

Trafford Children's Therapy Service

SECONDARY SCHOOL – POSITIONING FOR OPTIMAL WRITING PERFORMANCE

- For optimal writing performance, it is important for children to be positioned properly in order to support handwriting skills. A stable trunk will encourage good arm control. Children come in different shapes and sizes therefore chairs, tables and desks should properly fit each child.

TYPES OF POSITIONING:

Furniture Arrangement

- Student desks should face the instruction area. This improves visual attention, hearing, and attention.
- Avoid cluster seating to decrease positional and direction confusion especially for handwriting instruction.
- Children should be able to see the chalkboard without glare or lighting problems. The teacher's writing should be able to be seen by each child facing the chalkboard.



Appropriate Desk Height

- The desk or table top should be approximately 2 inches above the student's bent elbow when seated.

Appropriate Paper Position

- The position of the paper allows for the student to see what is written and to avoid smearing when writing. The student should angle the paper so that it is parallel to the forearm of the writing hand when the hands are clasped on the desktop.
- The paper should be angled: 20-35 degrees for right handed students 30-35 degrees for left handed students
- The top corner of the paper should be higher: Right corner higher for right handed students Left corner higher for left handed students
- The writing hand should be below the writing line (no matter the handedness).
- A piece of tape or other mark on the student's desk can be a helpful visual reminder for correct paper slant.

ENCOURAGING NEAT HANDWRITING

- **Consistent spacing** – spaces should be the same between letters and between words. Encourage the child to leave a finger space between words.

- **Correct placement** - 'tall' letters (such as t, k, d) reach up high (sky - blue) 'small' letters (such as a, c, e) sit on the line (ground – green) 'long' letters (such as g, y, j) hang down below the line (soil – brown)
- **Consistent sizing** – ensure all 'tall' letters are the same height, all 'small' letters are the same size, and all 'long' letters reach down the same amount.
- **Appropriate pressure** - not pushing too hard (can you feel the indents of the writing on the back of the paper) or too soft (can you see it clearly). You may like to talk to child about the colour of his writing and whether you can see it from the back of the page – if so, he is using too much pressure.
- **Consistent slope** – all letters sloping in the same direction. This can be very difficult for kids to master, however encourage child to try to make their letters all go in the same direction. It may be helpful to provide them with a slope card to prompt them when writing.
- **Good letter formation** – letters formed in the most effective way.

