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# St. Multose National School

# Handwriting Policy

 Date ratified by the Board of Management: June 2008

Date of review: September 2009

Date of review: September 2014

Date of review: January 2016

Date of review: September 2017

**Introductory statement:**

This policy was formulated by the staff of St. Multose during the school year 2007/2008.

**Rationale:**

Having introduced cursive handwriting ten years ago and seen an improvement in the children's handwriting, the staff agrees that we will progress with cursive handwriting by introducing it as a whole school policy.

**Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school:**

The children within the school produce work of a high standard. They are keen, extremely articulate and the level of handwriting reflects their high standard of presentation.

**Aims:**

* To encourage pride in one’s penmanship through the standard teaching of the Jolly Phonics handwriting scheme in Junior Infants. Cursive handwriting will be introduced informally at this level. Cursive handwriting will be formally taught to children from Senior Infants to 6th class.
* To focus on the improvement of spelling and word structure through the use of cursive handwriting.
* To reflect otherwise high standards present across other curricular areas.
* To promote good long-term handwriting skills i.e. provide them with the writing skills which will be needed later on in secondary school.

**Difficulties with handwriting:**

In order to develop fast, fluent handwriting, children need:

* Refined kinaesthesia
* Efficient motor planning
* Accurate hand-eye coordination
* Intact visuo-motor integration
* In-hand manipulation
* To appreciate the rhythmic qualities of writing, knowing when and where to join according to letter form
* To know where to position and lift the wrist
* To comprehend word construction
* To apply appropriate pressure through the writing instrument – too much will slow down the movement, too little will reduce fine-motor control
* To organise the page spatially, knowing where to start, how to track across horizontally, and where to finish
* To be able to write without viewing every letter and word in order to copy from books, black or white boards, and to take dictation

(Addy, L. *Speed up!* LDA U.K. 2008)

**Guidelines:**

See: Appendix for objectives, content and theory

Teachers will model letter formation and shapes on the board for children to copy.

**Infants:** Children in Junior Infants will use Tripod pencils with grip. These will be on the booklists and provided through the school. The use of tripod colouring pencils will be encouraged. Children will practise colouring in a circular formation, which will aid the development of muscles and will also allow the children to practise an action involved in forming some of the basic letters.

**1st/2nd:** The children will use thinner tripod pencils - these will be introduced as children are ready to progress. Every effort will be made to encourage the child to hold the pencil / writing implement correctly, to maintain good posture and to position his / her book at a 45 degree angle while writing. Sloped boards may be used as necessary.

**3rd/6th:** Pupils will progress from pencil to pen/biro

**Programmes currently in use:**

JI: Jolly Phonics handwriting programme and Go with the Flow A

SI: Jolly Phonics handwriting programme and Go with the Flow B

1st/2nd: Go with the Flow E

3rd/4th: Go with the Flow F

Samples of children’s writing will be kept in their folders to show progress.

Occasionally, handwriting competitions may be held.

**Success criteria:**

The handwriting policy will be deemed successful if the handwriting in the school is seen to continue to improve.

**Roles and responsibility:**

The class teacher’s role is to teach the correct formation of the letters and the letter patterns and to encourage good penmanship and neat presentation of work. The Support teachers will continue the work done by the class teacher and should the need arise, the ‘Speed up!’ and ‘Handwriting Without Tears’ programmes will be developed further to assist children who may continue to experience difficulty with handwriting. Parents need to check written homework to ensure it is of a good standard.

**Timeframe for implementation:**

All classrooms and support teaching classes will implement the revised handwriting policy.

**Timeframe for review:**

This policy was reviewed at the beginning of the academic year 2009/2010, 2014, January 2016 and September 2017 and amendments were made, where necessary. This policy will be revisited in September 2019.

**Responsibility for review:**

Lorraine Kingston is responsible for the review of this policy. Feedback will be sought from teaching staff to see how the plan is working.