



St Mary's Catholic First School

Handwriting Policy



Review Period	September 2024
Next Review Date	September 2025
Reviewed by	Mrs. S. Oakes



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
Company Registration Number 07890590

Handwriting Policy

At St Mary's Catholic First School we are very proud of our pupil's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive/joined-up handwriting style. We use Letter-join as the basis of our handwriting policy that covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Objectives

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes. We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Aims:

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 4, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

Expectations

All teaching staff are encouraged to consistently model the printed or cursive style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established and handwriting is consistently neat and eligible, a handwriting pen can be used. More competent pupils can use a ballpoint pen.

Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place. Letter-join's Lesson Planners all include differentiation activities for extra practice/challenge.

School aims

We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using continuous cursive letters that leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.

By the end of Year 4 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.



Method

Our teachers are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including report writing (when not word-processed), marking and comments.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency

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FOUNDATION:

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons, that will include the following;

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern making, dancing.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, blackboards, sand trays, iPads and tablets.
- Letter learning to familiarise letter shapes, formation and vocabulary.
- Correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting.

Lesson Planners

Module 1 Cursive: Early Years teaches pre-cursive patterns and cursive, lower case letters. It starts with fine and gross motor skills. Warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip.

The first module is divided into three sections covering:

- Pre-cursive patterns
- Easy letters and words
- Harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the cursive, lowercase letters of the alphabet and write words using the correct joining techniques.

Key Stage 1: Years 1 & 2

Teaching progresses to three longer sessions per week:

- Continuing with gross and fine motor skills exercises
- Strengthening handwriting, learning and practice
- Numerals, capitals and printed letters; where and when to use, learning and practice

Module 2 Lesson Planners – Year 1

Module 2 Cursive contains lessons for teaching how to write capital letters, printed letters, numbers and symbols, whilst reinforcing cursive handwriting using Letter-join's on-line and printed resources. It is divided into three sections covering:

- warm-ups, letter families and capital letters
- printed letters
- numbers and symbols.

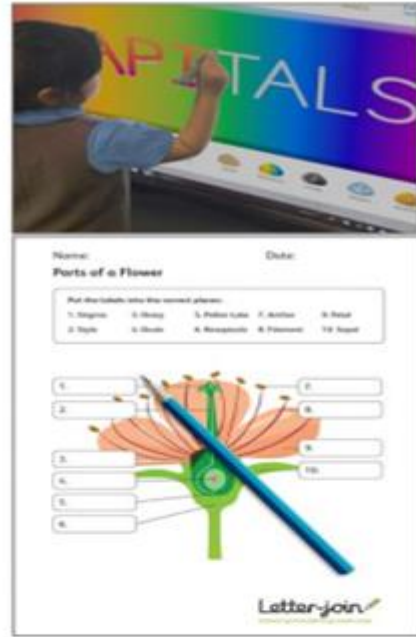
On finishing this module, children should be confident in writing all the capital and printed letters, numbers and symbols and start to become familiar with their use.

Module 3 Lesson Planners – Year 2

Module 3 Cursive: Year 2 includes lessons to improve letter formation and orientation of letters through regular practice and to support spelling, grammar and punctuation in readiness for KS1 SATs. The sections in this module cover:

- letter families
- high frequency words
- joining techniques
- sequencing sentences
- dictation exercises
- times table facts

With the regular handwriting practice throughout this module, children should now be developing the fluency and speed of their writing.



Lower Key Stage 2: Years 3 and 4 Handwriting lessons will continue regularly throughout Lower Key Stage 2.

Lesson Planner Module 4 for Year 3 is targeted at children in lower KS2 where pupils should be using a cursive style throughout their independent writing in all subjects, helping to refine their handwriting in line with the requirements of each lesson. This module covers topics such as dictation, double letters, number vocabulary, palindromes, tongue twisters, MFL (French), onomatopoeia, simile and statutory spellings.

Completion of Module 4 should ensure improvement in the legibility, consistency and quality of the children's handwriting through a variety of resources which link handwriting to other areas of the curriculum.

Lesson Planner Module 5 for Year 4 focuses on using handwriting practice to support other subjects in the curriculum and, at the same time, builds on fluency and consistency. This module aims to promote meaningful links with other subjects such as English, maths, science, geography, French and Spanish. Making such links enables children to apply the skills they are learning in context and also provides depth to the curriculum.

Learners will continue to build on producing fluent, consistent and legible handwriting through the regular practice offered in this module's lessons.

On concluding this module, children will have practiced applying size-appropriate handwriting to all areas of the curriculum whilst maintaining fluency and legibility.



Year 4-Pen Licence

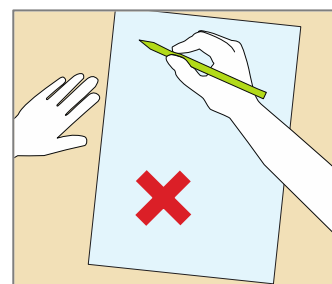
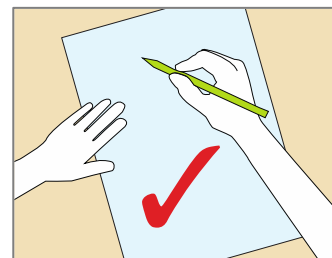
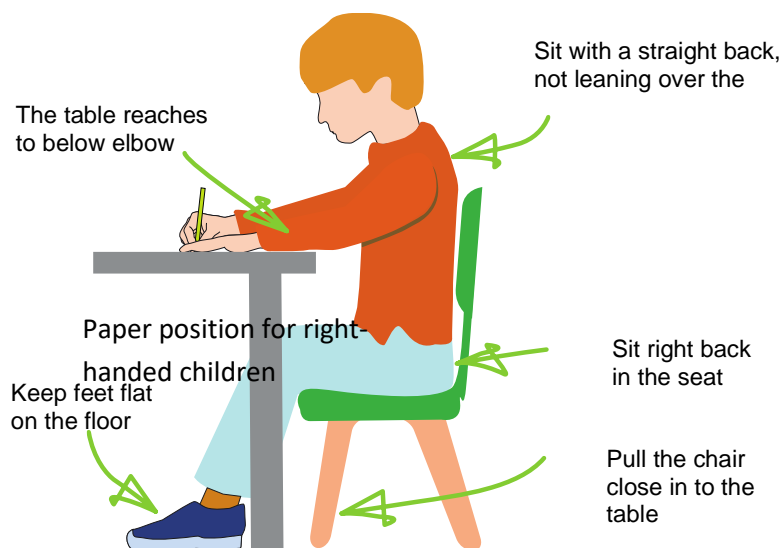
In year 4 pupils are awarded a pen licence certificate along with their very own handwriting pen to use in all lessons, with the exception of mathematics. In order to gain their pen licence children have to demonstrate:

- Continuous cursive handwriting, children begin letters on the line with a diagonal 'lead stroke'.
- Using diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined increasing the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting.
- Pupils can cope when challenged to increase speed without losing accuracy.
- Demonstrate stamina to write more maintaining consistent letter formation.

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

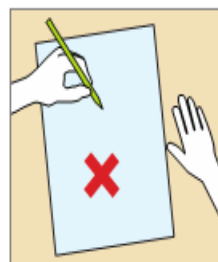
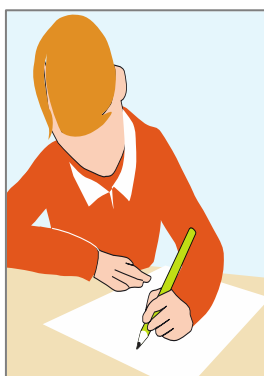
Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

SITTING POSITION

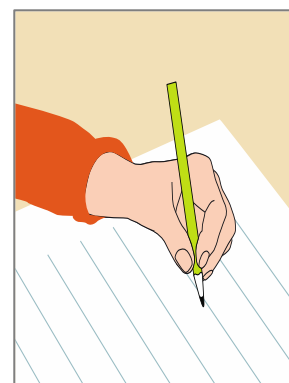


LEFT-HANDED CHILDREN

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



Paper position for left-handed children



Paper position for left-handed children

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- 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.

INCLUSION

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be supported to help achieve their optimum handwriting level.

PENS AND PENCILS

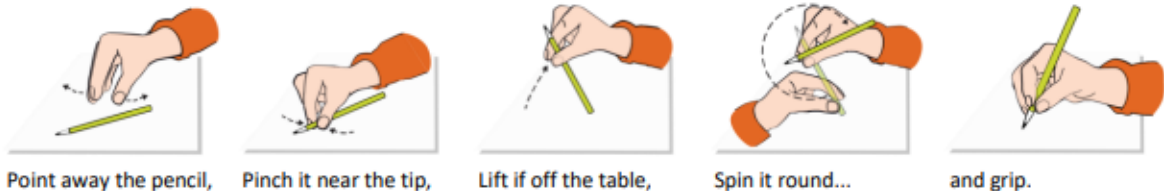
Children are encouraged to start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used.

TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

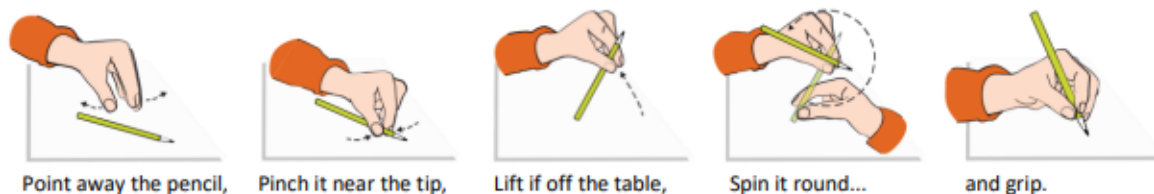
Both right- and left-handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

- 1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
- 2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

Right-handed pencil grip

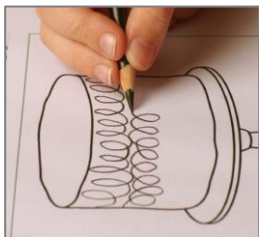


Left-handed pencil grip



Key Stage Teaching

RECEPTION

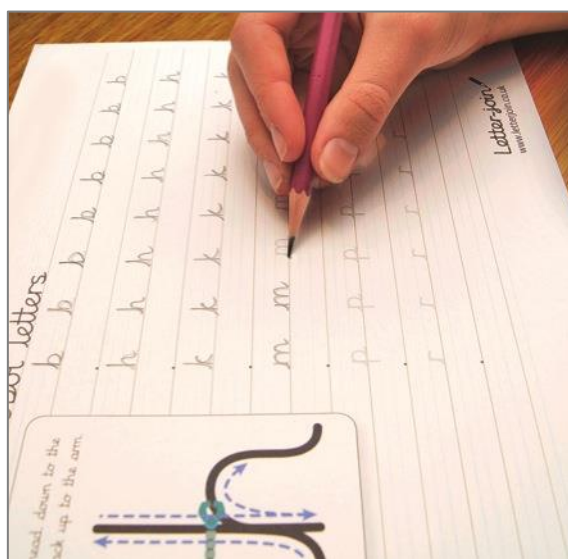
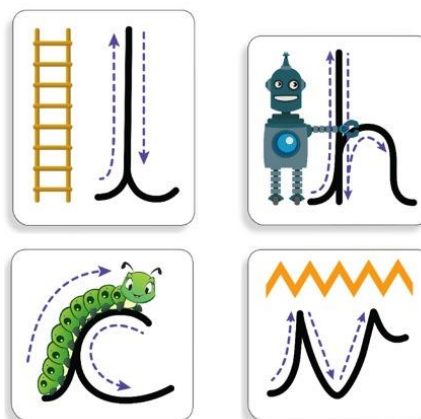


- Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib.
- Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns in a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, air writing, sand trays, felt pens, crayons, pencils, IWB, iPads/tablets.
- Understand the language need to describe pencil movements in preparation of letter formation.



RECEPTION

- Hold a pencil in an effective manner for writing and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.
- Understand that letters are written on a base line and that all cursive letters 'start on the line' and 'end with a hook'.
- Begin to form some recognisable joined-up cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.
- Have an understanding of writing their own name.
- Understanding different shaped letter families.



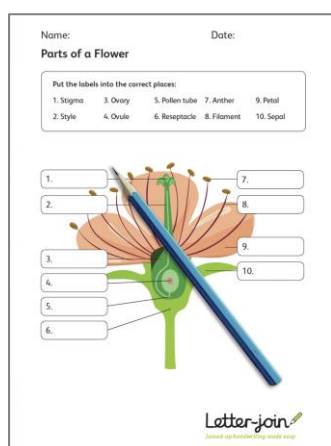
Key Stage Teaching

KEY STAGE 1



Write regularly using upper and lower case letters with correct joins.

- Ensure that letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use where appropriate.
- Form numerals that are consistent in size and sit on the base line.
- Begin to form printed letters and understand when they are to be used.
- Improve the speed of writing and begin to write automatically so promoting creativity in independent writing.



KEY STAGE 2

Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting.

- **Quality:** Ensure letters are consistently sized with equal word spacing and that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- **Speed:** Improve speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- **Stamina:** Have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue.

Have full knowledge and ability of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes:

- Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of text, lists and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling, and form filling.
- Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.

Dictation Exercises

<p>Easy practice</p> <p>A selection of CVC words, a list of numbers and an easy poem.</p> <p>dog hill bus 26 37 92</p> <p>I can eat a bun. Put it in my bun. Open up the top. Sip on my pop.</p>	<p>Harder exercises</p> <p>A list of phrases, easy sums and a three-verse poem.</p> <p>Over the hill. 2 + 1 = 3</p> <p>A is an ant. That seldom sheds skill. It made a nice house. I made a hill. Nice little ant!</p>	<p>More challenging</p> <p>Shopping list, complex numbers and a written passage.</p> <p>4 small sausages 12 medium barn eggs</p> <p>29-10-2003</p> <p>My birthday is Saturday and at school I moved seats for Lunchtime. I have lunch there since then, other than</p>
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Letter-join

An easy poem

Heads down to the poem at normal speed

I can eat a bun!

I can eat a bun.
Put it in my bun.
Open up the top.
Sip on my pop.

Letter-join