Handwriting Policy

Introduction:

At Sandal Magna Community Academy we believe that handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught regularly. It is a movement skill which affects all areas of written communication for all children. We therefore feel it should be practised correctly and regularly so to avoid ineffective handwriting styles that will be harder to correct as the child becomes older.

Aims:

- Encourage children to understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
- Children are able to legibly write in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
    - having the correct pencil grip
    - knowing all letters start from the line
    - forming all letters correctly
    - knowing the size and orientation of letters.
- Promote confidence and self-esteem in writing.
- Inspire children to take pride in their work.
- Support the teaching and learning of spellings.
- Help children recognise that handwriting is a lifelong skill and will be a fundamental element of all forms of written communication throughout their life.

Organisation and Planning:

- Staff will follow the Sheffield Handwriting Scheme and letters will be taught in family groups.
- Handwriting sessions will be taught throughout the whole of school.
- Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers will model and use printed cursive writing without starting on the line.
- When appropriate, children in Year 1 may be assessed by the class teacher as ready to use a joined cursive style.
- In Year 2, most children will start to use a joined cursive style starting from the line unless identified by Foundation Stage and Year 1 as needing to use a basic cursive print.
- There will be a minimum of three discreet sessions a week.
- Handwriting will be taught by the class teacher and techniques will be discussed with the class.
- Black pens will be used in Years 5 and 6 when their cursive style is deemed legible by the class teacher.

Techniques for teaching letter formation:

- Model good handwriting all the time.
- Demonstrate correct letter formation.

- Talk through the process.
- Encourage the children to verbalise the process.
- Children form letters in the air.
- Finger trace over tactile letters.
- Write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters).
- Draw round templates.
- Write in sand with finger or stick.
- Write with chalk on chalkboard.
- Form letters in beads with plasticine.
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of person in front of you.
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the table / palm of their hand.

Posture and seating for writing:

- The chair and table should be a comfortable height.
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor.
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch.
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor.
- Tables should be clutter free.
- Rooms should be well lit.
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left on their partners.

Advice for teaching correct pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen when introduced in Year 5 and 6) with a rounded nib.
- Pencils should be reasonably sharp
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point.
- The paper should be placed to the right slightly tilted to the left.
- Use the left hand to steady the paper.

For left handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger.
- Hold about 3cm from the tip.
- The hand should be kept below the writing line.
- The paper should be slightly to the right.

- Use the right hand to steady the paper.

NB It is very important that in a handwriting session or a lesson where writing is the focus activity that a right handed child is NOT seated next to a left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide.

Assessment:

The Senior Leadership Team and Middle Leaders will monitor writing and presentation in books regularly (see monitoring plan). The following will be considered:

- Is the writing legible?
- Are letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the movement when forming or joining letters?
- Are any of the letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently or rhythmically?
- Is the writing legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the Level Descriptions in the National Curriculum?