left-right, top bottom orientation.
- The Jolly Phonics Programme is used to introduce children to letters in Junior Infants. With the introduction of each letter the children are taught how to form the letters correctly. The Jolly Phonics uses Sassoon Infant type face.
- Relevant rhymes for the letter formation are used. Several other techniques are used, such as finger tracing on the table, in the air or in sand and playdough.
- Children are encouraged to find a hand dominance and pencil grip that is comfortable and allows good writing. They are taught and encouraged to have good posture for writing.
- Children are expected to be able to write their first name.
- Pupils see teacher model good handwriting.

Children are introduced to letters according to groups:

1. Curly Caterpillars
2. Long Ladder Letters
3. One Armed Robots
4. Zig -Zag Monsters

Senior Infants

Children in Senior Infants use the Jolly Phonics 2 programme. We revise lowercase letters and digraphs taught in Junior Infants and teach the capital letters in the following order.

1. s, a, t, i, p, n
2. c, k, e, h, r, m, d
3. g, o, u, l, f, b
4. j
5. z, w, v
6. y

The children use the Jolly Phonics 2 Pupil Book and Spellbound-Folens

- Children are encouraged to write and draw frequently throughout the year.
- Emphasis on proper pencil grip and good posture is encouraged.
- Correct word spacing, punctuation
- Children are expected to be able to write their first and surname using capital letters when appropriate.
- Teachers model good handwriting.

First Class

- Consolidation and reinforcement of Senior Infant work.
- There is a greater emphasis on proper letter formation, pencil grip, writing posture and on the quality of presentation.
- Children are expected to be able to use capital letters and full stops when writing
- Children use their handwriting copies for practice of their letter formation.
- Teachers model good handwriting always.

Second Class

- In Second Class the cursive script is introduced. Teachers follow the Write On Programme - Work Book (Folens).
- Pupils use their handwriting to practise their writing.
- The cursive script for all lower-case letters is taught in second class.

The cursive script for all the upper-case letters is also taught.

- By the end of second class all pupils should be using the cursive script for all their writing
- Teachers model good handwriting always.

Third Class

- Teachers' model good handwriting always.
- The use of red pen is introduced in Third Class - this is used for ruling the copies, titles, dates, underlining, correcting and editing. Pencil is used for all other work.

Fourth Class

- In Fourth Class the children are refining and developing their handwriting skills and handwriting practice is continued.
- Teachers model good handwriting always.
- The use of red pen is continued in Fourth Class - this is used for ruling the copies, underlining, correcting and editing. Pencil is used for all other work.

Fifth and Sixth Class

- Consolidation and reinforcement of Second, Third and Fourth Class work.
- There is a greater emphasis on proper letter formation, pencil grip, writing posture and on the quality of presentation.
- Children develop a fluent personal style of handwriting.
- Children write for more sustained periods.
- Continuation of the use of red pen in Fifth Class.
- In Fifth Class children are given a pen licence after signing a copies contract.

Pencil Grip

The pencil is grasped between the tips of the thumb and the index finger and is supported against the side of the middle finger. The last two fingers are curved and rested against the table surfaces. The wrist is bent back slightly and the pencil is held about 1cm" from the tip (slightly more for left-handed children).

Writing Instruments

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

- In Junior Infants the children will write with triangular shaped pencils.
- Senior Infants continue using triangular shaped pencils and twistables.
- In First Class the children will use a regular HB pencil using the triangular shaped pencils until they are ready to move onto the normal HB pencil.
- In Second/Third/Fourth Class the children continue using the HB pencil.
- In Third Class the teacher introduces the children to using red pen when underlining, correcting or ruling their work.
- By Fifth and Sixth Class the children will have been introduced to using pen.

Headings, Layout and Spacing

- Margins will be drawn down the left side of the page from Third Class.
- The heading will be centred on the top line of the page. The date is to be used at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Children are taught to use the space of one finger between words.

Handwriting Lessons

- Good handwriting should be modelled at all times.
- There will be at least one handwriting lesson in each class each week.

Assessment and Success Criteria

- There will be constant teacher observation of pupils' handwriting in copy books at school and in homework copies.
- There will be a focus on continuous improvement.
- Teacher should display the children's writing -emphasis should be placed on improvement made in handwriting. Children should be encouraged to write final pieces of work in their best handwriting.
- At the end of the year, for assessment purposes and for School Report comment, end of year handwriting should be compared with the handwriting the child was producing at the beginning of the year.

Resources

- Jolly Phonics
- Write On -Folens
- Edco Digital Website
- Handwriting copies
- Chubby pencils and regular pencils - HB
- Pen