



# **PARKLANDS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **HANDWRITING POLICY**

Approved by the Governing Body of Parklands Infant & Nursery School

Date: Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (To be reviewed Oct 25)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs L Coates (Chair of Governors)



**Parklands Infant and Nursery School**  
**Handwriting Policy – March 2023**

**Aims**

At Parklands, we believe that all children should be encouraged to develop clear and legible handwriting to ensure that they acquire excellent communication skills. The aim of this policy is to set out the expectations for handwriting to ensure a consistent approach and high standards across the school.

**Strategy for teaching handwriting**

At Parklands, we have adopted the Ruth Miskin handwriting strategy to fit in with our work on Read, Write Inc. The strategy is split into 3 stages:

*Stage 1*

- a) Basic letter formation using checklists (see appendix 1). The checklists are not the same as the mnemonics taught in the Speed Sounds lesson, this is for separate handwriting practice. Start in Reception as soon as children start to learn Set 1 sounds. It doesn't have to be a whole class lesson, it could be small groups or even individual as the need arises. We must not let bad habits start at this stage. This is best done on plain paper to begin with, size is not important yet. The letter formation is taught in this order:
  - 'Around' letters: c a o d g q
  - 'Down' letters: l t b p k h i j m n r u y
  - 'Curly' letters: e f s
  - 'Zig-zag' letters: v w z x
- b) Relative size of letters (see appendix 2)  
Progress to wide-lined paper  
Boat letters: a c e i m n o r s u v w x  
Water letters: g y j p q  
Sun letters: b d h k l (f and t are a little bit smaller)
- c) Number formation (see appendix 3)

## Stage 2

Continue to develop relative size of letters (focus on refining the size of letters – see Appendix 4)

Introduce new characters that encourage writing letters with flicks – Year 1, Term 1 – for letters a, d, g, o, c, q, u, y, b, p

Introduce formation of Capital letters (appendix 5)

## Stage 3

Joining letters – it is expected that children who are ready begin to learn to join in Year 1 Term 3 and start using joins in their own writing during Year 2 and beyond (see appendix 6).

There are two types of basic join – the arm join (diagonal) and the washing line join (horizontal).

Each of these joins has three variations:

- Arm to boat e.g. ai
- Arm to sun e.g. ab
- Arm to sister e.g. ic
- Washing line join to boat e.g. wr
- Washing line to sun e.g. wh
- Washing line to sister e.g. va

Children should learn the actions and practise them over and over until they can write them effortlessly. They should then be encouraged to apply them in their own writing across all curriculum areas.

## **Key Teaching Points**

- Ensure children know, and are using, the perfect handwriting position:
  - feet flat on the floor
  - bottom at the back of the chair
  - body one fist from the table
  - shoulders down and relaxed
  - back leaning forward slightly
  - left/right hand holding the page
  - left/right hand ready in a tripod grip
- Children should be praised as they gradually learn to develop legible handwriting.
- It is vital that children understand that being a good writer is not the same as being a good handwriter.
- Children with poor motor control should be given plenty of opportunities for activities which practice a strong pencil grip – drawing, colouring, doodling, writing messages. Activities such as “Squiggle while you wiggle,” “Dough disco” and “Write dance” will be promoted to develop poor motor skills.
- Some children manage to do beautiful handwriting during the lesson but do not transfer this skill to their own writing. How can this be achieved? When we focus on one thing, we can do it better than when we are doing three things at once. Gently praise children who

transfer this skill, once you know they are able to do so. Reminding children to do their 'best' handwriting is usually unproductive.

- Explain to children that there are three speeds of writing.
  - Speed 1: smart writing for letters and presentation. This can be slow! Ask children to use this speed when they sometimes write the 'hold a sentence' in the Get Writing lessons – emphasise using joins. Gradually increase speed.
  - Speed 2: everyday writing that you use for others to read. You want it to be fast, but legible, so you can get ideas down quickly. This is the style you all use most of the time.
  - Speed 3: the writing you use for notes that nobody else will ever read. Not very tidy but you can still read it!
- Once children have learnt the basic joins, emphasis should be placed on writing quickly and easily so that children will find it easier to join than use quick printing.
- Joining is not something that should be taught to children who are still not forming letters correctly. Only teach joining when children are ready. It may be necessary to split the teaching of handwriting into different groups.
- For lesson plan proformas, see Handwriting Guidance document.

## Appendix 1 - Read Write Inc

- Listed below are the sounds in the order they are taught. Each letter has a checklist for writing.

### 'Around' letters



Checklist: caterpillar

- ✓ start at the caterpillar's head
- ✓ curl around the body



Checklist: apple

- ✓ start at the stalk
- ✓ draw a nice round apple
- ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down
- ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom



Checklist: orange

- ✓ start at the stalk
- ✓ draw a nice round orange



Checklist: dinosaur

- ✓ draw a big round bottom
- ✓ up the tall neck
- ✓ down the straight line to the feet
- ✓ draw a curl for the feet



Checklist: girl

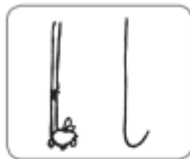
- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ draw a nice round face
- ✓ go back up to her bobble
- ✓ down her very straight hair
- ✓ draw a round curl to finish



Checklist: queen

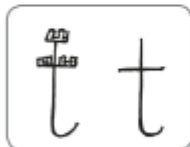
- ✓ start at her hair bobble on top of her head
- ✓ draw a nice round face
- ✓ go back up to her bobble
- ✓ down her very straight hair
- ✓ add a sharp flick to finish

### 'Down' letters



Checklist: Liam's leg

- ✓ start at the top of his leg
- ✓ go down his long leg
- ✓ add a curl for the shoe to kick the ball



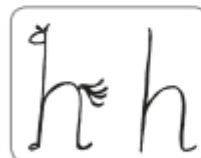
Checklist: tower

- ✓ start at the top of the tower
- ✓ draw a straight line down the tower
- ✓ add a curl at the bottom – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight line across the tower



Checklist: kangaroo

- ✓ start at the kangaroo's head
- ✓ draw down the long straight body – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight tail to the body – two-thirds of the way down
- ✓ draw a straight back leg from the body



Checklist: horse

- ✓ start at the horse's head
- ✓ draw down her long straight neck
- ✓ continue down to her feet
- ✓ go round her back
- ✓ draw a straight back leg
- ✓ add a little curl of dust as the horse runs away



Checklist: Nobby and his net

- ✓ start at Nobby's head
- ✓ go straight down Nobby
- ✓ go over the net – from Nobby's waist
- ✓ check the net is the same height as Nobby
- ✓ add a small curl for the grass



Checklist: robot

- ✓ start at the robot's head
- ✓ go straight down its body
- ✓ go over the robot's arm – from its waist



Checklist: umbrella

- ✓ start at the top of the handle
- ✓ draw down the straight line for the handle
- ✓ go round underneath the umbrella and back up the other side
- ✓ go down the umbrella
- ✓ add a little curl for the puddle



Checklist: insect

- ✓ start at the top of the insect's neck
- ✓ draw down the short straight body
- ✓ draw a curl for a small round tail
- ✓ add a little dot for the head



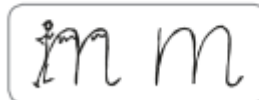
Checklist: yak

- ✓ start at the top of the first horn
- ✓ draw down the straight line for the first horn
- ✓ go round underneath the horns
- ✓ draw a straight line up for the second horn
- ✓ go down and curl under its head



Checklist: jack-in-a-box

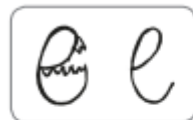
- ✓ start at the top of the jack-in-a-box's neck
- ✓ draw down the long straight body
- ✓ draw a smooth curl for the legs
- ✓ add a dot for the head



Checklist: Maisie and the mountains

- ✓ start at Maisie's head
- ✓ draw a straight body for Maisie
- ✓ go over the mountains – from Maisie's waist
- ✓ check the mountains are the same height as Maisie
- ✓ add a small curl for the grass

## 'Curly' letters



Checklist: egg

- ✓ draw up around the shell that needs to be cut off the boiled egg
- ✓ go round underneath the egg



Checklist: flower

- ✓ start at the top of the flower
- ✓ draw around and down the flower stem – then lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ draw a straight line across the leaves



Checklist: snake

- ✓ start at the snake's head
- ✓ curl one way
- ✓ curl the other

## 'Zigzag' letters



Checklist: vulture

- ✓ draw two straight lines for the wings – down, up



Checklist: worm

- ✓ draw four straight lines, all the same length – down, up, down, up



Checklist: zigzag

- ✓ draw three straight lines – across, diagonally back, across



Checklist: exercise


- ✓ start at the top left
- ✓ draw one straight line diagonally down – lift the pencil off the page
- ✓ start at the bottom left
- ✓ go diagonally up

## Appendix 2

Towards the end of Reception if possible but definitely in Year 1, handwriting will focus more closely on the presentation of writing as a whole piece. Children will be taught about the shape of letters and their relative size. They will learn how some letters have a similar appearance eg c a o and how the round part of some letters such as b, d, p and g are the same size as these. Children will be taught about sun letters, boat letters and water letters using the picture on the paper. They will also make sure that capital letters are clear by their size. All letters will be expected to sit on the line.

### **'Around' letters**

a d g c o q



### **Example words**


a add



dad cod



dog cog



'Down' letters

l h k b i j m



n p r t u y



Example words

bit lip rip hip



pip nip tip pin



tin pill till hill



bill





**'Down' letters with 'around' letters**

**Example words**

at lad log had



big bad mad



up rat pan



ran man



jam can



back pack



**'Curly' letters with 'down' letters**

e f s



**Example words**

let bet sit set



met fit fell



sell sent press



less



**'Curly' letters with 'around' letters**

**Example words**

sag cost sad



fan sat gas



soft



**'Zigzag' letters with all other letters**

V W Z X



**Example words**

zap fox win



buzz van



wish was zap



zoo box



what whizz



### Appendix 3

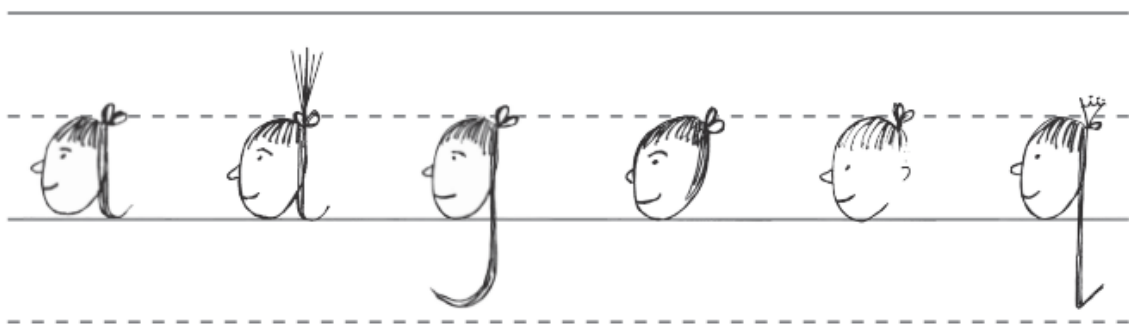
- 0 all around like an egg
- 1 straight down the line
- 2 hook the duck, across the pond
- 3 curve around, curve around
- 4 down, across and down the middle
- 5 straight neck, round body, flat hat
- 6 down we go, around the loop
- 7 across the hallway, down the stairs
- 8 start with an s then join it up
- 9 around the pond and down the path

### Appendix 4

For checklist for each letter, see Handwriting Guidance document.

**Introduce the formation family: six sisters, two uncles and their two pets.**

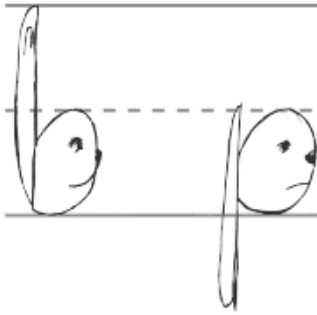
The six sisters – Annie, Dina, Gabi, Olivia, Carina and Queenie – all look the same. Their mother tells them that they must all have a different haircut so people can tell them apart!



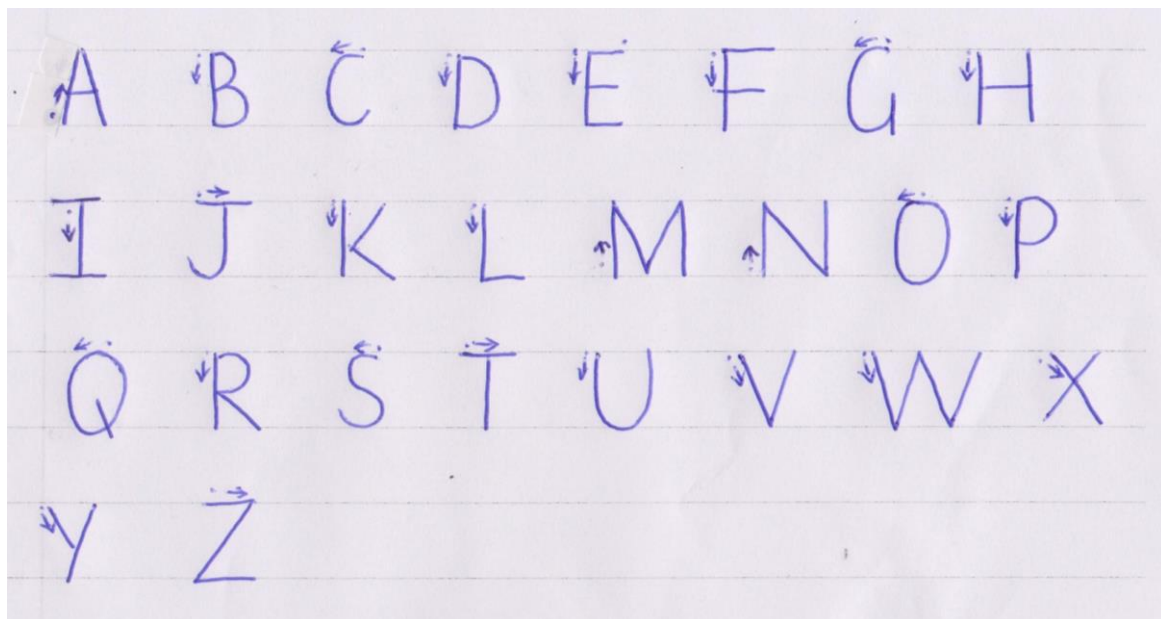
The uncles – Uncle Umberto and Uncle Yaseen – look just like the sisters, except they are bald on the top of their heads.



The family have a dog and a bunny whose faces are very similar too, but they have long ears.



## Appendix 5



## **a. The arm to boat join**

The arm join should not be too straight or too curly.  
(This depends on the school's adopted style.)

Phrase: 'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter).'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the curl gentle – not too round, not too spiky
- ✓ make the 'arm' sweep up in a gentle curve
- ✓ write the downstroke of the second letter very straight

Use for joining:

**a c d e h i k l m n t u**

to:

**e i j m n p r u v w x y z**

## **b. The arm to sun join**

The arm should meet the next letter just over halfway up. It should sweep smoothly into the sun letter.

Phrase: 'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter) and shoot up to the top.'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the join like an arm – not too straight, not too round
- ✓ continue the line up to the top of the next letter
- ✓ write the second letter carefully

Use for joining:

**a e i d h k l m n t u c**

to:

**b h k l t**

### **c. The arm to sister join**

The arm should touch the sister letter's forehead and then go to the back of the head as though resting a hand.

Phrase: 'Sweep up your arm to touch... (say letter) and stroke the sister's head.'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the join like an arm – not too straight, not too round
- ✓ continue the arm join over the head of the 'sister' letter – as though a hand is stroking back her hair
- ✓ go back along the head
- ✓ write the second letter carefully

Use for joining:

**a c d e h i k l m n t u**

to:

**a d g c o q**

### **d. The washing line to boat join**

The washing line should not be too droopy (the clothes get dirty) or too tight (the line breaks in the wind).

Phrase: 'Not too droopy, not too tight.'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the join like a washing line – not too droopy or too tight
- ✓ write the second letter carefully

Use for joining:

**v w r f o**

to:

**i j m n p r u v w x y z e**



## **e. The washing line to sun join**

The washing line should meet the next letter just over halfway up. It should sweep smoothly into the tall letter.

Phrase: 'Not too droopy, not too tight – and shoot up the next letter.'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the join like a washing line – not too droopy or too tight
- ✓ continue the washing line up to the top of the next letter
- ✓ write the second letter carefully

Use for joining:

**v w r f o**

to:

**b h k l t**

## **f. The washing line to sister join**

The washing line should touch the sister letter's forehead and then go to the back of the head – as though stroking back the sister's hair.

Phrase: 'Not too droopy, not too tight – and stroke the sister's head.'

Checklist

- ✓ write the first letter carefully
- ✓ make the join like a washing line – not too droopy or too tight
- ✓ stroke back the sister's hair
- ✓ write the second letter carefully

Use for joining:

**v w r f o**

to:

**a d g c o q**



## Letters that do not join to others (if using a non-curly style)

Schools need to decide whether or not to join the following letters: **b q g j s y z** onto the next letter. (Some schools only teach 'bi' and 'si' joined.)

It is not a statutory requirement of the 2014 National Curriculum that children use joined-up handwriting until Year 3, although it notes that children 'should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation'.