Tidbury Green School
Dickens Heath Road
Tidbury Green
Solihull
B90 1QW

Policy Name

Handwriting

Date of Review

Spring Term 2024

Next Review Date

Spring Term 2026

Agreed by Governors

Feb 2024

Date

Jan 2024

Policy:	Handwriting
People Authorised to make changes to this policy:	• Mrs R Fitter • Mr B Green
Committee responsible for approving policy:	Policy, Curriculum, Scrutiny & Standards

Questions for the reviewer of this policy:	
Does this policy comply with statutory requirements and is relevant legislation and guidance referenced in the policy?	Yes
Does the policy reflect current evidence-based good practice?	Yes
Is the policy consistent with the vision and ethos of the school?	Yes
Does the policy reflect current practice in the school?	Yes

After policy review:	
Changes made:	Progression altered in line with current cognitive load research and advice. Updated to new format. Letter formation phrases updated.
Expected impact of updated policy:	Allow children the time in Reception and Year 1 to secure the formation of each letter. This will provide a stable foundation for joining of handwriting in Year 2 and above. The expectation is that handwriting standards will improve.
Updated policy sent to governors:	Summer 2023
Updated policy sent to staff:	Summer 2023
Updated policy put on website:	Summer 2023

Introduction

At Tidbury Green School, handwriting is seen as a skill that allows our children to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively.

Aims

Our aims in teaching handwriting are:

- For all children to develop a legible style of handwriting in both joined and printed styles, with increasing fluency, confidence and speed.
- For children to be aware that handwriting can take different forms for different purposes (eg, drafting, rough work and final presentation, etc.)
- To make provision for children who use their left hand to ensure they develop free flowing writing.
- To make provision for any children with special needs affecting their gross or fine motor skills.

In order to achieve this, children are taught to:-

1. Develop their fine motor control through a variety of means.
2. Understand the importance of correct posture and paper position according to whether they are left or right handed.
3. Use a pencil/pen and hold it effectively.
4. Write from left to right and top to bottom on a page.
5. Start and finish letters correctly, with joins where appropriate.
6. Form upper and lower case letters correctly; of regular size and shape (see 'Appendix One').
7. Know the language of writing and use the correct terminology (eg, ascenders and descenders.)
8. Put regular spaces between words.
9. Write legibly in both cursive and printed styles.
10. Use different styles of writing for different purposes.
11. Understand the importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.

Methodology and Organisation

At Tidbury Green School, we understand that handwriting is a skill that needs to be taught explicitly. As a motor skill, it takes up considerable cognitive capacity. By writing with fluency, we are allowing our children to free up their cognitive load, allowing them to focus on the content of their writing. Through systematic and regular practice, as well as effective modelling, children can master the skill of handwriting. The use of 'Letter-join' ensures a consistency in handwriting expectations for everyone within the school community.

Handwriting is taught in the following ways: -

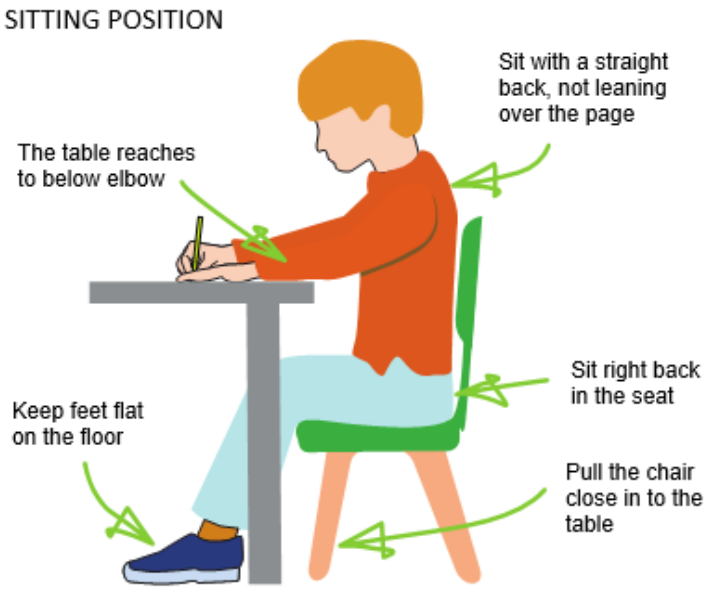
- In the Foundation Stage children are taught correct letter formation regularly in phonic and writing sessions.
- In Year One, children continue to form letters correctly whilst using the lead-in and lead-out in preparation for cursive handwriting.

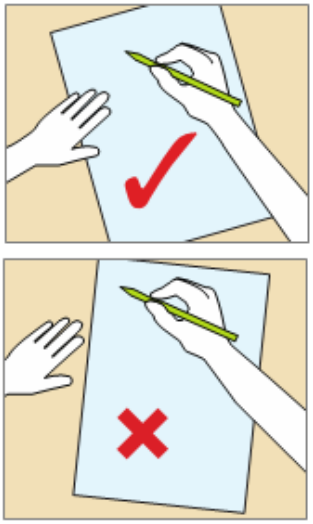
- In Year 2, children are taught to join letters appropriately with horizontal and diagonal joins.
- In Year 3 and 4 horizontal and diagonal joins are consolidated and practiced regularly through handwriting, spelling and literacy activities.
- In Year 5 and 6 handwriting is addressed depending on the needs of the children concerned.

When teaching handwriting at Tidbury Green, we consider how best to support our children.

Position of the writer

Children should sit comfortably with their feet flat on the floor and their body upright, leaning forward slightly. The non-writing hand should rest on the paper, supporting the upper body, facing slightly to the dominant side.





Paper position for right-handed children.

Grip

When teaching the children to grip, care should be taken that the children do not grip the pencil too tightly as they will tire easily and not develop a free flowing movement. They should hold the pencil between the thumb and the

forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should be able to move slightly so that the very fine movements required for writing are possible. Pencil grip is of paramount importance as it is very hard to undo bad practice once established.

Right-handed pencil grip

Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift if off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

Left-handed pencil grip

Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift if off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

Assessment

When children are engaged in handwriting activities, teachers and teaching assistants observe the children and offer ongoing support and identify, intervene and address any misconceptions.

Opportunities to develop handwriting

There are other areas in the curriculum that lend themselves well to promoting good letter formation and fluent handwriting. Phonics and spelling sessions are a good example of this; however, handwriting should not become the focus of these sessions. Handwriting expectations must be maintained across all areas of the curriculum and when preparing work for display.

Children who write with their left hand

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision when needed:

- Left-handed pupils should most often sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space,
- Paper should be positioned to the left for right-handed pupils and to the right for left-handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in each case,
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision,
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

The role of parents/carers

All teachers play an important role in communicating the handwriting policy from an early stage. This is to ensure parents are informed and encouraged to offer good models to their children. They can do this by:

- using capital letters for the beginning of their names.
- encouraging good pencil grip when writing at home.
- encourage good posture when sat at a table (particularly when writing).
- practicing drawing patterns together.
- playing joining up games which encourage left to right directionality.

Building Fluency in Handwriting

Each stage of education at Tidbury Green plays an important role in our desire for all of our children to develop fluent handwriting.

Foundation Stage

Pre–writing skills are often practiced in the Foundation Stage and its aim is to develop and strengthen *gross motor skills* especially muscles in the shoulder, arm, wrist and hand. This is done through 'Write Dance,' Brain Gym, ball skills and exploring space and direction using the whole body. Sky patterns and forming letters correctly can be practiced regularly using a range of objects including sticks and scarves.

To develop and strengthen *fine motor control* the following multi-sensory activities can be done:

- threading
- constructional apparatus
- pegboards
- sewing and weaving
- tracing
- stencils
- colouring
- painting
- scissor skills
- experimenting with a range of implements, e.g, pens, pencils, crayons, felt tips, chalk, interactive whiteboard, sticks, paints, water
- use a selection of materials, e.g, shaving foam, mud, wet/dry sand and water
- malleable materials
- sandpaper and other tactile letter shapes
- playing with 'roll and write' letters
- finger and counting rhymes

Throughout the Foundation Stage children are introduced to the relationship between letter symbols and letter sounds. Good starting points for writing are the child's own name, labelling familiar objects all using the agreed script formation. The class teacher uses a variety of appropriate resources, e.g alphabet friezes, tactile letters, chunky pencils, various media, letters in 'air' and tracing in sand/paint etc.

Writing patterns are practiced in order to encourage a flowing style and when children are ready they are taught to produce correct letter formation.

Pre-School and Nursery

The children practice their handwriting through the following activities:

- Emergent writing ('Think Writing') Days of the Week, writing their own name and 'Name Cards'. They will then progress onto tracing over shapes of letters, using word mats and alliteration. Work is set that is relevant to the individual children. The children use green and red spots in activity time to help form some lower case letters.
- Where possible handwritten models are provided to children that models the correct letter formation using letter forms from Appendix One. Where word processed models are provided these should also be correct form and match Appendix One.

Reception and Year 1

This practice continues on from Nursery with children forming letters correctly (see 'Appendix One'). In Reception, children have access to their name cards at all times which models correct letter formation. Handwriting practice occurs regularly in Reception and Year 1 with staff modelling correct letter formation using the Little Wandle letter formation phrases (where appropriate during the phonic sessions), writing sessions and through independent activities. Specific handwriting skills are taught through focused activities.

The teaching of capital letters becomes more pertinent as Year 1 progresses and their writing development as a whole demands simple punctuation.

Year 2

In Year 2, handwriting continues to be taught through regular handwriting sessions where children are shown how to produce letters with the lead-in and lead-out (see 'Appendix Two) to encourage a cursive style in preparation for fluent, joined handwriting. As children become more familiar with the correct formation of individual letters, they are encouraged to consider size and position (with regard to lines) of letters. Ascenders and descenders are pointed out in relation to positioning of letters on lines. Lined paper is used for all written work. Correct letter formation with lead-ins and lead-outs is modelled consistently by teachers in phonic and writing sessions, in their response to children's work and when using the IWB.

Year 3

Children in Year 3 revise and consolidate the four main joins in handwriting and any appropriate points previously mentioned. Joined handwriting is used at all times (unless it is not appropriate e.g. printing on a map or note taking). Speed, fluency and legibility continue to be built upon. Pupils consolidate their use of the four basic joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters.

1. Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g, ai, ar, un
2. Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, e.g, ou, vi, wi
3. Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g, ab, ul, it
4. Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, e.g, ol, wh, ot

Years 4, 5 and 6

In Years 4, 5 and 6, handwriting is consolidated to ensure all children write with automaticity and fluency. Those who have already secured this skill will go on to develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Experimentation with different styles and writing implements is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility. Year 5 and 6 children are to use a joined style, developing fluency, accuracy and speed in handwriting. Children are to use a clear, neat style for final presented work as opposed to informal writing for rough drafting or taking notes etc.

Appendices

Appendix One – Letter Formation (lower case letters)

letter and mnemonic	formation phrase	letter and mnemonic	formation phrase
a	Around the astronaut's helmet, and down into space.	n	Down, up and over the net.
b	Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.	o	All around the octopus.
c	Curl around the cat.	p	Down the penguin's back, up and round its head.
d	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.	u qu	Round the queen's face, up to her crown, down her robe with a flick at the end.
e	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.	r	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.
f	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.	s	Down the snake from head to tail.

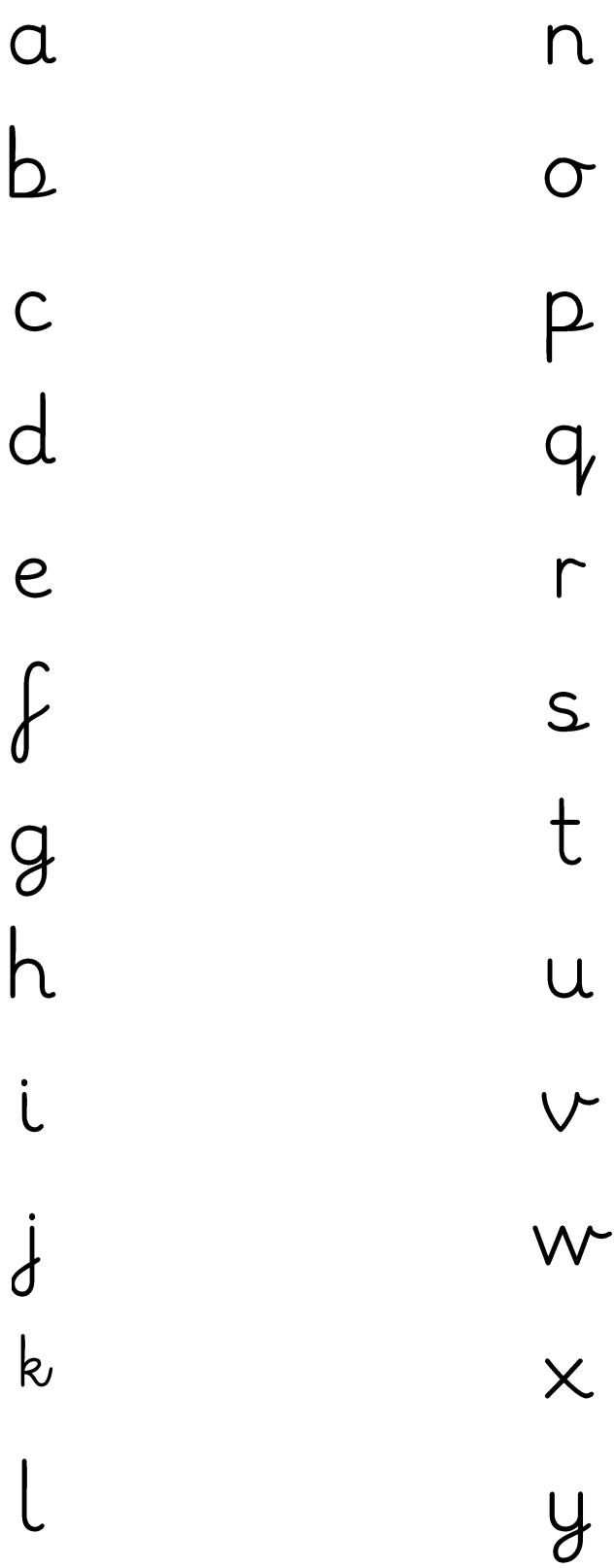
g	Round the goat's face and curl under his chin.	t	Down the tiger and across its neck.
h	Down, up and over the helicopter.	u	Down and around the umbrella, and back to the ground.

i	Down the iguana's body and dot the leaf.	v	Down to the bottom of the volcano, and back up to the top.
j	Down the jellyfish and dot on its head.	w	Down and up and down and up the waves.
k	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.	x	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again across the box to the bottom.
l	Down the lollipop stick.	y	Down and around the yo-yo and

			curl round the string.
m	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.	z	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.

Appendix One – Letter Formation (capital letters)

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.



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