



Handwriting Policy	
Date adopted	October 2020
Date reviewed	
Next review date	October 2022
Subject lead	Charlie Martin
Governor/Committee <small>(where applicable)</small>	David O'Connell

## Our Vision:

**Jesus said: 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.'**

**Promoting *life-long learning***

**Developing *life-giving relationships***

**Exploring *life-enhancing faith***

**Inspiring *life-enriching aspiration***

This policy covers the following areas:

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## Rationale

At Hanley St Luke's C of E Aided Primary School we use a cursive handwriting scheme which has been customised for our school and matched to the National Curriculum (2014). All children and staff are expected to use the font and display it as much as possible across the school to further promote high standards of handwriting, presentation and pride in work.

We have chosen to use a continuous cursive handwriting so that children do not need to learn how to form letters twice. This is a recommendation from the British Dyslexia Association, which we feel supports writers in our school. The policy has also been written with guidance from the National Handwriting Association and the document 'Gateway to writing – developing handwriting' (2009).

## Aims

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting
- Develop flow and speed to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes
- To automatically use clearly formed and joined handwriting in all of their writing
- Use their skills with confidence, in real life situations

## Teaching and learning expectations (from Development Matters/National Curriculum)

Year group		Teaching and learning expectations
Reception	30-50 months	Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp Holds pencil between near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control Can copy some letters e.g. in name
	40-60 months	Shows a preference for a dominant hand Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines Begins to form recognisable letters Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters
Year 1		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 in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place Form 0-9 digits in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these Leaving spaces between words
Year 2		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 (Revision of previous years' handwriting where appropriate)
Year 3 and Year 4		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 (e.g. parallel and equidistant downstrokes) and that lines of writing are sufficiently spaced so that ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch. (Revision of previous years' handwriting where appropriate)
Year 5 and Year 6		Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed Vary letter shape for effect Choose the best writing implement for the task Print as appropriate e.g. algebra/emails (Revision of previous years' handwriting where appropriate)

### Basic structure of a handwriting session:

- Gross and fine movement warm up
- Posture check: feet flat on the floor, back straight and touching the chair (see further information below regarding P checks)
- Teacher modelling using guidelines on a whiteboard/IWB
- Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory e.g. using <https://www.ictgames.com/mobilePage/writingRepeater/>

The teaching of handwriting will be fitted predominantly around the teaching of phonics and spelling.

*There are also opportunities to practise handwriting during fast learning spellings on a daily basis (KS2).*

### Techniques for teaching letter formation and joins

- Always model good handwriting
- Demonstrate formations
- Talk through the process (using the patten detailed below)
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air and on parts of the body
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write in sand with finger or a stick

### Overview of progression

EYFS	Develop skills which include: Good fine and gross motor control Recognition of pattern Language to talk about shapes and movements Main handwriting movements involved in the 3 basic letter shapes as exemplified by: l, c, r. (See appendix 2 for ideas of how to develop these skills) Aim: to develop a secure foundation of skills to support handwriting
Reception <b>Print – unjoined</b>	As above but also: 1. Pencil grip/seating 2. Shape families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long ladder letters e.g. l i u t y j</li><li>• One-armed robot e.g. r n m h b k p</li><li>• Curly caterpillar: c a d g q o e s f</li><li>• Zigzag letters: z x v w y k</li></ul> 3. Number families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One-armed robot: 2 3 5 (clockwise direction)</li><li>• Curly caterpillar: 0 6 8 9</li><li>• Zigzag letters: 1 4 7</li></ul> 4. Capital letters (used to extend those who need the challenge (emphasise that you can take the pencil off of the paper).  Aim: focus on fine/gross motor skills, leading to letter formation in print
Year 1 <b>Print – unjoined (Autumn)</b> <b>Pre-cursive – unjoined</b>	As above but focusing on pre-cursive with lead ins and lead outs: 1. Check pencil grip/seating 2. Shape families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long ladder letters e.g. l i u t y j</li><li>• One-armed robot e.g. r n m h b k p</li><li>• Curly caterpillar: c a d g q o e s f</li></ul>

<p><b>(Spring onwards)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zigzag letters: <i>z x n w y k</i></li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Numbers – in numerical order</li> <li>4. Capital letters – In alphabetical order. Teach M and W together and O last. Emphasise that you can take the pencil off of the paper.</li> <li>5. Pre-cursive words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practise digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary/maths numbers using pre-cursive font. Do not join</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)</li> </ol> <p>Aim: to secure letter formation in print and then learn the lead ins/out for pre-cursive from Spring onwards</p>
<p><b>Year 2 Cursive - joined</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check pencil grip/seating</li> <li>2. Recap of year 1 letter formations using the shape families (see year 1)</li> <li>3. Diagonal join to ascender e.g. at, all, th, ch, cl</li> <li>4. Diagonal join, no ascender e.g. in, im, cr, tr, dr, lp, mp</li> <li>5. Diagonal join, no ascender, to an anti-clockwise letter e.g. id, ig, nd, ld, ng</li> <li>6. Horizontal join, no ascender e.g. ou, ow</li> <li>7. Horizontal join, no ascender, to anti-clockwise letter e.g. oa, og</li> <li>8. Horizontal join to ascender e.g. wh, ol</li> <li>9. Numbers – in numerical order, focusing on similar size, orientation and spacing</li> <li>10. Capital letters – focusing on similar size, orientation and spacing</li> <li>11. Joined cursive words – joining digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary using cursive font when fully ready for this.</li> <li>12. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)</li> </ol> <p>Aim: to begin to join cursively</p>
<p><b>Year 3 Cursive - joined</b></p>	<p>Recap of year 2, where appropriate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check pencil grip/seating</li> <li>2. Numbers – in numerical order, focusing on similar size, orientation and spacing</li> <li>3. Capital letters – focusing on similar size, orientation and spacing</li> <li>4. Linking to the teaching of spelling/phonics</li> <li>5. Joined cursive words – joining digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary using joined cursive font – focusing on parallel and equidistant down strokes</li> <li>6. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)</li> </ol> <p>Aim: to secure the joins, leading to increased speed and fluency</p>
<p><b>Year 4 Cursive – joined</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check pencil grip/seating</li> <li>2. Linked to the teaching of spelling</li> <li>3. Joined cursive words – joining digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary using joined cursive font – focusing on parallel and equidistant down strokes</li> <li>4. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)</li> </ol> <p>Aim: to secure the joins, leading to increased speed and fluency</p>
<p><b>Year 5 Cursive – joined</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check pencil grip/seating</li> <li>2. Linked to the teaching of spelling</li> <li>3. Joined cursive words – joining digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary using joined cursive font – with fluency and speed</li> </ol>

	4. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)  Aim: to develop speed and fluency using cursive handwriting
Year 6 <b>Cursive - joined</b>	1. Check pencil grip/seating 2. Linked to the teaching of spelling 3. Joined cursive words – joining digraphs, common classroom words/names e.g. dates, spellings and topic vocabulary using joined cursive font – with fluency and speed 4. Ensuring common problems are avoided (see Appendix 1)  Aim: to develop speed and fluency using cursive handwriting

How and When to Teach (From National Curriculum):

EYFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Frequent mark making and direct teaching)</li> <li>• (Linked to Letters and Sounds)</li> </ul>
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent, discrete and direct teaching</li> <li>• writing implement should be of a comfortable size to prevent bad habits forming</li> <li>• support e.g. quick drying ink pens for left handed pupils</li> </ul>
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revise and practise correct letter formation regularly</li> <li>• write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters with horizontal/diagonal joins correctly</li> </ul>
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use joined handwriting throughout all independent writing</li> <li>• support given to increase fluency and speed which will then support composition and spelling</li> </ul>
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use joined handwriting throughout all independent writing</li> <li>• support given to increase fluency and speed which will then support composition and spelling</li> </ul>
Year 5	• children should be aware of draft and best handwriting styles for different purposes
Year 6	• children should be aware of draft and best handwriting styles for different purposes

*There are also opportunities to practise handwriting during fast learning spellings on a daily basis (KS2).*

Patter

In order to support the formation of letters, there is a universal patter which is used throughout the school when teaching handwriting.

When teaching cursive handwriting we add a lead-in (from the line, up ...) and a lead-out (flick)

Long ladder letters	l	Straight down
	i	Short down, give it a dot
	u	Down round, up, down
	t	Down and round, take your pencil off, and across
	y	Down, round, up, down, give it a tail
	j	Straight down, round, give it a dot
One armed robot	r	Down, up and over
	n	Down, up and over
	m	Down, up, over, up and over
	h	Straight down, up to the middle and over
	b	Straight down, up to the middle, round the bottom
	k	Straight down, up to the middle, loop and down
	p	Straight down, up to the top, round to the middle
Curly caterpillar letters	c	Over the top and round
	a	Over the top and round, up, down
	d	Over the top and round, all the way up, down

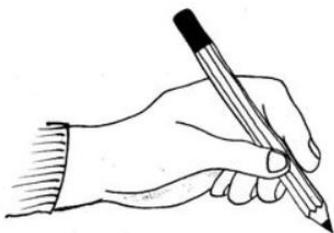
	g	Over the top and round, up, down, give it a tail
	q	Over the top and round, up, down
	o	Over the top and all the way round
	e	Across and round
	s	Over the top and round and around the other way
	f	Over the top, straight down, round the other way and across
Zig zag letters	z	Straight, across, straight
	x	Across and across
	v	Down, up
	w	Down, up, down, up
	k	Straight down, up to the middle, loop, down and flick
Numbers	0	Around and round and round we go. When we get home we have a zero
	1	Start at the top and down we run. That's the way we make a one
	2	Around and back on a railroad track. Two two two
	3	Around the tree and around the tree. That's the way we make a three
	4	Down and over, down some more. That's the way we make a four
	5	Down and around then a flag on high. That's the way we make a five
	6	Down we go and make a loop. Number six makes a hoop.
	7	Across the sky and down from heaven. That's the way we make a seven
	8	Make an 's' and do not wait. When it's joined up you have an eight
9	Make a loop and then a line. That's the way we make a nine.	

The number patter is taken from number formation poster that are displayed in KS1 and year 3. They can be found on the staff drive – English – handwriting. The patter is not compulsory for KS2.

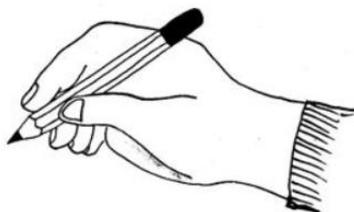
### Tripod grip

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

*Visual of Pencil Grip  
Left-Handed*



*Visual of Pencil Grip  
Right-Handed*



### Left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- 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 either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;

- pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
  - left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
  - extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- Teachers are aware of the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

#### Lines in books

Handwriting lines will be used from Reception to year 2 as a way to support handwriting in English books. These books have 18mm yellow tram lines. Where children are not secure in their size of letters etc, the use of handwriting lined books can be used for children in other year groups.

English books in KS2 use 8mm lines.

#### Display/resources

Display boards, where possible, will be created using cursive fonts (year 2 upwards). This helps to model the high expectations that we expect, promoting high standards of handwriting, presentation and pride in work.

In year 1, displays may be in either pre-cursive or print, with a stronger emphasis on pre-cursive as the year goes on.

In EYFS, displays will be predominantly in print although there may be examples of pre-cursive.

Phonic resources will be in print to ensure consistency from EYFS through to Year 3

#### Children joining the school

Older children, especially those joining the school, will not be expected to adopt the cursive joined style if they already have a fluent, legible handwriting style.

#### Computer font

In school we will aim to use a cursive font where possible. All computers have the following fonts available:

**Comic sans** (for print in EYFS/Y1)

*Letterjoin-Air Plus 40* (for Y1/2)

*Letter-join Plus 40* (for Y2 upwards)

#### P checks

The 'P checks' are used to support the *process* of handwriting and cover **Posture, Pencil grasp, Paper position and Pressure and fluency**. They are taken from the Good Practice for Handwriting guide produced by the National Handwriting Association and guide us in how we support children during handwriting.

#### POSTURE

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface
- Knees at a right angle with 2-fingers space behind the knee to avoid compression
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported
- Sit approximately a fist-distance away from the table

#### AND

- Table height adjusted so that forearms rest on the top without leaning forward (too low) or raising the shoulders/arms (too high)
- Surface - clean, smooth and uncluttered

#### PENCIL GRIP

- Check the child is developmentally ready before asking them to write.
- A dynamic tripod pencil grasp is the most efficient and is expected by end of Year 1.
- Address an inappropriate grasp in the early learning stages and later if it is causing discomfort or impacting speed.
- Consider corrective action using adaptive grips or specialist writing tools, but always trial several options to find the most appropriate.
- Encourage a 2 cm gap between finger tip and pencil point – and slightly greater for left-handers.

## PAPER

- Tilt and offset the paper according to the writing hand.
- Move the paper up or down to facilitate a comfortable reach and keep it in place with the non-writing hand.
- Consider glare from paper and overhead lighting.
- Consider a specialist vision assessment if visual stress continues.

## PRESSURE

- The just-right pressure eases writing across the page, which is important for fluency and reducing the risk of pain during handwriting.
- Use teaching tools such as carbon paper, mechanical pencils, 'lightup' and 'squiggle' pens to demonstrate appropriate pressure.
- Try some gross and fine motor warm ups before and during the handwriting task. Actions which include squeezing and deep pressure, resistance and/or vibration will increase body awareness.
- Check that posture/issues with postural control are not the causative factor here.

## S factors for success

These are taken from the Good Practice for Handwriting guide produced by the National Handwriting Association. The S factors (Shape, Space, Size, Sitting, Stringing, Slant, Speed, Style) can be used as a guide to teaching handwriting. They can also be used as an assessment tool using the questions under each stage after children have written a sentence containing all 26 letters e.g. The five boxing wizards jump quickly.

SHAPE - learning how the letters are formed; taught as a motor skill

- Children learn best by watching the letters being made and hearing a simple patten (see above) and then making them in developmentally appropriate ways using fingers and then pencils (see Appendix 2)
- Letters are best learnt in groups
- Are all the letters legible and formed correctly?

SPACE – learning that spaces need to be left between words

- Leave an appropriately-sized space e.g. space of 1 or 2 letter 'o's
- Lolly sticks make good spacers
- Are letters spaced evenly without bumping together?
- Is the space between words consistent?

SITTING on the line – learning where to position letters in relation to the base line

- Do all the letters 'sit' on the writing line?

SIZE – learning the relative sizes of letters

- Small/halfway letters/x-height letters e.g. a, e, o, s
- Tall letters/letters with ascenders e.g. h, l, b, k (plus all capitals)
- Tailed letters/letters with descenders e.g. p, g, y, j
- Are the letters written at the correct size and position?
- Is the writing a suitable size?

STRINGING together – cursive

- Basic joins are taught with plenty of practice
- Are most of the letters joined?

SLANT – a consistent slant helps the appearance of handwriting

- Is the writing slanting/sloping in a consistent direction?

SPEED – increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility

- Is the writing fast enough for the student's needs?

STYLE – encourage a style of writing that works for the child

- Is the writing consistent and fluent?

#### Appendix 1 – common problems

- Joining a capital letter to a lower case letter in the same word
- Not keeping the letters on the line (this should be helped by using a lead-in from y1)
- Not keeping to the same line of the letter when coming back along it
- Joining to the bottom of the letter from a horizontal join
- Going round the bottom of some curly caterpillar letters
- Not going all the way round to 'one o'clock' on curly caterpillar letters
- Too large 'i' and 's'
- Descenders standing on the line (especially j and p)

#### Appendix 2

##### Ideas for developing gross motor control

- Consolidate the vocabulary of movement by talking about the movements children make, such as going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements.
- Show children how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders. For example, fix ribbons on to the end of sticks for the children to swirl in the air. Encourage the use of both sides of the body.
- Let the children make different body shapes/actions in response to music to help them to remember the shapes.

##### Some ideas for developing fine motor control

- Let the children make patterns using pegboards.
- Provide sewing and weaving activities.
- Involve the children in chopping and peeling in cooking activities.
- Provide woodworking tools – pliers, screwdrivers, hammers.
- Use finger rhymes, counting fingers, playing with words and sounds, etc.
- Provide small construction toys.
- Structure sand and water play to include sieving, pouring, picking up toys using tools, etc.
- Develop the pincer movement: show the children how to use tweezers to pick up and sort sequins, small beads, etc., sprinkle coloured sand, glitter, salt, etc. on pictures.
- Provide the children with paints, finger paints, etc. for making big patterns on differently shaped paper, for example fish, balloons, kites. Talk about the patterns they make. Focus on developing the curly caterpillar, long ladder and one-armed robot.
- Encourage the children to strengthen their fingers by using clay, play dough, Plasticine, etc., for modelling. They can make letter shapes and patterns using the modelling media.
- Encourage dexterity by asking the children to cut out large letter shapes or patterns. They can use different coloured marker pens for tracing along inside the shapes. Emphasise that circles and curly caterpillars need to be traced from the top and anti-clockwise.
- Give the children thick paintbrushes and water to paint patterns on walls, fences, etc.

##### Developing letter shapes using gross motor movements

- Encourage children to skywrite with both hands.
- Ask another adult or a confident child to model the movement with her/his back to the rest of the children. Stand behind the children to check they are all following the movement correctly.
- Let children make patterns in the air or on each other's backs.
- Make a letter shape in the damp sand tray. Invite each child in the group to trace over the shape, going a little deeper each time. The object is to get down to the base of the sand tray without the sides falling in.

- Reinforce the vocabulary of movement, for example the curly caterpillar, the long ladder and the one-armed robot. Talk about the movements as you make them, using a 'patter', for example for the one-armed robot: 'Start at his head and go down to his feet. Bounce back up and go over for his arm.' While this is helpful in the early stages, it is purely to help to establish the movement. Reinforce a letter movement by asking the children to write the letter with their eyes closed