Newberries Primary School

'Play Together, Learn Together, Achieve Together, Grow Together'

Handwriting Policy

Aims

- Promote consistency of handwriting and presentation throughout the school.
- Promote children's sense of pride in their own work.
- Encourage children to acquire correct letter formation and clear, legible, joined handwriting.
- Children are able to have writing automaticity when writing.

Teaching and Learning

All classes will have daily sessions devoted to the teaching of handwriting.

Teaching should:

- Follow the chosen agreed cursive script (see Appendix 1 & 2).
- Ensure the children see effective demonstration and modelling of letter formation and joins through teaching inputs and in general writing on the whiteboards.
- Handwriting should be taught in conjunction with phonics/spelling to reinforce the link between letter formation and phonetical awareness.
- Give children in Reception to Year 6 the opportunities to practice and develop handwriting and presentation skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.
- Allow opportunities for children to practise handwriting alongside teacher demonstrations, rather than just copying from sheets or schemes.
- Introduce blue pens during Year 3 when the children earn their 'Pen License' (e.g. when they are joining consistently and neatly) and ensure that pens are used consistently in written work in Key Stage 2.
- Handwriting pens available for children as appropriate.

Inclusion & Adaptation

Our school is committed to supporting all pupils in developing handwriting skills in a way that meets their individual needs. We recognise that children progress at different rates and may require additional support or alternative approaches.

We provide differentiated teaching, appropriate interventions, and reasonable adjustments where needed, including adapted resources or assistive technology. We value effort, progress, and clear communication over uniformity of style.

We work in partnership with staff, pupils, and parents/carers to ensure all learners can achieve their full potential.

End of Year Expectations:

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3 & 4	Year 5 & 6
Below are the ELG statements which are considered to be the foundation motor skills needed for handwriting. **Gross Motor Skills ELG** • Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; • Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; **Fine Motor Skills ELG** • Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases; • Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery • Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing **Writing ELG** • Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; • Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.	Pupils should be taught to: ● sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly ● begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place ● form capital letters ● form digits 0-9 ● understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.	Pupils should be taught to: • form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another • start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one an-other, are best left unjoined • write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters • use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.	Pupils should be taught to: • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.	Pupils should be taught to: • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: • choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters • choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Progression and Pace

Children in Reception will follow the pace and progression as outlined in Little Wandle:

Reception progression

Autumn term	**Preparation and practice (suggested time 4 weeks)** • Teach the 'Ready to write' checklist • Engage in motor development activities • Practise with patterns	
	Unit 1: Practising patterns	• Horizontal lines, Vertical lines, Wavy lines, Circles (Week 1) • Up curves, Down curves, Mixed-height curves, Letter C (Week 2) • Spirals, Crosses, Turrets, Diagonals (Week 3) • Zig-zags, Sideways V, Letter X, Triangles (Week 4)
	Teach lower-case letter formation (suggested time 9 weeks) • Teach the lower-case letters in families • Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review	
	Unit 2: Curly letter family	• c, a, d (Week 5) • g, o, q (Week 6) • e, s, f (Week 7)
	Unit 3: Long letter family	• l, i, t (Week 8) • j, u, y (Week 9)
	Unit 4: Bouncy letter family	• m, n, r (Week 10) • b, p, h (Week 11)
	Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family	• v, w, x (Week 12) • z, k (Week 13)

End or start of term	Assess and review week	Review lower-case letters as needed (Week 14)

Spring term	**Teach capital letter formation (suggested time 11 weeks)** • Teach capital letters • Review lower-case letters alongside capitals • Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review	
	Unit 6: Capital letters	• Cc, Aa, Dd (Week 15) • Gg, Oo, Qq (Week 16) • Ee, Ss, Ff (Week 17) • Ll, Ii, Tt (Week 18) • Jj, Uu, Yy (Week 19) Assess and review week (Week 20 – before or after half-term) • Mm, Nn, Rr (Week 21) • Bb, Pp, Hh (Week 22) • Vv, Ww, Xx (Week 23) • Zz, Kk (Week 24)

End or start of term	Assess and review week	Review capital letters as needed (Week 25)

Summer term	**Practise in digraphs, trigraphs and words (suggested time 9+ weeks)** • Assess and review lower-case and capital letters as needed • Practise letter formation in digraphs and trigraphs • Practise letter formation in words • Use Assessment for Learning to reteach and review	
	Unit 7: Digraphs and trigraphs	• ff, ll, ss (Week 26) • zz, ck, qu (Week 27) • ch, sh, th (Week 28) • ng, nk, ai (Week 29) • ee, igh, oa (Week 30) Assess and review week (Week 31 – before or after half-term) • oo, ar, or (Week 32) • ur, ow, oi (Week 33) • ear, air, er plus Assess and review (Week 34)

End of term	Assess and review week	Week 35 (onwards): Assess and review all letters as needed

These letter formations will be consolidated throughout Year 1 and taught in conjunction with phonics.

Appendix 1 - Letter Formation Phrases

Unit 2: Curly letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Curl around the cat.
	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.
	Around the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
	Around the goat's face and curl under its chin.
	All around the octopus.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Around the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end.
	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.
	Down the snake from head to tail.
	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.

Unit 3: Long letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the lollipop stick.
	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.
	Down the tiger and across its neck.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
	Down and around the umbrella and back to the ground.
	Down, around the yo-yo and curl around the string.

Unit 4: Bouncy letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.
	Down, up and over the net.
	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down the bear's back, up and around its tummy.
	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.
	Down, up and over the helicopter.

Unit 5: Zig-zag letter family

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
	Down and up and down and up the waves.
	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again, across the box to the bottom.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.
	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.

Capital Letter Formation Phrases

Letter mnemonic	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.

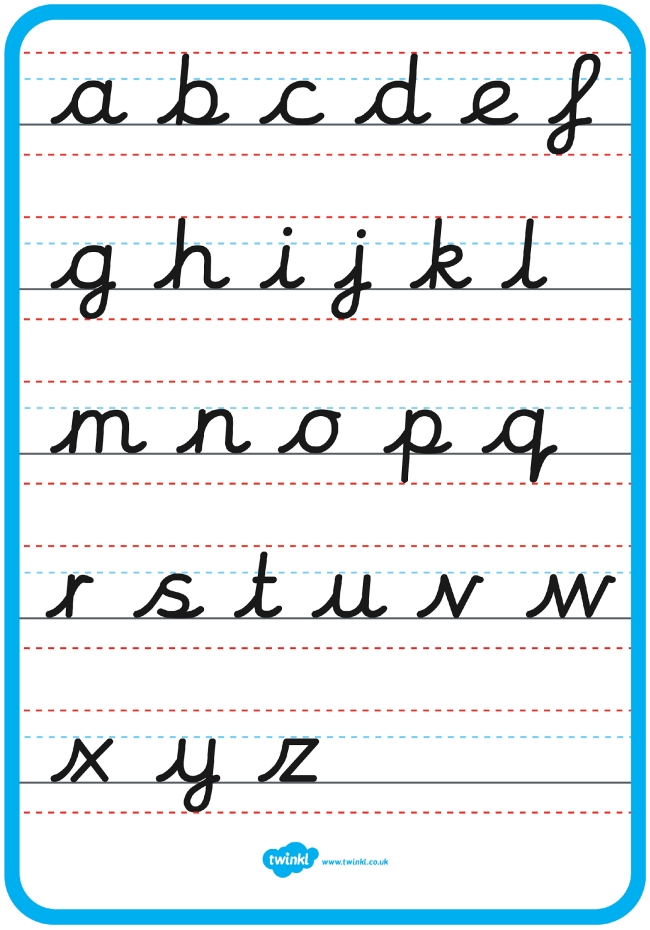
Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, 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.

Letter mnemonic	Formation phrase
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, curl around to the left. Then curl around to the right to make a snake shape.
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.

Appendix 2

Handwriting Letter Formation - Year 2 - 6

Letters are introduced individually and in conjunction with the teaching of phonics and spelling.

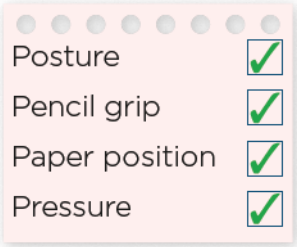


These joined letter formations will be introduced during Year 2 following the progression detailed above.

Throughout Key Stage 2 handwriting will be taught daily in conjunction with the teaching of phonics and spelling.

Handwriting will be modelled by the teacher using https://handwritingrepeater.app/

Appendix 3 - Pencil Grip, Seating Position & Paper Position



Posture

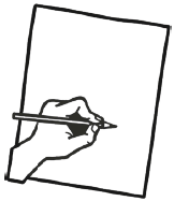
If children have a poor posture when writing, it can result in pain and fatigue, causing poor presentation, handwriting that is difficult to read, slow speed and lack of motivation to write. By modelling, monitoring and reinforcing good posture from the beginning, poor habits can be prevented from developing and children can be supported in building the stamina and speed needed for fluent writing.



- **Feet** are flat on the floor or supported on a wide, stable raised surface.
- **Knees** form a 90 degrees angle, with about two fingers' space behind the knees to prevent pressure on the lower thighs.
- **Hips** are positioned at approximately 90 degrees, with the back fully supported by the chair.
- **Seat position** with the back against the chair maintaining a small gap (about the width of a fist) between the stomach and the table, so there is sufficient space to breathe comfortably.
- **Table and chair height** should allow the forearms to rest comfortably on the surface – without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders (too high).
- **Work surface** must be clean, smooth and clear of clutter to promote proper hand and arm placement and allow arms to move freely to write.

Paper position

- Paper angle helps support natural hand movement and improves handwriting posture. It is important to teach children the optimal paper position for writing. The paper placement should not be directly in front of the child, but slightly offset as follows:

For right-handers: Position the paper slightly to the right. Tilt the paper so that the top left corner angles downward to the left. 	**For left-handers**: Position the paper slightly to the left. Tilt the paper so that the top right corner angles downward to the right. 

Holding the paper

- Encourage the use of the non-writing hand to hold and steady the paper. This positioning encourages smoother writing, better wrist alignment and improved visibility of the writing area.

Tripod grip



The tripod grip is typically the easiest for children to learn. It can be modelled by showing how to pinch the pencil between the ball of the thumb and index finger – about a finger's width from the pencil tip – while resting the middle finger underneath for support, and the other fingers tucked into the hand. Using a small sticker to mark the correct grip position can be a helpful visual aid. The ideal location of the fingers is about 3cm from the pencil tip. For children who find pencil grip challenging, timely intervention and additional practice are essential to prevent the development of incorrect habits. See the 'Pencil grip' video.

For children who continue to have difficulty with fine and gross motor skills, adaptive equipment can used to support their development.