



HANDWRITING

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

At Diamond Hall Junior Academy, we use a structured handwriting programme called Nelson Handwriting. As with reading and spelling, handwriting can be practised at home, as regular reinforcement of key concepts will support children's development in this area.

Handwriting needs to be taught in a consistent way. From the earliest stages, children will be developing their fine motor skills when they pick up writing tools and make marks on paper. It is important for children to develop good habits with writing, pencil hold and correct formation are vital parts of this process.

It is vital that the children not only form their letters correctly and join appropriately, it is also important that the letters sit on the line with the exception of those letters which have descenders which fall below the line. All letters should also be of an appropriate and consistent size.

To support handwriting at school, we would encourage the 'tripod' grip through modelling and correction where necessary and it would be beneficial if this was reinforced at home. This pencil grip gives children the most control over the movement of their writing tool. Once a child can form their letters correctly in a printed fashion, joined writing is introduced. This is usually taught from Year 3 onwards, however, if your child needs further support in letter formation, we will consolidate the printed form of writing before moving them on. When starting to join, we encourage clear joins, which aid fluency and accuracy in writing. Please get in touch for more information about letter formation and joins.

There are other ways in which you can be of help. These include:

- pointing out letters which have a similar formation e.g. the letters c a o d g q all start in the same way
- model writing key words (such as names) using correct letter formation and joins as appropriate for the level of your child's progression e.g. your child's name starts with a capital letter and capital letters do not join
- praising good effort in handwriting, especially if the error is a 'reasonable' attempt, before correcting any mistake
- encouraging other development of fine motor skills, such as colouring in or drawing, as well as giving ample opportunity to write.

If you have any queries about any of these matters, please feel free to ask at school for more information.