

AURORA ACADEMIES TRUST

Policy Title:	Handwriting Policy
Policy Reference:	AAT H - Exp May 2018
Function:	<u>For Information and Guidance</u> /Statutory
Audience:	Prospective Parents, Trustees, Governors, Executive Headteachers, Head, Teachers, Support Staff, as necessary
Ownership/ Implementation:	The Trustees/LAB Governing Body (as required) have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented
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Handwriting Policy

Handwriting is an essential skill to be learned by children, even in our world of increasing multi-media forms.

The ability to write using a clear, fast flowing cursive script is a skill learned for life and will give our students an advantage in their ability to communicate through the handwritten word. Many tests and exams are still based in a hand written form and therefore it is essential to be able to write quickly and clearly in a pleasing form that is easy to read.

The basis for 'high standards of handwriting' starts from the moment a child is born. Development of the shoulder muscles is essential, followed by arm, wrist and finger control, which all allows for legible writing.

It is recognised that a cursive script has an impact on children's reading and writing ability but that they develop and mature at different rates. Therefore expectations should be associated with individual children not necessarily groups or classes. Whilst handwriting for older children lends itself to a 'class activity,' adults must be aware of the differing rates of maturity and expertise between individual children.

Children are exposed to both cursive and print styles as well as commercial print. They develop an awareness of reading in print and writing in cursive script simultaneously in their learning. Posters around school, advertising, alphabet letters etc. all form part of the exposure to letters and words. It is also important that teachers and adults in school 'model handwriting.' There are close links between handwriting and spelling.

The more activities experienced by a child through play and art/craft, the better control they will develop in manipulating their fingers and arms. This aids the development of a fast, high standard of cursive script as well as a pride in the achievement of neat handwriting. This leads on to confidence and self esteem and a willingness to 'attack' educational activities that involve writing.



Pre-school:

A child must learn how to move the arm with large movements that engages hand-eye coordination and develops the muscles in the shoulder and arm. Exercises such as throwing balls, climbing, movements with scarves and streamers all build up the essential physical skills needed to control at a macro and micro level.

Wrist and hand control then need to be developed using items such as zips, buttons on clothes, scooping and pouring activities that allow development of hand – eye coordination and muscle strength.

Very large mark-making using chinks, pens on whiteboards, large *art-attack* type activities come first before moving to medium sizes such as easels, individual whiteboards etc. Children then need to make finger movements by making patterns/marks in sand, flour and paint etc. Activities such as weaving large pieces of material or ribbons, threading beads and jigsaw puzzles help children develop the physiological elements needed for handwriting.

Mark-making resources should be available for children at all times in Nursery and Reception classes. These may also need to be available for older children who are possibly having difficulty in learning to write legibly with a cursive script. Using these types of materials to 'act out' a writing situation is important.

A child's grip and control should begin to develop naturally with large, back to front writing being acceptable. We want to encourage their development and not to restrict it by responding negatively.

When a child is 2 to 3 years old they should be encouraged to talk about the marks they are making, by asking them what they mean. This associates writing and reading together. By the time most children reach 4 years old they will have a 'preferred hand' with which they will choose to hold things or use. It is essential that reading takes place with the children during this period so that they can associate shapes and patterns of letters with the marks that they make and the stories that they listen to. Their development of reading shows them that letters and words have meaning.



Pre-writing stages

- Making lines and dots – usually the child has no ‘determined hand’ at this stage
- Imitating directional marks made by others
- Making curved and closed marks
- Being able to copy straight and curved lines made by others
- Making straight and curved lines linked to form symbols
- Developing a pencil grip – palm grasp (Where all the fingers are wrapped around the pencil and the arm moves to make marks)
- Finger grasping but still using the whole arm to make marks
- Tripod grasping with the fingers and thumb opposing – movement controlled by the fingers.

Phonic activities should also be linked to writing as this reinforces the links that children need to make between writing and reading. Careful choice of letter combinations that children read/learn helps their development of handwriting and reading. For example: s, a, t, p, i, n, learned as the first letters/phonic blends allows a child to make many simple words – at, in, sat, pin, spin, pat etc. Children also need to learn that there is more than one way of writing. They are bombarded in their surroundings by advertisements that use all sorts of different styles of writing. Therefore when we teach children letters to write, we should teach both a printed and a cursive form simultaneously.

There are many and varied activities that must take place to aid the development of the necessary gross and fine motor skills.

- Playdough – squeezing and pinching
- Threading – beads, pasts, straws, necklaces etc



- Finger rhymes – curling, stretching
- Water play outside – spray bottles, watering plants, squeezing etc
- Craft activities – painting, collage, sticking sequins
- Cooking – icing cakes, stirring both clockwise and anticlockwise.

There are **6 stages to the development of handwriting**

Stage 1: The development of gross motor skills through big movements and big mark-making whilst the large arm and shoulder muscles develop

Stage 2: Greater 'fine' motor skill development so the child is holding a pencil/pen and uses some control

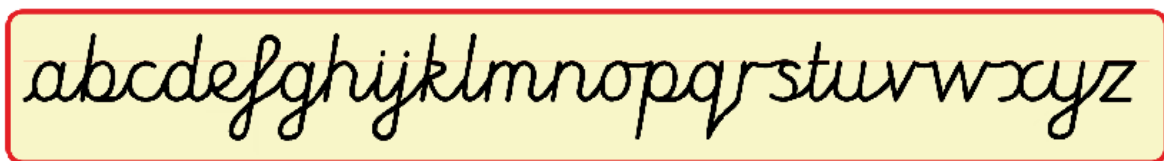
Stage 3: Finger control and a 'tripod' grip

Stage 4: The introduction of long and short strokes to handwriting

Stage 5: The beginning of 'entry strokes' and 'exit tails' with 'curly letters'

Stage 6: The introduction of capital and lower case letters.

'Lead in' strokes and 'tails' become very important and rather than teaching a child a printed script and then two years later a cursive script, we should teach them both at the same time. In traditional handwriting schemes a child may have to learn up to 7 different start points for the letters they use. However if we teach the children that all letters start 'on the line' at the same place, it becomes easier for the child to learn and remember the letter formations.



The more a child practises the activities, the more control they will develop. This has to be in conjunction with phonic work and reading. Bombard the children with a word rich environment!

Handwriting Rules

- Children should sit upright and with the chair 'pulled in'
- The desk/table should be clear of clutter
- The writing instrument should 'flow' across paper easily
- Each lower case letter starts on the line with an entry stroke
- Letters which finish at the top e.g. 'o' join horizontally
- Letters that finish at the bottom e.g. 'g' join diagonally
- All down strokes are straight and parallel
- All rounded letters are closed
- The horizontal 'cross line' of a letter should be the same height as the lower case letters e.g. 't'
- All similar letters are the same height
- Each letter should be written in one flowing movement, the pencil/pen should not be removed from the paper until the letter is complete or a cross line is needed
- Each word should be written in one flowing movement, the pen/pencil should not be removed until the word is complete, cross lines should be added last
- Letters within a word should be evenly spaced
- The main body of the word sits on the line
- Capital letters do not 'join.'



Left Handed Children

- Seat left handed children on the 'left of their partner', (Assuming there are 2 children to a desk), this allows them to write with enough room to the left of their midline
- The book or paper should be at an angle of approximately 30° clockwise
- The right hand should be used to support the paper/book
- The writing forearm should be parallel with the paper edge as the child writes
- The writing tool should be held sufficiently far from its point to ensure the child can see what s/he is writing.

