

## Reading and Writing Guidelines

(Status as of 16.05.2019)

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### 1. Literacy in our school

Literacy refers to the mediation of an ability to read and write; that is learning to read and write. This mediation process takes place at the Platanus School Berlin from Year 1, primarily in English and German classes.

Following prolonged discussions in research and literature on the best method to do this, there is now agreement that a combination of several paths leads to the best results. We adhere to these findings and deploy an analytical-synthetic method of learning to read and write. To this end, in terms of literacy in the German lessons in Year 1, we work with a primer and a writing course. We initially use the materials in such a way that the children learn the words synthetically when reading (letter-by-letter – sound-by-sound), before they later learn to recognise words as a whole and to have a view of the word content. Accordingly, they also initially learn to write individual letters, before moving on to letter connections and words. A more detailed description of how writing is taught in Year 1, is provided in Chapter 2: "Writing Utensils and Font".

The following criteria apply for our early lessons in German:

- In terms of pupils learning to read and write, we combine a logical approach with independent and child-led discovery as well as creative work and processing with recurring, careful, rhythmic exercises.
- The regular exercises follow their understanding.
- We use a variety of games and exercises in the areas of listening, reading and reading comprehension, language awareness and speech, along with varied materials that complement our two main textbooks (e.g. picture books, writing tables, word lists).
- For the training and strengthening of the strategies of listening and repeating, we start off with words that are phonetically accurate.
- We work with the Berlin Basic Vocabulary (Berliner Grundwortschatz), whose words are selected according to child-appropriateness, frequency and orthography.
- We place great value on writing motor skills, so we make sure to pay attention to the suppleness and mobility of the hand and finger muscles and to appropriate pen posture, sitting posture and the positioning of the writing paper.
- To promote reading motivation and pleasure, especially in Year 1, we do a lot of reading out loud. The pupils are also provided with initial reading magazines and books, which use exciting stories and interesting factual texts to support them on their path to being an independent reader.
- In principle, the German lessons in Year 1 do not involve any letter connections or letter alternatives being practiced. The aim is for pupils to understand the basic shape of the letters and to be securely able to write these; and thus to write a printed font, which they only start to join up in Year 2. Exceptions for individual differentiation are possible here.

After the 1st half of Year 1, where the focus in English lessons is placed on orality, in the 2nd half of the school year (after the winter holidays), writing is commenced with. The pupils work with the phonics

program "Read Write Inc." and within this framework, they get to grips with the sounds and sound connections of the English language.

In this, the staff also make use of the appropriate ruled lines (Lineatur 1), pay attention to the correct holding of the pen and writing posture, to the correct formation of letters and, where appropriate, also to proper spelling and the correction of spelling mistakes. In the English lessons, due to the complexity of the sound structures, letter connections are introduced and practised as early as Year 1.

The subjects, in which the literacy is primarily taught, are German and English. Furthermore, all the teachers and educators take their cue from the fundamental ideas set out in these guidelines.

## 2. Writing instruments

The community school's pupils start writing in Year 1 with a pencil. In Year 2, they take their so-called "pen licence"; once they have this, in principle they can use a fountain pen and blue ink.

Writing with a fountain pen and ink is the basic idea we pursue up to and including Year 6 with a view to supporting the pupils in the development of beautiful handwriting and the proper maintenance of their exercise books. While in notebooks, on so-called rough paper or in workbooks, writing with a pencil can be retained throughout, pupils should deliberately and carefully write with a fountain pen in their writing books and during learning success tests.

Within the framework of the differentiation and individual support, it is possible that individual pupils will use other devices more accommodating to their motor skills, such as a rollerball pen or fine liner. In this instance, they must still write in blue in order to mark their work out from teachers' corrections. Ballpoint pens are generally not allowed, as they are detrimental to the development of a legible and beautiful typeface. Likewise, pupils must entirely avoid using correcting pens and Tipp Ex. In this, we want to support the pupils in consciously thinking about writing properly, about various spelling strategies and in recognising their own spelling errors and correcting them.

## 3. Development of handwriting

Year 1 pupils learn the basic font developed by the Primary School Association, which has many advantages compared to the conventional method of first learning to print letters and then an associated joined-up font. For example, the childrens' writing development is not interrupted, but the formation of the letters is fundamentally retained.

The basic font begins as a printed font, whose letters are mostly oriented towards print letters and of which most can be simply and attractively joined together at a later stage. Many letter connections are proposed; in addition, there are letter alternatives, which are rather more curved than those originally learned. The pupils start to join the letters together as soon as they have attained a certain degree of security and routine when writing; this is also what the framework curriculum for the Federal State of Berlin provides for. It is not the case here that all the letters can and should be joined together, for example, capital letters are not necessarily connected. Writing speed and security are continuously increased.

Despite all the individual freedom and alternative letter forms provided for by the basic font, here at the Platanus school we pay attention to economic movement sequences and to a writing direction from top to bottom and from left to right being maintained, so that the pupils are consciously writing and not painting letters. Similarly, especially when learning the letters or even with older pupils, who have difficulties with typography or proper spelling, the well-known primary school ruled lines are used, so that the pupils learn to understand and securely apply the size and shape of the letters. When learning

the font, pupils thus simultaneously, and informally, develop their own handwriting. The latest research has once again confirmed that this development should not be left to the pupils alone. Accordingly, we

view our work with the concept of the basic font as being active and dynamic. While the form of the basic font letters always serves as a basis; especially in the later individual development of personalised handwriting, other letters are permitted, for example, those based on the Latin font, as these can be added to the basic font very successfully. Our teachers act as writing role models, show template letters and broach the issue of a sensible writing process. In the context of joint discussion, pupils reflect upon their experiences with writing and letters and learn the basic font as a basis for the development of their own handwriting. As before, regular writing exercises and the writing out and copying of prescribed letters or words on the appropriate ruled lines, continue to prove themselves.

The German and English teachers in particular support the pupils on this path and help them to develop legible and beautiful handwriting and proper spelling. But the specialist teachers and educators also support the pupils in the subject lessons and throughout the full day in terms of writing correctly, accurate and legibly. The teachers and educators of Years 1 - 3 also use the basic font, or a type of handwriting developed from this ,for writing on the board or making comments.

Pupils who come to us from other federal states or countries within the course of the school year, retain the handwriting they learned in their previous school career. If there are difficulties, the teachers work individually with the child in question. The basic font can be offered here as a form of handwriting. This also applies to pupils, who have handwriting that is difficult to read or reading and spelling difficulties. They also work together with a teacher from the subjects of German or English as part of the individual differentiation.

All subjects offer the option of using computers as a writing instrument. This takes place especially within the individual support if, for example, pupils with motor or reading and writing difficulties are to write longer texts. Furthermore, various projects provide an opportunity to work with computer-based writing programs.

#### Timeframe for literacy and the development of individual handwriting

Learning of the individual letters	Learning and practising the letter connections and letter alternatives	Development of own handwriting		Own handwriting Choice between joined-up and printed font If necessary, individual discussions about writing
	Individual discussions about writing			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 5 - 10
BASIS Writing direction Motion sequences		LEGIBILITY Writing speed Writing fluency		INDIVIDUALITY Fluent and legible Making texts

#### 4. Exercise books and textbooks in Years 1 – 10

The following table provides an overview of the ruled lines and textbooks used in the 2017/2018 school year in the subjects of German and English. In addition to the main textbooks, teachers may also make use of other textbooks and teaching materials in lessons, for example for particular exercises, individual support, differentiation or for the decoration of the classroom.

In order to support pupils having difficulties writing legibly or using correct spellings, ruled lines other than those which are the standard for the level in question may also be used.

Year group	Ruled lines	Main textbook English	Main textbook English
1/2	Ruled line 1 Ruled line 1G* Ruled line 2 Ruled line 2G	- Karibu (primer) - Karibu Workbook A and B  - Karibu Reading Book 2 - Karibu Language Book 2 - Ich kann die Grundschrift ('I can do the basic font') - Part B (Writing coursebook)	- Happy House 1 and 2
3/4	Ruled line 3 Ruled line 3G Ruled line 9 Ruled line 25 Ruled line 4G	- Karibu Reading Book 3 - Karibu Language Book 3 - Karibu Workbook 3  - Karibu Reading Book 4 - Karibu Language Book 4 - Karibu Workbook 4	Wild About English: - Phonics and spelling 7-9 - Grammar and punctuation 7-9
5/6	Ruled line 9 Ruled line 25 Ruled line 4G	- Wortstark Basis - Zebra Workbook 5 and 6	- Wild About English: Grammar 9-11
7/8	Ruled line 9 Ruled line 25	- Wortstark Basis	- Collins Key Stage 3 English
9/10	Ruled line 9 Ruled line 25	- Deutschbuch Orientierungswissen ('Orientational knowledge') - Finale: Prüfungstraining MSA ('Intermediate School-Leaving Certificate Exam Training'), German	- Finale: Prüfungstraining MSA ('Intermediate School-Leaving Certificate Exam Training'), English

\* G stands for a "story book", which can be as a learning or reading diary or as a project book.

#### 5. Exercise book and file management

We place great value on exercise books being maintained properly, as this makes it much easier for the

pupils to truly get to grips with the topics being taught and to develop independent learning. To this end, pupils avoid the use of correction pens, ballpoint pens and Tipp Ex. Our experience has shown that clean striking out with a ruler looks much tidier and clearer. In exceptional cases, for example in the design of a poster or display or when entering into a workbook, the teacher may, in the event of an emergency, provide the pupil with a correction pen or Tipp Ex. Pupils use rulers to underline something or put a line through it or to draw a table. In this, they first use a pencil and later a fountain pen.

Every exercise book entry is provided with the current date. The date is written in accordance with DIN 5008 as in one of the following two examples, so that the pupils become acquainted with, and learn how to apply, a form of notation common in the German-speaking countries:

- 06.09.2018
- 6.9.18

In addition to this, in the English lessons, teachers may teach a form of notation used in the English language (6th September 2018), for example, in a unit on the topic of time.

Each book entry is provided with a title, which is underlined with a ruler. The sequence of the exercise book entries is derived from the lesson and must be adhered to by pupils. If the exercise book contains a margin, pupils fundamentally leave this free for comments by their teachers. Between the individual exercise book entries, pupils leave enough space or carefully draw a line. Each side of the page is used to avoid wasting paper.

Pupils are encouraged to check their own exercise book entries for correctness, completeness, clarity and tidiness and, if necessary, to improve, supplement or redo their work. During the course of the school year, teachers take in the exercise books several times, in order to check individual entries, to give feedback on how to maintain the exercise book and, in the older classes, to issue a book management mark.

Of course, we carefully introduce Year 1 pupils to properly maintaining their exercise books. For example, the date is regularly discussed and noted once all the numbers have been introduced in maths lessons. Also, underlining with a ruler is jointly and continuously practised.

We also place value on the careful management of files, that is the filing of worksheets. Here too, the order is derived from the lessons. Worksheets are provided with the name and the date and filed properly. In some subjects, pupils independently create a table of contents.

## **6. Support from parents**

Parents can support their children, especially in the regular and joint checking of exercise books, files and pencil cases. In this, the pupils can:

- Add missing entries in their exercise books
- Finish unfinished worksheets
- Sharpen their pencils
- Pack ink cartridges
- Replace missing or used-up materials (e.g. glue stick)

One particularly important concern for us is the development and support of reading competence, since children are basically able to find, learn and (re)discover everything they will encounter in the course of their education from reading and from books:

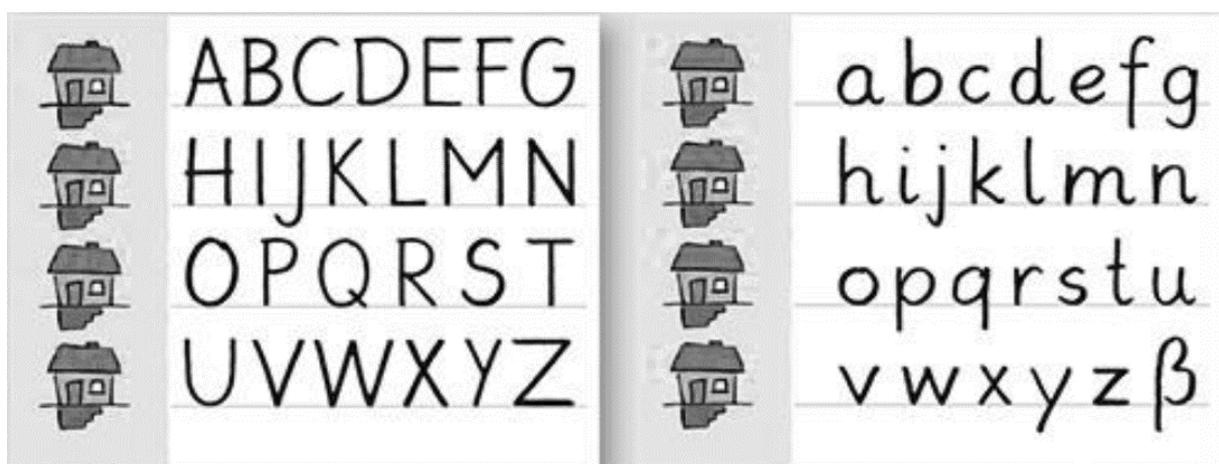
- Imagination, empathy, tolerance, and respect
- Creativity and fantasy
  
- Focussing on one thing
- Rest and relaxation
- Ability to critically query
- Development of problem-solving strategies
- Use of the words and expansion of vocabulary
- Correct spelling and punctuation
- Construction of sentences and texts
- Research and information gathering

It is therefore of great importance that parents do a great deal of reading out loud at home. Parents are always a role model to their children, and confronting books and texts makes it much easier for the children to access the written language and to develop secure reading and writing skills. Here are just a few ideas for implementation:

- Joint reading rituals before going to sleep
- Looking at picture books (also without text)
- Telling stories
- Counting rhymes, children's songs and poems
- Children's magazines

Each parent should read and speak to the child in his/her own native language.

The basic font at a glance:



## 7. Sources and appendix

### Specialist literature:

Framework curriculum for Berlin, German: <http://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/rlp-online/c-faecher/deutsch/kompetenzentwicklung/> (07.06.2018)

Pompe/Spinner/Ossner: Deutschdidaktik Grundschule – Eine Einführung, Erich Schmidt Verlag, Berlin, 2016, 978 – 3 503 16656 5

Basic font: <http://www.die-grundschrift.de/> (07.06.2018)

Date: <http://www.din-5008-richtlinien.de/startseite/datum/> (07.06.2018)

Primary school pedagogy/German/Didactics of written language acquisition and first reading lessons: [http://de.mini.wikia.com/wiki/Grundschulp%C3%A4dagogik/Deutsch/Didaktik\\_des\\_Schriftspracherwerbs\\_und\\_Erstleseunterricht](http://de.mini.wikia.com/wiki/Grundschulp%C3%A4dagogik/Deutsch/Didaktik_des_Schriftspracherwerbs_und_Erstleseunterricht) (07.06.2018)

Duden – The dictionary of foreign words, 10th edition, 2010, p. 74

DIN 5008 – The standard for perfectly constructed letters – the current recommendation on the spelling

### Textbooks and materials:

The textbook "Karibu": <https://verlage.westermanngruppe.de/westermann/reihe/KARIBU14AA/Karibu-Ausgabe-2016> (07.06.2018)

Ich kann die Grundschrift – Part B: <https://www.sternchenverlag.de/ich-kann-die-grundschrift-teil-b.html> (07.06.2018)

The textbook "Wordstark Basis": <https://verlage.westermanngruppe.de/schroedel/reihe/WORT12BASAA/worststark-Basis-Differenzierende-Allgemeine-Ausgabe-2012> (07.06.2018)

Happy House

Happy House Class Book and Activity Book 1  
[https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/young\\_learners/happy\\_house/?cc=de&selLanguage=de](https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/young_learners/happy_house/?cc=de&selLanguage=de)  
(07.05.2019)

Happy House Class Book and Activity Book 2  
[https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/young\\_learners/happy\\_house/?cc=de&selLanguage=de](https://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/young_learners/happy_house/?cc=de&selLanguage=de)  
(07.05.2019)

Letts Wild About English Phonics and Spelling 7-9 <https://collins.co.uk/products/9781844197927>  
(07.05.2019)

Letts Wild About English Grammar and Punctuation 7-9 <https://collins.co.uk/products/9781844197910>  
(07.05.2019)

Letts Wild About English Grammar and Punctuation 9-11 <https://collins.co.uk/products/9781844197828>  
(07.05.2019)

### Lined rules

School start – Ruled lines for school books: Easily and understandably explained:  
<https://www.schulstart.de/heft-lineatur-uebersicht-schulheft-collegeblock-kieserblock> (07.06.2018)