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# Handwriting Policy

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## 1 PHILOSOPHY

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Below are the expectations for each of the year levels which are based on the Australian Curriculum Year-level specific documents, under English - Literacy and the Handwriting in South Australia Curriculum which underpin SPW Handwriting policy.

Children should be taught handwriting explicitly and have time to practise so that they are able to develop a fluent and legible style, which will support their work in other curriculum areas.

The main stages in teaching children handwriting at primary school generally are:

- teaching grip, posture, letter shapes and movements;
- teaching linking\*;
- increasing speed and endurance without loss of quality.

Individual practise should follow the demonstration. During modelled whole-class and shared writing the teacher provides a strong handwriting model, articulating the process. Small group, individual writing and guided writing creates opportunities for specific instruction. During such times a small group approach provides the opportunity for the teacher to facilitate, guide, respond to and extend the learners thinking as they write. (Handwriting in the SA Curriculum 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, 2006)

Several year levels are combined, with thoughts and expectations to consider for Handwriting at SPW based on the work that has been completed in Team Meetings in 2008. These expectations provide a guide to the sequence of instruction, but are not intended as a rigid requirement for each year level. Nor should it be regarded as a fixed sequence of learning through which every child must go. Children of similar ages will show a wide range of skill in handwriting.

## 2 PRESCHOOL

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Children beginning Early Learning Centre will include some children who can draw objects and a few who can copy or even write their own names. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some may appear to have rarely used a pencil. Those who have not had the experience will need many opportunities to engage in manipulative activities to develop the co-ordination of hand and eye before handwriting instruction begins.

Children show their readiness to be taught how to form letters correctly through their physical dexterity, their efforts to copy on their own, and by their enthusiasm to write or through asking for assistance.)

- No formal instruction
- develop fine motor skills with activities involving pincer grip etc.
  - using tongs
  - pouring
  - open/closing fasteners
  - cutting
  - hand control/pencil grip
  - direction
  - copying/tracing/writing own name.

"S. Hill (2006, pp 283–286) proposes the following developmental model that represents stages in young children's writing:

- Beginning writing
- Early emergent writing
- Emergent writing
- Early writing
- Transitional writing

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- Extending writing

The first four stages, which are applicable to the birth to age 5 group. It is important to remember that children will progress through the different stages at different rates and ages, depending on their experiences and developmental abilities." **((Handwriting in the SA Curriculum 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, 2006) ACARA**

The Early Years Learning Framework Outcome 5 ("Children are effective communicators") incorporates pre-writing skills for children in the pre-school years.

### **3 RECEPTION/YEAR 1/YEAR 2 – SA BEGINNERS SCRIPT**

*The first objectives should be to help children to establish the correct grip, to begin letters at the correct point and to form letters and numerals correctly.* The Reception children: numeral formation 1-10. Order of letter introduction as per the Handwriting in the SA Curriculum 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, 2006, and content descriptors in the Australian Curriculum, using one of two letter formation approaches in the Foundation year ie Graphophonological or phonological approach.

Individual help during lessons so the possibility that children practise errors, can be avoided.

#### **3.1 LESSON FORMAT**

A typical handwriting lesson for the children includes exercises to practise handwriting movements, instruction in and practise of specific letters, and application of the letters taught. Several explicit lessons a week should be incorporated in the weekly programme. Letter focus of 2 letters per week (Reception).

#### **3.2 EXERCISES**

To assist the children; simple exercises which practise the movements for letters, especially in the early stages.

The four main purposes of exercises are to help children to:

- develop manipulative skill and control;
- learn to copy simple shapes;
- practise movements on which letters are based;
- develop visual discrimination.

Tracing of shapes lines, etc provides such opportunities.

*(When children have learnt a letter in a lesson and are applying it in words, the words chosen should reflect their basic reading vocabulary and their need to consolidate it.)*


#### **3.3 VERBALISING**

In regard to handwriting, verbalising means, the children watch and listen as the teacher models the letter and describes the movements, using such language as "Start at the top, down to the line, up, over, down, stop." The children then repeat the directions aloud as they practise the letter in the air, on paper, etc. As their confidence grows, they can assist in describing the sequence of movements, including reference to the starting point, direction of stroke, and stopping point.

Immediate feedback and correction in a supportive manner is important so that children do not fix incorrect forms in their minds by repeating them.

#### **3.4 CAPITAL LETTERS**

Teaching of the capital letters is usually left until children are able to write most of the lower case letters from memory with reasonable accuracy. Introduction from Year 1.

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The above expectations are to be linked with the Australian Curriculum.

| Reception (towards standard 1)      | Year 1 (towards standard 1)                               | Year 2 (standard 1)  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Attempts to use correct pencil grip | Demonstrates consistent formation of letters and numerals | Uses correct letter formation in lower and upper case  |
| Establishes hand preference         | Leaves spaces between words and letters                   | Uses correct formation on numerals   |
| Practises correct letter formation  | Writes on lines   | Places letters correctly in relation to the line   |
| Writes left to write                |   | Starts to use kicks (eg t)   |
|                                     |   | Produces neat, legible writing with consistent size/shape of letters and space between words |

## 4 YEAR 3-4 – BEGINNERS CURSIVE

The main objective in Years 3 (introduction) and 4 to teach the children and provide opportunities both formal and informal to practise linking words and the linking rules associated with the SA Modern Cursive by the addition of **links**.

*Although some children may begin to link letters independently, it is important to teach the children the correct way to join letters to one another, these 'links' are the basis on which fluency and speed are built. One formal handwriting lessons a week with a focus of one letter per session. The use of a slope sheet may be incorporated in Year 4. Year 3 classes are provided with one homework sheet a week during the year; Semester 1 print and Semester 2 SA Modern Cursive.*

The Year 4 children use cursive once they have received their pen licence.

## 5 YEAR 5


The main objectives of teaching handwriting in Year 5 are to:

- help the children consolidate their skill so they can write all upper and lower case letters automatically;
- help children to develop and maintain the quality of their handwriting.
- refining the process during their attempts to form a fast, legible style;
- enable teachers to diagnose the difficulties children are having and to correct them through small group instruction. The children may still require assistance on how best to make particular links.

The lesson format suggested for children in the Foundation-Year 4 years also remains appropriate at this level, with one formal lesson per week. This may include a presentation piece such as poetry or the daily writing up of the children's diary.

The above expectations are to be linked with the Australian Curriculum.

| Year 3 (towards standard 2)                              | Year 4 (standard 2)   | Year 5 (towards standard 3)                               |
|--|---|---|
| Forms letters of the alphabet and numerals correctly and | Writes using consistent shape, size, slope and formation of | Maintains existing style, developing consistency, fluency |

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| appropriately  | letters  | and legibility   |
| Uses lower and upper case letters of consistent size and formation                               | Links letters when writing                                   | Experiments with different writing instruments, surfaces and styles to note the effects of writing with speed. |
| Begins to use linked script  | Uses correct pencil grip and maintains correct body position | Practises note-taking at speed (eg telephone messages, recorded interviews)                                    |
| Uses relaxed posture and maintains finger movements and arm slide during cursive script patterns |  |  |

## 6 YEARS 6-7

By Year 7 a majority of children are able to form letters correctly and the objectives for handwriting, inclusive not only for specific lessons but for all written work, are to:

- Continue to assist children develop an individual style
- Assist the children to adapt handwriting, eg speed, fluency and endurance, to suit the nature/purpose of the work whilst maintaining the legibility. The writing up of the child's diary may also be part of formal handwriting learning.

## 7 CONSIDERATIONS

### 7.1 CHILDREN NEW TO THE SCHOOL

Children who begin at SPW during their primary school years (particularly Year 4 when cursive is established) and have been taught an alternative script may not be expected to change their style, as long as their handwriting is formed correctly, is legible and 'fluent'. This paragraph also applies to the Years 6 and 7 students.

### 7.2 EVALUATION

The children will receive feedback on their progress and extra support if necessary.

Assessment and monitoring will be ongoing by way of observation by the class teacher.


Examples of criteria by which children's handwriting can be evaluated are:

- shape, size, slope (consistency)
- formation of letters
- its general appearance and legibility;
- pencil grip;
- the fluency of movement.

*NB The quality of each child's writing in relation to his or her fine motor skill (co-ordination) and the effort the child makes to produce work of quality.*

The following assessment techniques could be used to assess learners' handwriting.

- Ongoing observation

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- Peer assessment
- Product analysis
- Conferencing

### 7.3 LEFT-HANDEDNESS

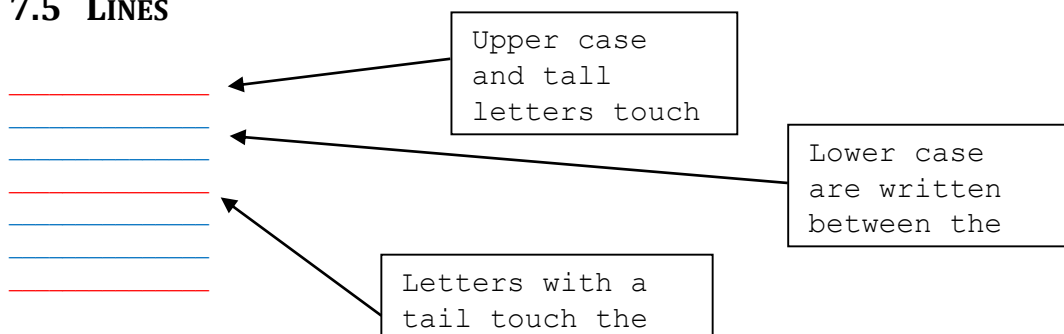
Important the children have sufficient elbow room and that their page is tilted so that they can see what they are writing; a higher chair may be of benefit. Sit on the left hand side of a right handed child.

Please refer to the [Learning Support information sheet](#) on the intranet.

### 7.4 HANDWRITING LESSONS

The explicit lessons will be of twenty to thirty minutes.

### 7.5 LINES



### 7.6 PENCIL GRIPS

Several forms of grips are available from Learning Support staff or may be purchased.

### 7.7 USE OF PENS

The children in the Junior Primary classes will be encouraged to experiment with a variety of writing instruments and to learn to use them appropriately. Children from Reception to Year 4 will use a HB lead pencil for handwriting lessons and for their day-to-day bookwork. Once the children know the basic letter forms and are using the SA Modern Cursive and have received a pen licence; teachers will introduce the use of the ball point pen to individual students.

### 7.8 CORRECTIONS


If a mistake is made the children should correct the error in one of three ways:

- I. Rule a line through the word using a ruler ~~hapy~~
- II. Rule a line under the word with a ruler hapy
- III. Place a cross next to the incorrect word hapy x

Correction fluid is not permitted and should not be kept by the children. It may be used at the teacher's discretion if a child makes a mistake in their good copy of a research project, etc. The Have-a-Go books are also another option that can be used.

### 7.9 LINKS

Children should not be required to join every letter of a word, nor, conversely, to keep every letter separate. They should join those letters that can be connected as per SA Modern Cursive script. The links are either

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horizontal (o) or diagonal (a), and the children will need to be taught in their use. Links are taught by joining together groups of two or three letters.

Begin teaching those letters which join with diagonal links.

## 7.10 PURPOSE

Children are to be made aware that the speed and quality of handwriting may vary according to the task ie an initial draft can differ from a final copy in quality; whilst legibility is still maintained. Also, the time to compose a first draft may be longer than producing the final copy.

## 7.11 AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM - SKILLS

Below is a summary from the Australian Curriculum:

### **Foundation English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations"

"(adopt) correct posture and pen grip"

"(learn) to produce simple handwriting movements"

"(follow) clear demonstrations of how to construct each letter "

"(learn) to construct lower case letters and to combine these into words"

"(learn) to construct some upper case letters"

### **Year 1 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters."

"(use) correct posture and pencil grip

"(learn) how each letter is constructed including where to start and the direction to follow"

"(write) words legibly using unjoined print script of consistent size"

### **Year 2 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower case letters."

"(use) correct pencil grip and posture

"(write) sentences legibly and fluently using unjoined print script of consistent size"

### **Year 3 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Write using joined letters and develop increased fluency and automaticity."

"(use) handwriting fluency with speed for a wide range of tasks."

### **Year 4 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Write using clearly-formed joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size."

"(practice) how to join letters to construct a fluent handwriting style."

### **Year 5 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic."

"(use) handwriting with increasing fluency and legibility appropriate to a wide range of writing purposes."

### **Year 6 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**


"Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to audience and purpose."

"(use) handwriting efficiently as a tool for a wide range of formal and informal text creation tasks."

### **Year 7 English-Literacy-Creating Texts**

"Consolidate a personal handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and supports writing for extended periods."



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## 8 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information regarding this policy is available from any member of the Executive Leadership Team.

### Relevant Legislation

None

### Related Policies

None

### Related Procedures & Standard Operating Procedures

None

### Related Forms & Checklists

None

### Related Safe Work Practices & Guidance Notes

None

### Related Other Documentation

None


### References

None

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
|                              | 27.10.2017  |
| <b>PRINCIPAL</b> (Signature) | <b>DATE</b> |

## APPENDIX A – SA HANDWRITING CURRICULUM

| <b>Early Years F-2</b>   | <b>Primary Years 3-5</b>   | <b>Middle Years 6-9</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>They focus within the handwriting program, includes specific lessons on correct letter and numeral formation, posture, paper placement, seated position and pencil grip.</p> <p>Depending on learners' needs and their developmental stages, educators focus on particular aspects of handwriting to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the purpose of legible writing</li> <li>the ability to differentiate between drawing and writing</li> <li>an understanding that writing can represent thoughts, ideas, messages and speech</li> <li>the development of fine motor coordination</li> <li>a writing-hand preference</li> <li>awareness of the terms and</li> </ul> | <p>Learners need time to consolidate and to move from print to cursive writing. They are working to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand the terms and concepts relating to</li> <li>written and printed material—spaces, words, letters, chunks of letters and directionality</li> <li>identify and form correctly the 26 lower-case and upper-case letters</li> <li>develop automaticity with letter patterns that appear regularly in English</li> <li>develop sufficient legibility and fluency to enable them to focus on the message, form and purpose of the writing</li> <li>develop further an understanding of the purposes of legible writing.</li> </ul> | <p>Once learners have a well-developed standard form, usually during the middle years of schooling, they may be encouraged to personalise their handwriting. (6/7)</p> <p>They may build on the basic style and adapt it to suit their writing purposes. Learners at this stage may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing a personalised style which is legible, fluent, durable and aesthetically pleasing 6/7</li> <li>using efficient deviations from the model form, if appropriate</li> <li>using embellishments and alternative styles for different purposes, if appropriate</li> <li>experimenting with different writing instruments, surfaces and</li> </ul> |

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| <p>concepts relating to written and printed material—spaces, words,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• letters, direction</li> <li>• letter formation (see ***)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- starting and finishing points, and direction</li> <li>- and number of strokes</li> <li>- slope, size, shape, proportion, placement</li> <li>- and spacing of letters</li> <li>- letter links (hooks and kicks) if appropriate</li> <li>- the equal-size relationship of heads</li> <li>- (ascenders), bodies and tails (descenders)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• numeral formation</li> <li>• appropriate pencil grip</li> <li>• paper placement and hand, arm and sitting</li> <li>• positions (relating to left-handers and right-handers)</li> <li>• a visual memory of letter shapes</li> <li>• movements that form the basis of later automatic</li> <li>• processes in handwriting</li> <li>• the ability to identify and correctly form lower-case and upper-case letters.</li> </ul> <p>The kicks and hooks (strokes that form the exit from the letter) are the precursors to linking and are usually introduced towards the end of Year 2.</p> | <p>Once basic letter shapes and letter sequences have become 'automatic' to the point of legibility and fluency, learners can be shown how the letter shapes that they have learned initially may be joined. Learners are ready to join letters when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can form correctly the 26 lower-case letters to write words, using an efficient pen grip</li> <li>• show consistent use of slope, size, spacing and letter alignment</li> <li>• show signs of trying to join the letters together</li> <li>• have developed an understanding of common letter patterns.</li> </ul> <p>To avoid the development of inappropriate linking techniques, the teaching of linking ought to begin as soon as the learner displays these characteristics, and usually this will occur around the beginning of Year 3.</p> | <p>styles, and to note the effects of writing with speed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practising note-taking at speed with telephone messages, recorded interviews, broadcasts and short lectures</li> <li>• developing and/or practising speed loops.</li> </ul> |
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