

<b>Date of issue</b>	September 2021
<b>Next due for review</b>	September 2022
<b>Owner</b>	English Leads
<b>Approver</b>	Academy Council

### **Principles**

As it becomes a predominant method to present written ideas, handwriting is still an important skill when communicating ideas for specific purposes. This is acknowledged in the National Curriculum with a focus on joined handwriting for higher achievement and making the connection between a child’s handwriting and their composition and spelling ability.

Teaching of handwriting includes the development of:

- A positive attitude to handwriting
- A neat, legible style
- A fluent, joined style
- An effective and efficient way of holding writing instruments
- Understanding that different styles of handwriting are appropriate for different purposes
- A balance between speed and neatness is appropriate to a task

### **Intent**

At Oyster Park Primary Academy, the importance of children being able to write legibly, fluently and at a reasonable speed is recognised. We aim in our teaching of handwriting that pupils will:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in accordance with the cursive font.
- Develop flow and speed.
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

With these skills, children have a much greater chance of being able to reach and demonstrate their true potential throughout their school careers and in their lives beyond school.

### **Implementation**

At Oyster Park we use the basis of the National Curriculum for the teaching of fluent and legible handwriting (see Appendix 1). This is taught through specific handwriting sessions where children learn to form letters and develop a fluent style through modelling of technique and independent practise.

Children are taught that different handwriting styles are appropriate dependent on the purpose of a task such as note taking or for presentation. Children are given opportunities to present written work for display and they are encouraged to see the need for developing a neat, legible style.

Staff model these styles in their own handwriting such as teaching notes on the whiteboard, Interactive whiteboard and in marking. Children experiencing particular difficulties with their handwriting may be given additional support to refine and develop their handwriting style through specific teaching or be provided with access to a range of writing tools such as pencil grips or writing slopes.

Children may record their written work electronically when their physical capabilities make handwriting particularly difficult. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the SENCo and class teacher will also make reference to those outside agencies involved with the child.

### **PROGRESSION OF HANDWRITING SKILLS**

Research suggests that children make most progress when they have short, focused handwriting sessions.

- In the Foundation Stage, staff focus closely on the formation of correct habits, observing and supporting children accordingly. In Upper Foundation Stage short handwriting sessions are needed every day.

- In Year 1, three 10 minute handwriting sessions are needed each week.
- In Years 2 to 6, two 10 minute handwriting sessions are needed each week dependent on need. It may also be useful to create other opportunities for the children if and when appropriate. One specific issue should be concentrated on in each session. Looking at more than one issue is potentially confusing to the children.

## Foundation Stage

In Foundation Stage, children are taught to make marks and engage in writing of many different types using a range of mark making materials such as with finger paints, writing in sand or with pencils and crayons. This is emergent writing.

Opportunities are provided during play, role play and within the provision areas to promote and engage children in writing, as well as in a more formal focused writing group. Children are able to access a range of pencil, crayon and paint brush body thickness, building hand strength and dexterity, to develop fine and gross motor skills. Pre requisite skills needed for writing agility and fluency are developed through activities such as writing patterns and forming letters in play dough as this teaches a child the shapes and directional pushes and pulls of the writing tool required to form letters.

To help children to remember how to form letters, numbers and grip a pencil, 'Read Write Inc' handwriting phrases and rhymes and songs are used during the teaching of handwriting.

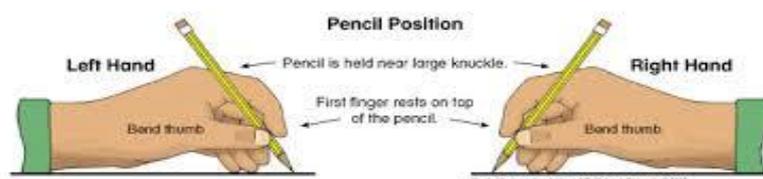
(See Appendix 2)

In Upper Foundation Stage, children are taught to use a pre cursive printed style. They are encouraged to:-

- Write from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page
- Use a tripod grip when holding any writing tool
- Write letters with the correct formation
- Practise correct letter formation in stroke-related families
- Write capital letters to start their first and last name
- Write their own name

When working with individual children and small groups, staff monitor children's writing to ensure that they develop appropriate letter formation and that a correct tripod grip is developing.

During small focused writing groups children are observed to ensure that they develop appropriate letter formation and that the correct tripod grip is being developed.



Children are taught handwriting in the following stages:

- Letter formation is practised
- Where to place the letters on a writing line
- Two basic joins-diagonal and horizontal

Letter formation is introduced at the same time as the Read Write Inc letter sounds, so that children can begin to write and use the sounds they are learning. Sounds are taught in the order:

m a s d t  
i n p g o  
c k u b

f e l h  
 r j v y w  
 z q x

- Once introduced, these are then practised in groups of letters with similar formations  
 'Around' letters a, c, o, d, g, q  
 'Down' letters l, t, b, p, k, h, I, j, m, n, r, u, y  
 'Curly' letters e, f, s  
 'Zig-zag' letters v, w, z, x
- The same 'Read Write Inc' picture mnemonics are used to help teach letter formation (See Appendix 2). Rhymes are also used to help with number formation.
- Letters are taught in a pre-cursive font style (ending in a 'curl') as this helps towards joining.
- Vocabulary used: Capital letters (**A**), tall letters (**h**), small letters (**i**), letters with tails that go under the line (**g**). RWI descriptions of 'sun', 'boat' and 'water' letters may be used if it helps children with placing letters on the line.

### Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, children build on their early writing experiences with reinforcing and consolidation of the correct letter formation in line with the National Curriculum. They are encouraged to:

- Hold a pencil with an efficient grip, preferably tripod grip however other grips chosen by the child can be successful
- Sit with the correct posture when writing (See Appendix 3)
- Form consistently sized and shaped letters with uniform ascenders and descenders
- Use regular spacing between letters and words
- Take pride in their handwriting and be aware of the need for clear and neat presentation and appropriate layout
- Begin to join letters together in Year 2

### Joined handwriting

- Letter joins are taught within words the children are using in their daily phonic sessions so that the children can write those sounds and words they are learning
- Individual letter joins are also practised in groups of letters with similar joins e.g. **a, c, o, e** particularly where a child may find a certain join difficult
- Vocabulary used: Capital letters (**A**), tall letters (**h**) ascenders (**h**), small letters (**i**), descenders (**j**)

### Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, children build on and reinforce their use of letter joins and are given opportunities to:

- Develop greater control and fluency
- Continue to develop legible joined handwriting
- Apply appropriate handwriting style to fit writing purpose i.e. a faster script for notes, a neat style for presented work.
- Use pens in written work once they have established correct joins and neatly formed handwriting
- Develop their own style within the general principles of the school style

Vocabulary used: Capital or upper case letters (**A**), lower case (**i**), letters with ascenders and descenders (**h g**)

As children begin to join or to use pen there is often deterioration in the neatness and overall appearances as they become comfortable with the different flow of writing and the feel of the pen. Children should be reassured that this is a natural part of the writing process and not to let it deter them.

### TECHNICAL LANGUAGE TERMS

- The word **cursive** means joined.
- The correct name for the joins between letters is **ligatures**.
- The technical name for a 'tail' is a **flourish**.

### RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TEACHING OF HANDWRITING

A number of different materials, resources and writing implements are available to support handwriting in school. These include thick bodied pencils for early grips, a range of handwriting pens (suitable for left and right handed writers including triangular bodied), handwriting whiteboards, marker pens, pencil grips and various handwriting pattern sheets.

'Join It' software is available for teachers to model the appropriate styles used and to produce their own resources in this script.

Children will be able to access a variety of writing implements, allowing them to independently choose the tool that best suits their needs.

In both Key Stage 1 and 2 children use lined paper similar to their writing books (wider rule for younger children) to ensure consistent application of their handwriting in all areas of the curriculum. Plain paper with line guides is also used for neat presented work.

### Impact

The impact of using a consistent teaching approach, including in display, will be evident across the school with an increase in the profile of handwriting. Our children's handwriting will become automatic and to a high standard so that they are able to focus on the content of their writing rather than the presentation. The impact of a consistent approach should be noticeable within written work in all areas of the curriculum.

## APPENDIX 1 HANDWRITING IN THE PRIMARY NATIONAL CURRICULUM

### FOUNDATION STAGE (4-5 years old)

#### Early Learning Goal – Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

### KEY STAGE 1 (5-7 years old)

#### Statutory Requirements - Handwriting

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.

#### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### Year 2

#### Statutory Requirements – Handwriting

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 another, 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.

#### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practice correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

### LOWER KS2 (Year 3 & 4)

#### Statutory Requirements – Handwriting

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 down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

#### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should be joining handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

### UPPER KS2 (Year 5 & 6)

#### Statutory Requirements – Handwriting and Presentation

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.

#### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

*'English Programmes of Study: Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum in England'*; September 2013' (up-dated for implementation September 2014); Department for Education.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**INTRODUCING LETTER FORMATION: READ WRITE INC RHYMES**

a	Round the apple, down the leaf (Apple)	n	Down Nobby and over his net (Football net)
b	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe (Boot)	o	All around the orange (Orange)
c	Curl around the caterpillar (Caterpillar)	p	Down the plait and over the pirate's face (Pirate)
d	Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet (Dinosaur)	q	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (Queen)
e	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg (Egg)	r	Down his back, then curl over his arm (Robot)
f	Down the stem and draw the leaves (Flower)	s	Slither down the snake (Snake)
g	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl (Girl)	t	Down the tower, across the tower (Tower)
h	Down the head to the hooves and over his back (Horse)	u	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle (Umbrella)
i	Down the body, dot for the head (Insect)	v	Down a wing, up a wing (Vulture)
j	Down his body, curl and dot (Jack in a box)	w	Down, up, down, up (Worm)
k	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg (Kangaroo)	x	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side (Exercise)
l	Down the long leg (Leg)	y	Down a horn up a horn and under his head (Yak)
m	Maisie, mountain, mountain (Maisie with mountains)	z	Zig-zag-zig (Zip)

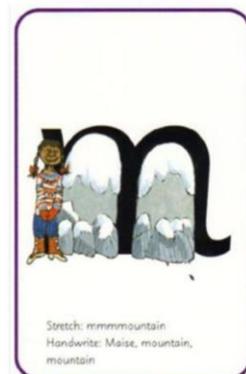


## Handwriting phrases for helping your child to form letters

This works best if your child practises for a short time every day.

1. Show the picture side and air-write as you say the phrase.
2. Ask your child to practise in the air with you.
3. Using a sharp pencil and sat at a table, encourage your child to have a go.
4. Praise your child for their efforts.

- m Maisie, mountain, mountain  
 a round the apple, down the leaf  
 s slither down the snake  
 d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet  
 t down the tower, across the tower  
 i down the body, dot for the head  
 n down Nobby, over his net  
 p down the plait and over the pirate's face  
 g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl  
 o all around the orange  
 c curl around the caterpillar  
 k down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg  
 u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle  
 b down the laces to the heel, round the toe  
 f down the stem and draw the leaves  
 e lift off the top and scoop out the egg  
 l down the long leg  
 h down the head to the hooves and over his back  
 r down his back and then curl over his arm  
 j down his body, curl and dot  
 v down a wing, up a wing  
 y down a horn, up a horn and under his head  
 w down, up, down, up  
 z zig-zag-zig  
 q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair  
 x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side



APPENDIX 2  
PENCIL GRIP SONG

**THE PENCIL GRIP SONG**

**(Sung to tune of Frere Jacques)**

Mr Pencil, Mr Pencil  
Time to write,  
Time to write,  
Hold him near the bottom,  
Hold him near the bottom,  
Time to write,  
Time to write.

Mr Pencil, Mr Pencil  
Time to write,  
Time to write,  
Thumb and finger, finger,  
Thumb and finger, finger,  
Time to write,  
Time to write.

**APPENDIX 2  
 INTRODUCING NUMBER FORMATION: RHYMES**

**All numbers start at the top and should be formed in one fluent movement**

<b>All numbers start at the top and should be formed in one fluent movement</b>	
<b>0</b>	Start at the top and around we go, now you've made the number zero
<b>1</b>	Start at the top and down we run, that's the way you make a one
<b>2</b>	Round at the top and then a shoe, that's the way you make a two
<b>3</b>	Around the tree and around the tree, that's the way you make a three
<b>4</b>	Down and across and down some more, that's the way you make a four
<b>5</b>	Short neck, belly fat, number five wears a hat
<b>6</b>	Down and around to make a loop; number six rolls a hoop
<b>7</b>	Across the sky and down from heaven, that's the way you make a seven
<b>8</b>	Make an 's' and close the gate. Now you've made a number eight
<b>9</b>	Round the circle and down the line, that's the way you make a nine
<b>10</b>	A one and an egg laid by a hen, that's the way you make a ten

APPENDIX 2  
LETTER FORMATION PROGRESSION

Read Write Inc Pre Cursive unjoined

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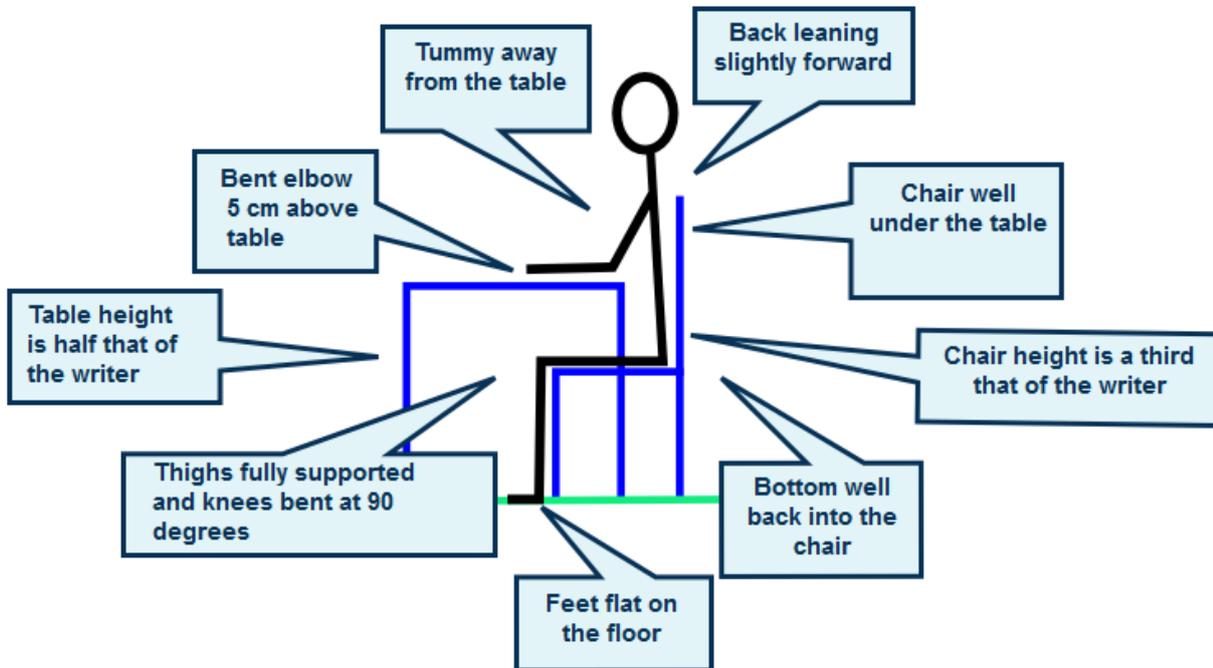
Cursive style

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**APPENDIX 3  
POSTURE AND POSITION FOR WRITING**

**Posture**

It is acknowledged that it is vital to develop good posture for writing as well as a good pencil grip. During any writing task children should be seated in a comfortable upright position.



In order to sit comfortably at a desk for a duration children need good [posture muscle strength](#). This can be developed through various activities to develop a core strength (see below).



**Crab Walk**  
**You need**  
An area of floor or grass and a bean bag or soft toy.  
**How to do it**  
Get your child to sit on the ground with their hands and feet on the floor, fingers pointing behind them, raise their bottom off the floor to make a table shape. In this position get them to walk backwards, like a crab, to a destination and back again. Put a beanbag or soft toy on their tummy - make sure they keep their bottom up otherwise the toy will fall off!  
As this activity is quite demanding only ask your child to go 2 to 3 metres at their first attempt, as your child's endurance increases you can increase the distance.  
To add variety you can add an obstacle course or follow-my-leader to the game.

**Tummy Skittles**  
**You need**  
A large/medium sized ball, skittles or empty 1 litre or 2 litre plastic drinks bottles and space enough for your child to lay flat on their tummy and the skittles to be about 2 metres away.  
**How to do it**  
Get your child to lie on their stomach, lift their head up and then lift their arms above their head. Throw the ball at the skittles, then lower the body gently back to the floor, ready to throw again.

**Bridge Games**  
**You need**  
An area of floor or grass and some small toys to pass under the bridge such as vehicles or animals. For older children a stopwatch or clock with a seconds hand.  
**How to do it**  
Laying on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor get your child to raise their bottom off the floor to form the bridge. Pass the toys under the bridge. For younger children get them to make the noise of the toys, for older children set them time challenges.  
As this activity can be quite demanding start by just playing for between 30 seconds and one minute. As your child gets stronger and can play for longer why not turn it into a family competition?

**Position**

Children should have a clear view of the whiteboard being used to model and teach. They should be encouraged to use their non-writing hand to support the paper/book they are working on and this should be angled with a slight tilt for ease of writing.

**Right - handed**

Children should have their writing material tilted slightly to the right with the top right-hand corner raised slightly.

**Left - handed**

Children should have their writing material tilted slightly to the left with the top left-hand corner raised slightly. Children who are left handed should be seated so they have additional space to their left.

