




## Ardfinnan National School

### Handwriting Plan

#### Introductory Statement & Rationale

This plan is formulated in line with the Primary Language Curriculum and it will be implemented with immediate effect.

Handwriting and presentation 			
Stage 1 Junior and Senior Infants Through appropriately playful learning experiences, children should be able to	Stage 2 First and Second class Through appropriately engaging learning experiences, children should be able to	Stage 3 Third and Fourth class Through appropriately engaging learning experiences, children should be able to	Stage 4 Fifth and Sixth class Through appropriately engaging learning experiences, children should be able to
Write upper and lower case letters as separate, flowing letters and present texts in a range of formats.	Write legibly and fluently in a chosen script and present texts in a range of formats.	Write legibly and fluently in a chosen script using a personal style and present texts in a range of formats.	Select, justify, and recommend appropriate writing and presentation styles to create and present texts in a range of formats.

In Ardfinnan N.S. we acknowledge that the developments of handwriting skills are important in our pupil's education and that children develop concepts, dispositions and skills in relation to:

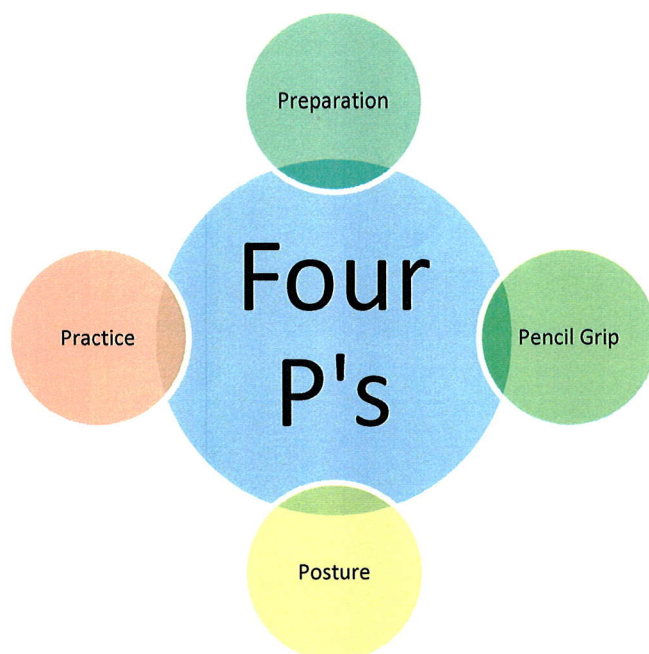
- Engagement.
- Motivation and choice.
- Conventions of print and sentence structure.
- Handwriting and presentation.

#### Aims of the Handwriting Policy

- To develop and improve fine motor skills in the early years.
- To ensure good letter formation from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.
- To encourage pupils use of the correct pencil grip.
- To ensure legibility and neat presentation of all written work.
- To develop speed, accuracy and writing fluency.
- To ensure uniformity and consistency in letter formation from class to class.
- To help in the improvement of spelling.

## General Writing Guidelines

Children will be encouraged to remember the Four P's – *see Appendix 1*



- Classrooms (Junior Infants – Second Class) should have a pre-handwriting frieze displayed in their room.
- Classrooms (Second Class – Sixth Class) should have a continuous cursive handwriting frieze displayed in their room.
- Pupils' (Second Class –Sixth Class) should have a reference copy of the cursive script at hand e.g. as a bookmark – *See Appendix 2*.
- Parents' of new enrolments should be given a copy of the handwriting scheme and emphasise the importance of encouraging good handwriting at home.
- Parents' are also given a copy of Letter formation Rhymes & Jingles and Number Rhymes 0-10 to encourage continuity of teaching at home – *See Appendix 3*.
- For left-handers, writing from left to right can be difficult. If the pupil is left handed they should hold the pen/pencil at least 2cm away from the tip so that they can see what they are writing. It is also important that the class teacher ensures that the pupil is seated on the left side of the desk.
- Teachers should model good handwriting at all times.
- '*Sassoon Infant Std*' font is in line with our handwriting scheme and downloadable online <https://www.dafontfree.net/freefonts-sassoon-infant-std-f17132.htm>

## Handwriting Programme

### Junior Infants

- Develop muscle control through strong hand activities and fine motor skill activities eg. threading, cutting, playdough, clothes peg game, theraputty and a range of other activities. These activities give pupils an opportunity to strengthen their shoulder, hand & finger dexterity, become kinaesthesia & tactile aware, practice visual spatial skills, eye-hand coordination and flow and control of arm movements.
- Encourage pupils to scribble and draw with crayon.
- Complete various prewriting patterns to strengthen fingers and hands. These patterns will also create awareness of directionality i.e left-right, top bottom orientation.
- Encourage pupils to find a hand dominance and pencil grip that is comfortable and allows good writing.
- Pupils learn the name and correct formation of lowercase letters in tandem.
- Teacher brings awareness to the lazy 8 letter formation of 'c,o,a,d,g', these activities give pupils an opportunity to practice visual motor skills, wrist extension exercises and their tripod grip.
- Pupils are encouraged to write in their free writing journal.
- In Junior infants two alphabets will be taught: a reading alphabet (taken from The Jolly Phonics Programme) and a writing alphabet (taken from the educate.ie Just Handwriting Programme)
- Jolly phonics letter sounds, names and formation are taught in the following order: s,a,t,i,p,n,c,k,e,h,r,m,d,g,o,u,l,f,b,j,z,w,v,y,x,qu
- Pupils start by using chubby crayons for colouring activities. Pupils use tripod grip, jumbo grip or lyra grip pencils for handwriting .

### Senior Infants

- Pupils revise the formation of the lowercase letters and they are introduced to the correct letter formations of uppercase letters.
- Pupils are made aware of the importance of putting a finger space between all words and are expected to keep writing on the line.
- Pupils are encouraged to engage in free writing.

### First Class

- Consolidation and reinforcement of Senior Infant work.
- There is a greater emphasis on proper letter formation, pencil grip, writing posture and on the quality of presentation.
- Pupils are expected to be able to use capital letters and full stops when writing.
- Teachers may use handwriting copies to further practice correct letter formation.

### Second Class

- In second class the pupils are introduced to cursive/looped writing.
- They will discover that many of the lowercase letters are unchanged from those that have been taught already.
- Letters i,l,t,n,m,h,c,a,d,u,e,k,p,r,s,x finish with an up stroke/a tail.
- Pupils are given plenty of practice with up stroke before proceeding to join letters. Point out that by making the up stroke a little longer they can easily be joined to the next letter.
- Practice joins to 'e' and joins to tall letters – all, hill, mill.

### Third and Fourth Class

- In Third/Fourth Class the pupils continue using pencils and practice good cursive writing.
- Pupils will write titles and dates at the top of the page.
- They will use publishing activities to practice cursive writing.

### Fifth and Sixth Class

- Consolidation and reinforcement of handwriting skills.
- In Fifth Class, pupils work towards earning a Pen Licence, which is achieved by a continued high standard of handwriting. Once they achieve their pen licence they are allowed to use a pen for writing exercises. Felt tip pens are recommended as they are more easily controlled than biro.
- Pupils continue to complete Maths activities in pencil.

### Position of Pencil/Pen.

- Hold pencil/pen correctly between the tips of the thumb and the index finger, it is supported against the side of the middle finger (tripod grip). The last two fingers are curved and rested against the table surfaces. The wrist is bent back slightly and the pencil is held about 2cm from the tip (slightly more for left-hand children).



- Do not press heavily on the paper.
- Use left hand to hold copy in correct position or with the right if the the pupil is left handed.

### Assessment and Success Criteria

- There will be constant teacher observation of pupil's handwriting in copy books at school and also in homework copies.
- There will be a focus on continual improvement.
- Teacher should display the pupils writing – emphasis should be placed on improvement made in handwriting. Pupils should be encouraged to write final pieces of work in their best handwriting.
- The end of year handwriting should be compared with the handwriting the child was producing at the beginning of the year, for assessment purposes and school report comment.
- Teachers' assess pupils progress using the screening of proficiency of handwriting assessment on <https://www.lwtears.com/resources/screener-handwriting-proficiency>

### Resources

- Just Handwriting (educate.ie)
- Mrs Murphy's Junior and Senior Infant copies (BCM publishing)
- Handwriting copies
- Free Writing Journals
- Pre-Cursive and Cursive Handwriting Wall Frieze
- Handwriting without Tears software
- A4 Whiteboards.

**Review** - This plan will be reviewed by the staff in January 2021. The principal will conduct the review and lead the curricular team in implementing any changes. All changes will be ratified by the BOM.

**Ratification and Communication** - On ratification by the staff and the BOM, this plan will be communicated to all teachers through distribution and will become part of the school plan.

This plan was ratified by the BOM on 29/1/20

Signed (Chairperson) Tony Kenny

## Appendix 1

### The Four P's - as per Just Handwriting Introduction Page 2.

#### **Preparation (Junior Infants to Second Class):**

The simple, fun 'Let's Get Ready!' exercises help to relax the child mentally and physically and enable them to focus on the planned activity. Encourage the child to draw or trace the 'Giant Sunglasses' before every writing activity. In time, it will become part of their work routine.

#### **Pencil Grip:**

The correct pencil grip will lead to quick, fluent writing.

#### **Posture:**

Good posture helps the writing stamina of the child.

#### **Practice:**

The formation of each letter is clearly illustrated so the child will have a reference that shows him or her to form each letter, especially if more than one stroke is involved. Handwriting is an essential skill that needs to be taught and fluency only comes with plenty of practice. Practice, practice, practice makes perfect and enables the child to become a confident writer.

## Appendix 2

A a	B b	C c
D d	E e	F f
G g	H h	I i
J j	K k	L l
M m	N n	O o
P p	Q q	R r
S s	T t	U u
V v	W w	X x
Y y	Z z	
Name: _____		

A a	B b	C c
D d	E e	F f
G g	H h	I i
J j	K k	L l
M m	N n	O o
P p	Q q	R r
S s	T t	U u
V v	W w	X x
Y y	Z z	
Name: _____		

## Appendix 3

### Lowercase letter formation rhymes/jingles (a-z)

- c- around and stop!
- a- around like a c, up and down. Then give a little curl, for every boy and girl.
- o- around like a c, all the way around and stop.
- d- around like a c, up so tall, down and curl.
- g- around like a c, up, into the water and curl.
- s- around, big belly and back in.
- t- down, lift and across.
- i- down, lift and a dot.
- l- down, lift and stop.
- h- down the ladder, half way up, around and down, and curl.
- m- down the ladder, back up the ladder around and down the ladder, back up the ladder around and down, and curl!
- n- down the ladder, back up the ladder, around and down, and curl.
- r- down the ladder, back up the ladder around and stop.
- k- down the ladder, half way up, blow a bubble, out and kick!
- e- make a dot, go over and around, and don't forget to touch the ground.
- f- start up tall, down to the ground and across.
- u- down, around, up and down, and give a little curl, for every boy and girl.
- p- down, into the water, up and around. Don't forget to land on the ground.
- b- the bat before the ball.
- j- down, into the water, curl and a dot!
- q- around like a c, up, into the water and kick!!
- w- down, up, down, up!
- x- we make the "x" shape using our hands and then saying the "xxx" sound as we write "x"
- y- down, around, up, into the water and curl!
- z- out, in, out.
- v- little "vvv" is ready to vroom, down, then up and it's out of the room!



### Uppercase letter formation rhymes

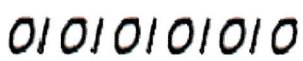

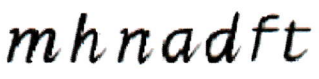
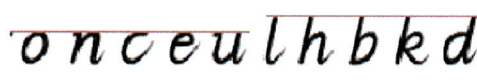


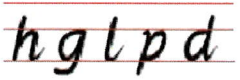
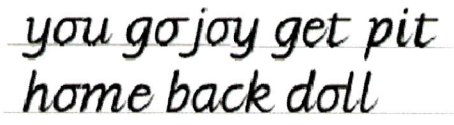

- C- curve around the handle of the cup
- O- Go all around the big orange
- S- Start at the swan's head. Go down his long neck. Sit him on the lake.
- Z -Go across his head. Go down his neck. Go across his body.
- V- Slide down and up the vampire's tooth (if you dare!)
- W- Slide down and up; down and up the walrus' teeth.
- I - Go down his straight body. Make his antenna. Make his back legs.
- L- Go down to the knee, then across to the toes.
- H -First make the first post. Then add the bar across. Then make the second post.
- A- Draw the first side, then the second. Finish with the step.
- T- Go down the table's. Then add the tabletop.
- Y -Go down the branch of the old yew tree, then down the trunk.
- K -Go down daddy kangaroo's body. Go in for his arms, and out of his legs.
- X- A big kiss.
- F- Go down Fred the florist's body. Go across his hat. Reach out his arm.
- E - Go down the elephant's body. Then go across her trunk and two legs.
- M- Go down the first bed post. Bend the mattress. Then go down the other bed post.
- N- Go down the billy goat's first horn. Bend it down, and go up the second.
- U- A big umbrella handle!
- J- Jack jumps up. Go down his body, then draw his arms.
- D- Go down the door frame then go around the door.
- P- The princess has grown up.
- B- Go down the Baxter's body. Go around his head and then his tummy.
- R- Go down the rabbit's body, around his face, then down the paw.
- Q- Go all around the queens's carriage, then down the steps.
- G- Go around Grandad's rocking chair, then across the armrest.

### Number Rhymes 0-10

- 0→ “around, all the way around and stop!!”
- 1→“Down and stop!”..... Number 1 is like a stick. A straight line down that’s very quick!
- 2→“For Number 2 go right around, then make a line across the ground!”
- 3→Go right around, what will it be? Go round again, to make a 3!
- 4→“Down and over and down some more, that’s the way to make a 4!”
- 5→“Down and around then a flag on high, that’s the way to make a 5!”
- 6→“Down we go and make a loop, number six makes a hoop”.
- 7→ “Across the sky and down from heaven. That’s the way to make a 7!”
- 8→ “Make an “S” and then don’t wait. When it’s joined you have an 8!”
- 9→ “Make a loop and then a line. That’s the way to make a 9!”
- 10→ “Make a 1 and then a 0. 10 is every finger you know.”

## Appendix 4

Remember Good Cursive Writing is...

- 1. Based on a pattern of ovals and parallel lines. 
- 2. All small letters start at the top except 's' and 'r'. 
- 3. All the down strokes are parallel. 
- 4. All similar letters are the same height. 
- 5. All down strokes are equidistant. 
- 6. The space between words is the width of the small letter 'o'. 
- 7. Ascenders and Descenders are no more than twice the height of small letters, preferably less. 
- 8. Capital letters are no higher than Ascenders, preferably less. 
- 9. Lines of writing are far enough apart for Ascenders and Descenders not to touch. 
- 10. Letters which finish at the top join horizontally. 
- 11. Letters which finish at the bottom join diagonally.

a b c d e f g

h i j k l m n o

p q r s t u v w

x y z