

**Brahma Lodge  
Primary School**

**Writing Policy**

## **The Teaching of Writing at Brahma Lodge Primary**

A Literacy Block is an uninterrupted period of learning of at least one hour that should occur between 9:00 to 11:00 each day. Writing that occurs within a Literacy Block includes Guided Writing, Modelled Writing, Shared Writing and Independent Writing.

All curriculum areas should be used within a Literacy Block to drive text type learning. Literacy Blocks receive SSO support for an hour a day, four days a week. This enables teachers to organise the class into groups. Some groups work with adult support and some groups work independently.

Teachers should emphasise one aspect of writing each day through Shared Writing or Modelled Writing. Explicit teaching sessions should be about 10 minutes in duration. During this writing session teachers need to provide explicit instruction on selected features of the text being learnt. This explicit teaching should clearly link to the assessment criteria that the teacher wants to see evidence of in the text the students create whilst writing independently.

### **Independent Writing**

Students should be involved in independent writing tasks everyday. The amount of time that students will spend writing independently will vary according to the Year Level and the abilities of the students. The minimum requirement is for students to be writing independently for 30 minutes throughout a day. Independent Writing should occur across the curriculum. This means that all learning areas should be included in Independent Writing. Students should have some elements of choice within independent writing tasks. Teachers need to clearly communicate their learning expectations to students before they write. Students need to understand what the purpose of the writing is; they need to know who the audience is for a piece of writing and what the assessment criterion is before they write. The marking stamp is a useful tool in organising the thinking of teachers about what they are to assess about a particular piece of writing.

### **Modelled Writing**

In Modelled Writing the teacher works with the whole class, however, the teacher does both the writing and contributes the thoughts and ideas (*the teacher holds the pen*). In Modelled Writing the teacher demonstrates 'what happens in the head' of a writer by sharing their thoughts as they write. The purpose of this is to develop understandings of the decisions proficient writers make during the writing process. Teachers should demonstrate one aspect of writing through Modelled Writing and this demonstration should take about 10 minutes. Teachers demonstrate

to students what they will be looking for in the student's independent writing. This also links to providing the students with information on what is to be assessed.

### **Shared Writing** (the teacher shares the thinking)

Shared Writing sessions will not always be text type driven. For example teachers may use Shared Writing to explicitly teach sentence construction, compound or complex sentences etc. During Shared Writing the teacher records the text as the students and teacher jointly come up with the ideas for writing. The process allows for discussion as students offer suggestions. It is best in Shared Writing to only write a part of a text to demonstrate one aspect of writing. Shared Writing is very motivational for students as they can all participate and contribute successfully. It is essential to allow for partner talk during Shared Writing. The teacher may then ask for a suggestion and the students all 'turn and talk' with their buddy about the idea. Although the process is interactive the teacher leads and sets the direction of the learning. This ensures all students are actively engaged in Shared Writing. It is important for teachers to just focus on one idea to teach during Shared Writing and the topics to teach will come from your observations and assessments of student's writing.

### **Guided Writing**

Guided Writing is targeted, explicit teaching of writing strategies to a small group of students. Each child works individually on their own piece of writing, attempting to apply the writing strategy demonstrated. Within Guided Writing students will have opportunities to use scaffolds. Guided Writing groups are not ability groups; the group is determined by what the writing developmental focus is. Literacy Block is an obvious place to have a Guided Writing session as there is SSO support. It could occur whilst students are writing independently but it may be organised to occur another way. All students should participate in a guided writing lesson weekly.

### **Assessment / Feedback**

Teachers need to clearly communicate their learning expectations to students before students write. Students need to understand what the purpose of their writing is; they need to know who the audience is for the piece of writing and they need to know what the assessment criteria are before they write.

Feedback improves student learning outcomes. Conferencing with students to talk through your feedback and to set learning goals in writing is powerful. Feedback and Assessment should inform your teaching as well as informing the student about their learning progress. Students need opportunities to share their writing with each other, to share ideas about writing and to critique each other's work.

When giving feedback to students or assessing student writing teachers need to remember to provide authorial and secretarial information to the student.

**Authorial Feedback** - a response - to the message, to the generation of ideas, to the awareness of audience, to the editing.

**Secretarial Feedback** - a response to punctuation, proofreading, grammar, and spelling contained in the piece of text.

All teachers will provide written authorial and secretarial feedback to students which enable students to set appropriate learning goals.

It is important to begin with an emphasis on '**authorial**' and then move to the '**secretarial**' when we assess and mark students work (e.g. '***This work has been marked for:*** - *Sentence Construction, Tense & 3 Spelling Errors*'). The balance of authorial to secretarial feedback is dependent on the needs/development level of the students. The feedback or assessment criteria must be shared with the students before they write. We have agreed correcting 3 spelling errors within a piece of writing seems appropriate. We believe that if we always look at students writing on the surface level; features such as spelling or punctuation we will turn children off writing. We want our students to feel comfortable taking risks and making approximations when writing.

Teachers need to inform parents through their class newsletters of their marking of writing practices. All teachers have the option of using the: '***This Work has been checked for:***' stamp when marking and assessing student writing. Teachers who choose to use another tool to mark student writing will need to inform their line manager of the tool that they are using and they will need to inform parents through their class newsletter of their marking practices.

## **Spelling (Word Study)**

At BLPS we believe that the learning of how to spell words comes from the need to write words during student writing. This aspect of a spelling program needs to be individualised and based on errors from children's writing. As a student's vocabulary develops so will their need to learn the spelling of new words for their writing.

Students should have a *Have a Go* book or personal dictionary as a tool for developing a writing vocabulary. There should be no Friday test in an authentic Word Study program.

All students participate in a word study program based on their developmental ability as opposed to their year level. Students will be explicitly taught the four spelling knowledges.

### **Phonological knowledge**

- How words and letter combinations sound

### **Visual knowledge**

- The way words and letter combinations look

### **Morphemic knowledge**

- The spelling generalizations that can be used to spell a word,
- How compound words are constructed,
- How prefixes and suffixes work within words

### **Etymological knowledge**

- The derivations of words

The tables on the following 2 pages provide teachers with a breakdown of the four spelling knowledges. The information contained in the table is useful both for planning learning activities, assessment of learning activities and as a guide to the language that could be used when giving feedback to students and reporting to parents.

## Capacity Matrix for Spelling

Aim: Students demonstrate growing skills, knowledge and understanding in all elements of spelling

CAPACITY	CAPACITY BREAKDOWN
Phonological Knowledge	Rhyming words.
	Names letters of alphabet.
	Recognises sounds of alphabet.
	Says and writes letter for the first sound of a word.
	Segments words orally into syllables.
	Segments words orally into onset and rime.
	Spells by listening to sounds and attempts to write words.
	Says words that rhyme.
	Writes beginning and ending sounds to words.
	Blends sounds <i>cv, vc, and cvc</i> .
	Builds word families.
	Segments phonemes (e.g. <i>sh-i-p</i> )
	Exchanges one sound or letter in a written word with a different sound or letter to make a new word.
	Uses onset and rime to spell a new word (e.g. hop - mop)
	Blends sound vowel diagraphs, double vowels and common diagraphs.
	Blends words beginning and ending with double consonants and consonant diagraphs to work out unknown words.
	Draws on knowledge of letter sound relationships when trying to read unknown words.
	Alphabetical order knowledge to use dictionaries, encyclopaedias and glossaries.
	Phonograms can have more than one sound. ( <i>ough.. enough / through</i> )
	Uses known letter patterns to spell unknown words.
Spells words with less known diagraphs and letter combinations.	
Groups words according to the way that they have been spelt.	
Spells unknown words in syllables instead of in separate sounds.	
Develops knowledge of less common letter patterns and spelling generalizations or rules and applies them to new situations.	

CAPACITY	CAPACITY BREAKDOWN
Visual Knowledge	Recognises that words are made of letters.
	Copies words.
	Recognises and writes some Sight Words
	Spells some sight words accurately.
	Builds word families based on initial sounds.
	Uses analogy to spell new words.
	Recognises when a word is spelt incorrectly.
	Draws on knowledge of sight words and high frequency words when spelling.
	Self corrects own writing.
	Spells High Frequency Words correctly.
	Automatically spells an increasing bank of words.
	Draws upon spelling rules.
	Self corrects using resources.
	Uses a range of self-correction strategies when proof reading.
Morphemic Knowledge	Uses <i>s</i> for plural form.
	Building word families changing the suffix.
	Uses morphemes such as <i>ed</i> and <i>ing</i> to spell unknown words.
	Uses meaning and their context when spelling words (e.g. <i>there, their, they're</i> ).
	Uses meaning and their context when spelling words (e.g. <i>there, their, they're</i> ).
	Uses knowledge of base words to form new words.
	Groups words according to their families.
	Independently applies spelling rules.
	Uses a thesaurus.
	Uses knowledge of word parts (e.g. prefix, suffix, compound words).
Etymological Knowledge	Discusses origins of familiar words (e.g. TV and television).
	Builds word families (e.g. semicircle, semitrailer).
	Discusses and uses less familiar words and terms (tele - telephone; bi - bicycle).
	Uses knowledge of word origins ( tri - triangle).
	Uses knowledge of base words to construct new words.
	Groups words according to word origins.
	Uses knowledge of word meanings as a spelling strategy.
	Investigates origins of technical terms using dictionaries and other resources.
Draws on knowledge of word origin, changes in word usage and meaning over time and word building strategies to work out new words.	

## **Grammar**

Our grammar program needs to be authentic; it should be taught in response to writers' needs. Grammar should be taught within the text type that is the focus of the classroom writing program.

## **High Frequency Words**

We believe that our High Frequency Word learning is separate from our Word Study program. Our students need to be highly proficient at reading and writing the 100 most frequently used words as they make up 70% of words used in student writing.

We need to develop a Word Families scope and sequence R-7. Benchmarks need to be established to ensure R-7 consistency. We need to meet the needs of the students as opposed to teaching year levels.

## 2011 Overview of Writing Text Types to Guide Learning at BLPS

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2		Year 3	Year 4		Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
<b>Description</b>	Introduce	Introduce	Introduce	<b>SACSA Standard 1</b>	Introduce	Teach	<b>SACSA Standard 2</b>	Teach	Teach(C)	Teach(C)
<b>Explanation</b>	Introduce	Introduce	Introduce		Introduce	Teach		Teach	Teach(B)	Teach(B)
<b>Exposition</b>	Introduce (Term 1)	Teach (Term 1)	Teach (Term 1)		Teach (Term1)	Teach (Term 1)		Teach (Term1)	Teach(D) (Term 1)	Teach(D) (Term1)
<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Introduce</b>	Teach	Teach		Teach	Experience		Experience	Teach(A)	Teach(D)
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Introduce</b>	Teach	Teach		Teach	Experience		Experience	Teach(C)	Teach(C)
<b>Recount</b>	<b>Introduce</b>	Teach	Experience		Experience	Experience		Experience	Teach(D)	Teach(D)
<b>Report</b>	<b>Introduce</b>	Introduce	Teach		Teach	Experience		Experience	Teach(B)	Teach(B)
<b>Discussion</b>	Introduce	Introduce	Introduce		Introduce	Teach		Teach	Teach(D)	Teach(D)

In Year 6/7 all text types are explicitly taught. The letters are in pairs: this indicates which text types align in terms of assessment markers and similarities.

**A** - Recount, Narrative      **B** - Explanation, Report      **C** - Description, Procedure      **D**: Exposition, Discussion

## 2011 Overview of Writing Text Types at BLPS

The purpose of the R-7 Text Type Writing Overview is to help improve student learning outcomes in writing. As children develop higher levels of understanding and knowledge of how to write each text type and the purposes of each text type the quality of their writing will increase. As a teaching staff we are committed to aligning our curriculum and practices to ensure that our efforts are strategic and coordinated.

The Overview is an R-7 guide to assist teachers to understand where Text Type Writing fits into learning at BLPS. All teachers are expected to use the overview as part of their curriculum and learning planning process.

Teachers can also use the guide to plan other aspects of their literacy program including oral tasks and reading tasks. Many of the Reading Recovery levelled readers provide excellent examples of specific text type that could be linked across a learning program. The overview is not a summary of all text types that teachers may choose to use in the learning program. For example all children should be involved in a poetry writing program. Poetry provides an opportunity to learn about figurative language, adjectives, similes, metaphors, idioms, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia etc.

### Definitions of Terms Used in Text Type Writing Overview

**Introduce** - Students are introduced to a variety of reading materials that represent each text type. Teachers teach some features of a text type and use the language of the text type. Students write within the defined text types. Teachers need to understand that the term introduce means that students have not been explicitly taught the text type and have not been expected to create complete texts. A goal at this stage of learning is to get the students writing using their knowledge of text types. (Although reading will be the primary exposure method other mediums that could be used include: DVD's, web sites, newspapers, magazines, television shows etc.)

**Teach** - Teachers explicitly teach the purpose, structures, features and grammar of a text type following the BLPS Writing Policy. Students create complete text types related to the text type that they are explicitly learning. Students use scaffolds and are provided with assessment expectations and specific feedback as part of their learning.

**Experience** - This represents a period of consolidation and growth. Students revisit a text type that has previously been explicitly taught. Teachers build on the prior knowledge that the students have. Teachers will require students to write both complete texts and partial texts in this stage of development.