

Walbottle Village Primary School

Handwriting Policy



September 2025

Handwriting Policy and Guidelines

Aims

For Teachers:

1. To know the correct style, letter formations and joins in handwriting to ensure consistency across the school.
2. To understand the progression in handwriting so that pupils are taught in the appropriate order and handwriting develops and improves.
3. To ensure high expectations in handwriting lessons and that pupils are expected to apply the same standards in other independent writing.
4. In all writing on the board and in books all staff must handwrite using the school joined font.

For Pupils

1. To know the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively.
2. To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by;
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - Knowing the size and orientation of letters

Teaching time

There must be a discrete handwriting lesson each week, which must be visible on the weekly timetable. Children should be expected to transfer the skills taught in handwriting into their writing in all curriculum areas. Opportunity for development should be evident and progression should be seen in books.

Font/Style

At Walbottle Village Primary school the handwriting font used is Nelson Thornes with the following letter formation:

Lower case letters:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capital letters:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Cursive Script

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The Four Joins to be taught:

1. to letters without ascenders
2. to letters with ascenders
3. horizontal joins
4. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

The break letters (letters that aren't joined from) are:

b g j p q x y z s

(See appendix 2 for examples of the break letters)

The New national curriculum states that in Year 5/6 pupils need to be taught when and how to adjust the style of their handwriting to fit purpose i.e. print for maths and email addresses and block capitals for filling in forms. Personal shape changes are acceptable in upper Key Stage 2, once the correct forms are secure. Adopting style in handwriting at this point is satisfactory as long as writing is clear, legible and correctly formed.

Books

For handwriting sessions, pupils should be using handwriting specific books. These have a red top and bottom lines and blue inner lines (midline and baseline). The top red line is for capital letters and ascenders. The bottom red line is for descenders. All other letters must sit on the baseline and go up to the midline. See appendix for examples.

In EYFS and initially in Year 1, tracer sheets may be an appropriate starting point before moving on to using handwriting books. In KS1, children should use tramlined/handwriting books with 12mm spacing for writing in lessons across the curriculum (except mathematics where squared paper is used).

From year 3 onwards (except in the case of some children with a Special educational need where tramlines may still support letter formation) all exercises books must have lines that are 5mm-8mm except handwriting books.

Pencils and Pens

Pupils will use HB pencils initially. In upper Key Stage 2, they may start using pens in hand-writing lessons and then begin to use them in all lessons by Year 6 in preparation for secondary school (except maths where pencil is to be used).

The national curriculum states that in Year 5/6 pupils need to be taught when and how to adjust the style of their handwriting to fit purpose, including the use of writing implement i.e. pencil for diagrams, drawings etc. and blue/black ink for writing (colours for decorative purposes only).

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor

- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor

Pencil grip

- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line although some pupils will find a 'hook' more comfortable
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?

- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?

Teacher Modelling

It is essential that teachers model neat and cursive writing in shared writing on the whiteboard, interactive whiteboard and in pupils' books. Teachers' writing must be consistent with the Nelson model.

Application

Pupils should be encouraged to apply the hand-writing they are taught in all independent writing. Teachers must have high expectations of all pupils and expect to see examples of what they have been taught in all books.

If pupils are learning joined hand-writing they should be expected to use this in their written work. Pupils should only attempt joins if they have been taught them. Before joins are taught pupils first need to form the shape of each letter correctly, starting and finishing each one at the correct point and ensuring that its size is properly related to other letters in the same family.

Teachers must monitor this and use praise and next steps marking to bring this to pupils' attention where appropriate.

Incentives

Rewards, incentives and praise will be used to encourage good practice. Teachers may use rewards along with the assessment sheets at their own discretion and in line with their class system.

APPENDIX 1

Progression ladder

Order of teaching

Single letters (YR and Y1)

- c a d g q o
- e s f
- i l t
- u y j k
- r n m
- h b p
- v w x z

Joins Y2 (going into Y3)

Introduction of the four hand-writing joins:

- First join; un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung
- Second join; ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ckackststi ink unk
- Third join; odpg re veonoom
- Fourth join; wlvf of fffllo
- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

Joins Y3 (going into Y4)

Revision

- Practise the break letters b p g q y j z
- Practise capital letters

Further practise of the four hand-writing joins

- inine
- utute
- ve vi
- ok oh
- sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s)
- rirury (practising joining from the letter r)
- oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a)
- eeeaed (practising joining from the letter e)
- owov ox (practising joining from the letter o)
- kyhyly (practising joining to the letter y)
- ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a)
- odoog(practising joining from the letter o)
- erirur (practising joining to the letter r)
- ai al ay
- o you oi
- reoefe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e)
- fuwu vu (practising the horizontal join to the letter u)
- otol ok (practising joining to ascenders)
- ai al owol (practising all the joins)

Year 4

- ning ping ting
- oc od oo
- akeome are
- flaflofle
- whowhawhe
- ie in il
- inlykyny

- apar an
- ickuckack
- practise writing with a slope
- he
- we
- re
- fte fir fin
- wrawrikni (silent letters)
- illttrnn mm cc ooddssfee
- ewev ex (spacing)
- thhtfl (proportions)
- acagaf
- Capital letters
- Decorated capital letters
- Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘

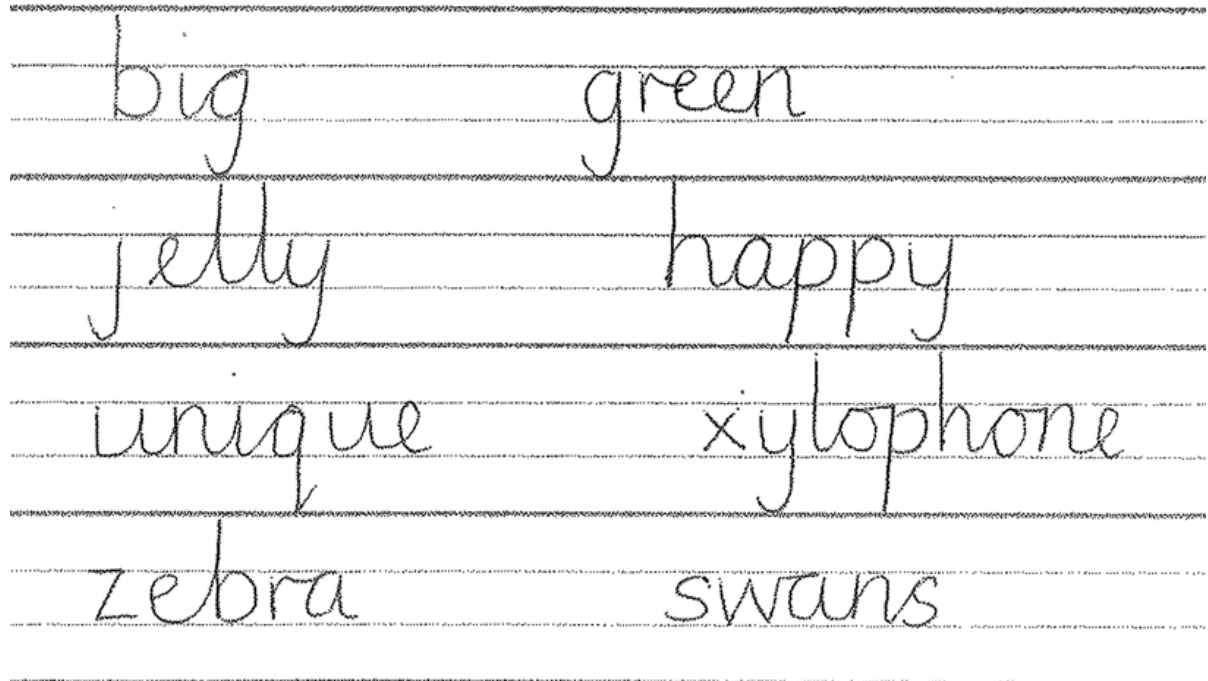
Years 5 and 6

- Practise and ensure consistency and size of letters
- Practising using a diagonal joining line
- Practising leaving an equal space between letters
- Practising joining to the letter y
- Practising using a horizontal joining line
- Practising the size and height of letters
- Practising joining from the letter i
- Practising joining to and from the letter v
- Practising consistency in forming and joining letters
- Practise speedwriting
- Practising crossing double tt on completing the week

- Practising joining to and from the letter e
- Practising joining to and from the letter w
- Practising printing
- Practising drafting and editing
- Practising joining to the letter t
- Practising with punctuation
- Practising break letters
- Practising joining from the letter m
- Ensuring the ascender on the letter t is the correct height
- Practising spacing within words
- Developing fluency
- Practising printing
- Practising forming and joining the letter f
- Practising presentation
- Practising printing
- Practising speed writing
- Revision
- Looking at different handwriting styles

APPENDIX 2

Examples of the break letters



APPENDIX 3

Examples of the joins

I fell asleep in class

today

as I was awfully bored

I laid my head upon

my desk

and fell asleep and snored

APPENDIX 4

Lines in handwriting books

