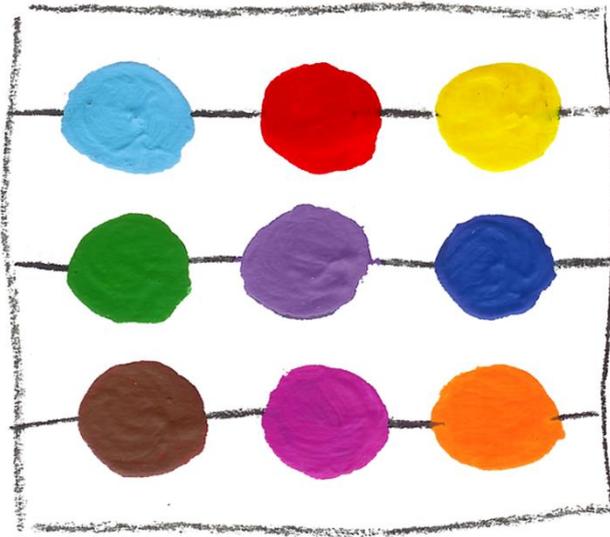


# Handwriting Policy



*Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.*

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Carrigaline Educate Together National School (CETNS). It is intended to help parents and guardians understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
1.0	May 2019	First version of policy	Board of Management
1.1	Nov 2021	Second version of policy	Board of Management

### **School Contact Details**

**Principal:** Mel Thornton

**Board of Management Chairperson:** Eric Hurley

**School Phone Number:** 021-4375616 or 087-7453659

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## **Introductory Statement**

This policy is the result of the collaboration of the Policy Committee and School Self Evaluation (SSE) Committee, together with the Board of Management.

## **Rationale**

The staff, principal and inspectorate identified handwriting and presentation skills as an area to work upon. In September 2018 handwriting and presentation skills were chosen as the areas to focus upon for school self-evaluation. As part of the school self improvement plan a handwriting policy was suggested by the committee to enhance handwriting in our school.

## **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

This policy reflects the overall ethos of the school which states:

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. is one of a number of equality-based schools throughout the country. The representative organisation for these schools is Educate Together.

Educate Together aims to meet a growing need in Irish society for schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structures. In particular, Educate Together guarantees children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education.

The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education & Skills and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- Equality-based i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- Co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,
- Child centred in their approach to education
- Democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (Source: Educate Together Charter)

Whilst the concepts of child-centeredness and co-educationalism are now widely accepted in Irish primary education, what distinguishes the Educate Together schools is their hard work in developing a culturally inclusive and democratic ethos. This has pioneered unique approaches to inclusion of minority opinions and faiths in the Irish context.

The schools have developed education programmes which open the eyes of children to the naturally positive contribution that social, religious and cultural diversity and difference of viewpoint and opinion make to society.

The other characteristic feature of these schools is that they are democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

Information taken from the Educate Together website [www.educatetogether.ie](http://www.educatetogether.ie)

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. makes the distinction between denominational education and moral/religious education. The ethical curriculum followed by the school is called the Learn Together Curriculum. It is comprised of four strands: Morality & Spirituality, Equality & Justice, Belief systems, Ethics & the environment. Denominational instruction is facilitated by the school insofar as groups are permitted to use the school premises. This is organised by parents outside of school hours.

## **Aims:**

The policy aims:

- To ensure good letter formation from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.
- To ensure that all children are using the correct pencil grip.
- To ensure legibility of all writing.
- To ensure consistency in letter formation from class to class.
- To facilitate the presentation of all written work.
- To develop a positive attitude to handwriting.
- To support the school's self improvement plan for SSE.

## **Writing Guidelines for Classes**

### **Junior Infants**

- Children in Junior Infants are encouraged to make marks (Primary Language Curriculum).
- They complete various pre-writing patterns to strengthen fingers and hands.
- These patterns will also create awareness of left-right, top bottom orientation.
- The Jolly Phonics Programme is used to introduce children to letters in Junior Infants. With the introduction of each letter the children are taught how to form the letters correctly. The Jolly Phonics uses Sassoon Infant typeface. Many letters have a joining tail at the end to make it easier to transfer into joined-up writing.
- In Junior Infants children are introduced to cursive style writing when learning the double long vowel sounds and diagraphs. They learn to write these sounds as all one unit from the start.
- A number of other techniques are used, such as finger tracing on the table, in the air or in sand.
- Children are encouraged to find a hand dominance and pencil grip that is comfortable and-enables good writing. Good posture for writing is modelled and encouraged.
- Children are encouraged to use a tripod grip pencil when beginning to learn handwriting.
- Children are given lots of practice writing their first name.
- Children are encouraged to use finger spaces when writing. Left handers will be shown how to create using a space using a pencil or an eraser.
- Pupils see the teacher model good handwriting.
- During the second term the children will have handwriting homework. This will encourage parents to work with children on handwriting at home.

## **Senior Infants**

- Cursive writing for lower case letters will be taught explicitly in Senior Infants.
- Children will be provided with a booklet developed by the school which contains the form of cursive script that will be used throughout the school.
- The class will work on this booklet throughout the school year developing their cursive style of writing.
- Script writing for upper case letters will be taught at the latter stage of Senior Infants.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Class**

- The teaching of script writing for upper case letters will be completed in 1<sup>st</sup> Class
- Revision of the Senior Infants cursive handwriting booklet will take place.

## **2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class**

- Every child will have a handwriting copy.
- Children will use their handwriting copy at least once a week in school and/or at home to practise their cursive handwriting.

## **SEN Children**

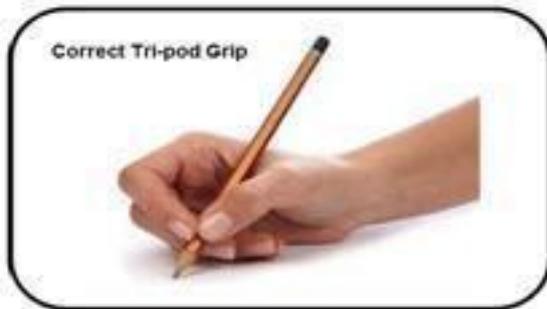
Children with SEN will be encouraged to follow the cursive style. However, if cursive writing is proving very challenging other methodologies will be used such as script handwriting or the Handwriting Without Tears programme.

## **Writing Instruments**

The writing instruments that the children use will depend on their readiness.

- In Junior Infants the children will write with triangular shaped pencils.
- Senior Infants continue using triangular shaped pencils.
- In 1<sup>st</sup> Class the children will transition from a HB triangular pencil to a normal HB pencil.
- In 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class the children continue using the HB pencil
- The use of red pen is also introduced in Third Class – this is used for ruling the copies, titles, dates, underlining, correcting and editing. Pencil is used for all other work.
- The use of red pen is continued in Fourth Class – this is used for ruling the copies, titles, dates, underlining, correcting and editing. Pencil is used for all other work.
- In 4<sup>th</sup> Class children 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. Children are encouraged to put a line through a mistake rather than using Tippex.
- The use of pen is continued in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class, as long as the children have earned and kept their pen licenses. Once again children are encouraged to put a line through a mistake rather than using Tippex

## Pen Holds



- The tripod grip is the recommended hold. Hold the pen between the thumb and the first finger with the second finger acting as a support. We refer to this as the "froggy" grip and it is taught from the start of Junior Infants.

### Helping left handers

- Left handers should be monitored to ensure that they are not experiencing any specific difficulties.
- The usefulness of having them sitting on the left hand side of the desk should be borne in mind.
- If possible, the teacher should demonstrate letter formation with their left hand.
- A pencil grip can be helpful, as left-handers tend to grip very hard. The pencil grip, by thickening the pencil and preventing the fingers from slipping, does relieve some of the pressure.
- Ensure the child has enough space. S/he should not be knocking either the wall or a friend.
- Encourage the child to try to hold the pencil farther from the point. This enables the left-hander to see what s/he has written.
- The paper should be positioned to the left of centre and tilted slightly to the right to give more freedom of movement. Young children often find this rather strange and will need gentle but frequent encouragement.

### Success Criteria

The practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

- consistent teacher observation of pupils' handwriting in copybooks at school and also in homework
- children will be entered in regular school and national handwriting competitions
- continuous displays of the children's writing in the classrooms and school
- positive feedback from staff, students, parents and inspectorate
- that the handwriting policy is in line with the school self improvement plan for SSE.

### **Roles and responsibility of the policy**

The Board of Management, Principal, policy committee and SSE committee have been responsible for supporting, developing, implementing and evaluating this policy.

### **Implementation Date**

The policy was implemented in December 2021. Amendments will be implemented immediately.

### **Timetable for Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2023/2024 and biennially thereafter

### **Ratification & Communication**

The plan was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in December 2021 and was formally ratified on December 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Parents will be made aware via Aladdin that the policy is available to view on the school website. A copy of the policy will be made available for the staff to view on Google Drive. A hard copy of the policy will be available in the school office in the policy folder.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON of the BOM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Appendix 1*

*(taken from <https://my.optimus-education.com/what-are-benefits-teaching-cursive-handwriting>)*

### **10 Benefits of Teaching Cursive Handwriting**

#### **1. Relative ease in introducing cursive penmanship to children:**

Contrary to common beliefs, it is very easy to teach cursive handwriting. It only requires 3 movements; undercurve, overcurve and up and down. Print handwriting necessitates an even more complex stroke of straight lines and perfect circles.

#### **2. Prevents reversals and confusion of letters:**

The letters “b and d”, “f and t”, “g, q and p” are confusing for young children. In cursive, writing the letter “b and d” requires a huge difference in directionality.

#### **3. Enhances spelling ability:**

In cursive, children learn to spell correctly since hand movements create some muscle memory that retains the spelling patterns.

#### **4. Develops internal control systems that can be used as tool for learning:**

With cursive writing practice, the neuron connections in the brain, responsible for organizing other kinds of information and skills, are greatly strengthened.

#### **5. Potential for errors are diminished:**

Cursive handwriting reduces errors because of the continuous flow of writing. In print, the child picks up the pencil from the paper to start a new letter in a word, thus the potential for mistakes is higher.

#### **6. Improved reading skills:**

The goal in reading is to read words instead of letters at a time. Cursive writing promotes reading words, instead of a distinct letter. After words, reading will move to sentences. Thus, remedial support for comprehension and reading of words are occurring less. The child reads what he or she writes as “whole words” rather than individual letters.

#### **7. Enforces the skills for patterns in reading and writing:**

Unlike print writing, lowercase cursive writing starts from the same beginning point. In print, various letters start from the top, down, middle and many different positions. Letter inversions and reversals are eliminated.

#### **8. Prevents erratic spaces between letters and words:**

In cursive, the flow of writing moves from left to right. It teaches spatial discipline. In print, the child's handwriting is difficult to discern. The spaces between words are so tight. It is hard to tell where the words begin and end.

9. Helps Left Handed Children:

In print, the left-handed child proceeds to write printing from left to right but will cover what he has written with his arms. This is called the hook position. In cursive writing, the left handed child learns to write from bottom up and turns the paper clockwise causing greater comfort and legibility.

10. Use as a tool to put thoughts on paper quickly and easily:

Mastery of cursive will be to the advantage of any student in the long-run. The child will be able to write faster.

Cursive Looped

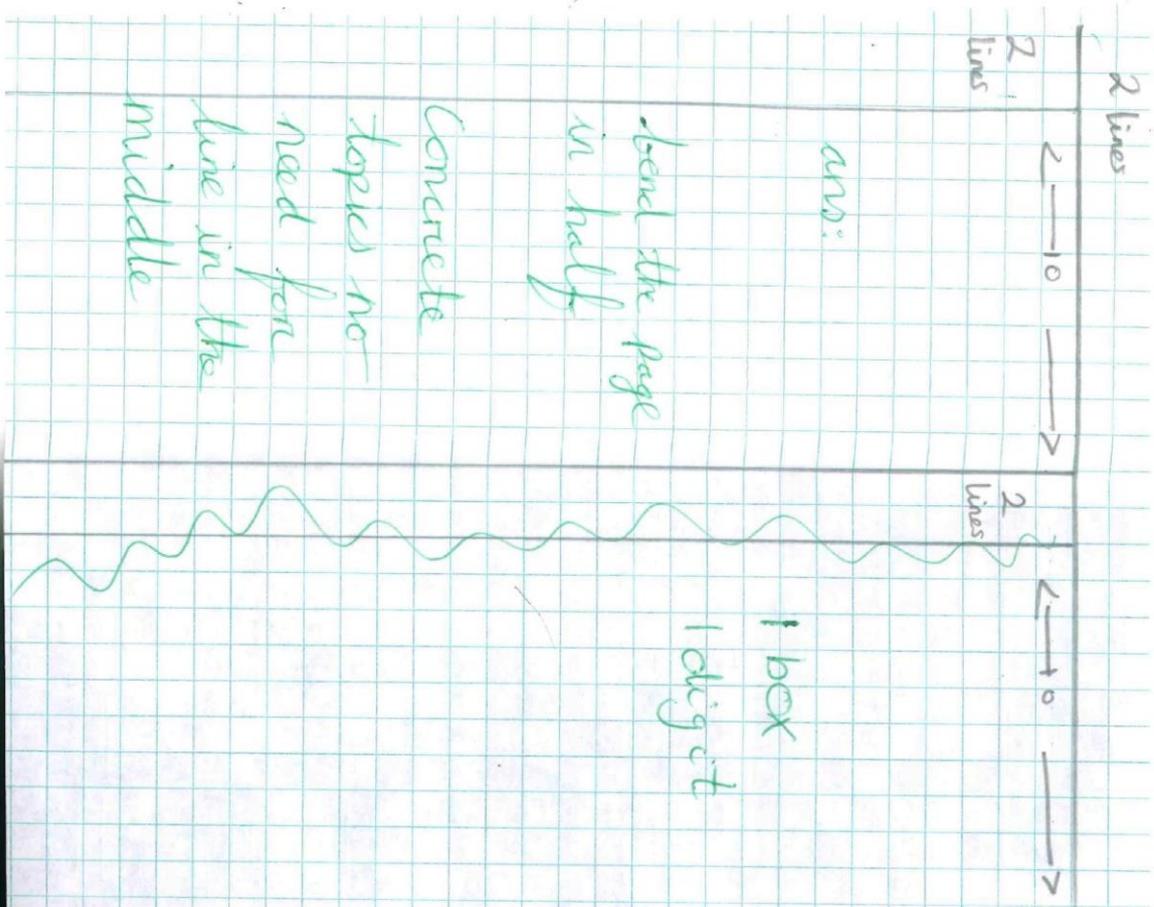
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With this option, capital letters are all formed at the same height and they're not joined to other letters.

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

*Appendix 3-Copybook Presentation*





Appendix 4-Maths Copy Presentation