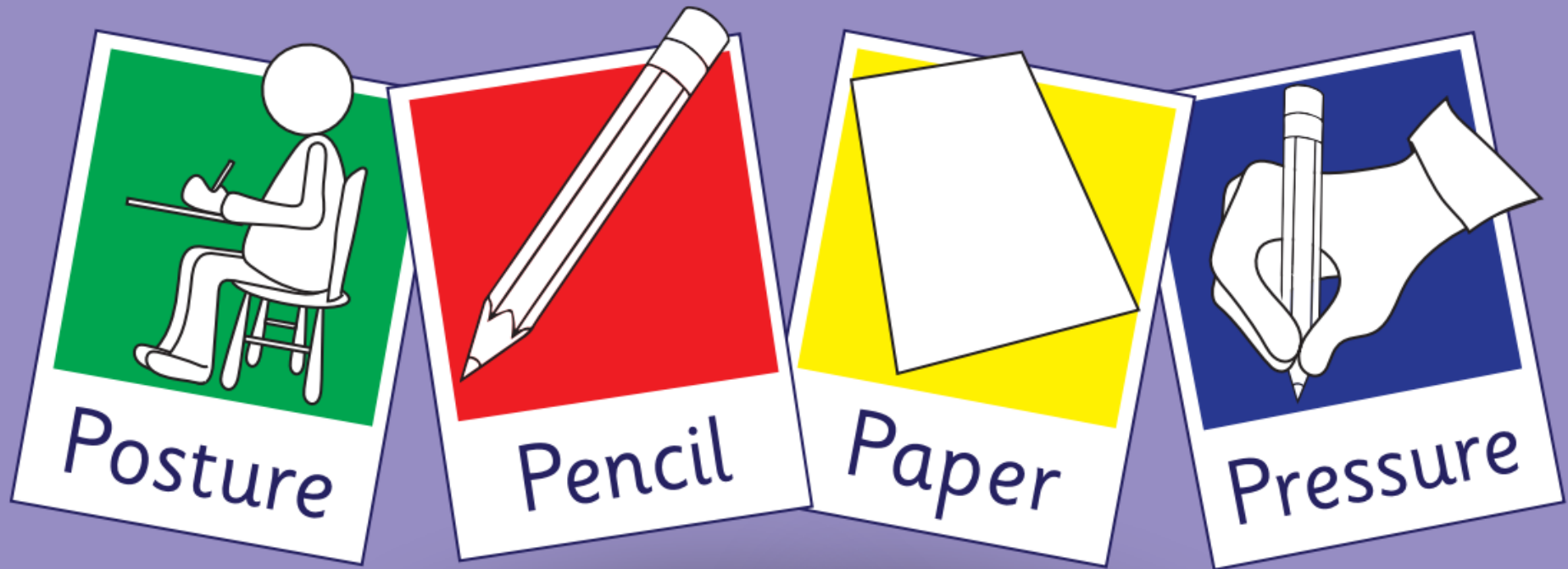


Prepare... for P checks





Poor posture can be a root cause of common handwriting difficulties such as pain or fatigue and will present as a reluctance to write, poor presentation or legibility, slow writing speed and reduced output.

POSTURE GUIDELINES

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table

AND

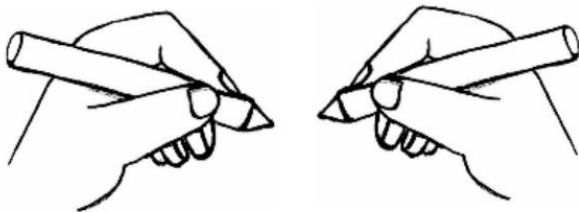
- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered

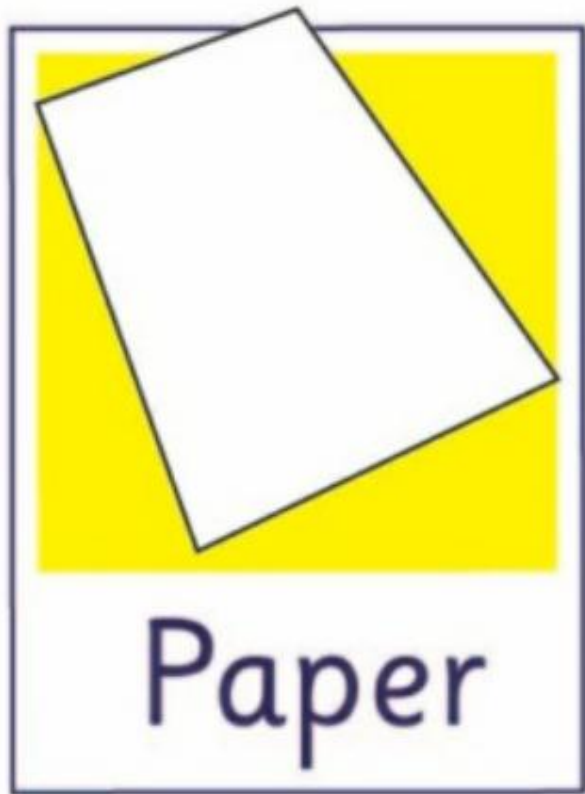


Children and adults can be seen to use a wide range of different pencil grasps, often because they have not learnt differently or as compensation for postural instability elsewhere. An inefficient pen/cil grasp can cause discomfort, impacting motivation, fluency and legibility and create difficulty in sustaining speed.

PENCIL GRASP GUIDELINES:

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.
- Consider corrective action using adaptive grips or specialist writing tools, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between finger tip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.





Correct paper position is vitally important during the early years of handwriting development as bad practice can lead to compensatory strategies, such as a hooked-wrist in left-handers, that are difficult to remedy in later years.

PAPER GUIDELINES:

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.



OFFSET

The paper should not be directly in front of the child but slightly offset, to the right for a right hander and to the left for a left hander.

The act of writing should leave a clear trace on the paper, neither too faint nor too dark, and flow along the line rhythmically.



PRESSURE GUIDELINES:

- The just-right pressure eases writing across the page, which is important for fluency and reducing the risk of pain during handwriting.
- Use teaching tools such as carbon paper, mechanical pencils, 'light-up' and 'squiggle' pens to demonstrate appropriate pressure.
- Try some gross and fine motor warm ups before and during the handwriting task. Actions which include squeezing and deep pressure, resistance and/or vibration will increase body awareness.
- Check that posture/issues with postural control are not the causative factor here.