ST PETER'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



HANDWRITING POLICY

September 2026

"Handwriting is a tool that has to work. It must be comfortable, fast and legible."

(Angela Webb, Chair, National Handwriting Association)

Handwriting is concerned with individual expression and the conveying of meaning through fluent composition. The principal aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression.

Handwriting is an integral component of the English programmes of study for Key Stages 1 and 2. The programmes describe two dimensions of writing:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

The curriculum demands that teaching should develop competence in *both* dimensions, as writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription. This relationship defines the role of handwriting as a *functional tool* in the writing process. Therefore, at St Peter's handwriting is taught in meaningful and curriculum-relevant contexts, particularly in the areas of phonics, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary.

School Aims

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

By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (precursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly. They will focus on developing an individual style and being able to adapt this to different purposes.

We aim for children to:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in precursive 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
- Develop pride in their presentation of work and enjoyment in the process of creating "best quality" drafts of work

Method – how it is taught in our school.

The school uses the Nelson scheme and resources to ensure the consistent teaching of joins and letter formation. As we use Little Wandle Phonics, teachers of KS1 and EYFS also need to check to ensure their handwriting teaching does not conflict with the delivery of phonics instruction.

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Handwriting is to be taught regularly through short, focused sessions and may be linked with spelling, grammar or phonics objectives. Teaching generally occurs outside English lessons, although shared and guided writing also provides additional opportunities for the modelling and monitoring of handwriting.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style by the teacher is very important (see appendix 1).

The role of the teacher:

 To use neat, joined-up precursive writing for all handwriting tasks, modelling writing on the whiteboard, marking and comments. In EYFS teachers will write in a neat printed style.

 To follow the school policy to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.

 To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling.

 To provide resources and an environment that promotes good handwriting.

 To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.

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 appendix 4)

 Teacher modelling

 Children practising independently with a teacher model, then from memory

Continuity and Progression

Formal handwriting is taught by following the expectations set out in the 2014 National Curriculum, which acknowledges handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth. This will be adapted by the teacher to include the adopted precursive styles of joining. See appendix 5.

Handwriting Frequency

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

The daily phonics session in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, provides opportunities to correct handwriting errors and staff should be aware that it is appropriate to correct pencil grip, letter formation, letter joins etc. at this time.

Preschool

Patterns relating to letter formations are first introduced using a variety of tools and multi-sensory methods across the EYFS continuous provision. This develops free flowing hand movements and muscle strength. Letters are also introduced in varied, multi- sensory sessions: writing letters in the air, on backs or hands; orally describing letter shapes and joins with children using 'letter speak'; using a variety of writing materials including whiteboards, chalk, paints, felt pens, crayons, plasticine, cornflour mix, shaving foam etc.

EYFS

- Children are to take part in activities that develop fine and gross motor skills.
- Printing and forming letters with use of the letter rhymes (see appendix 2)
- A variety of paper offered to children, lined/unlined etc.
- How to hold a pencil / pen
- 'left to right' orientation
- Exercises to warm and strengthen muscles ready for writing.
- Spacing of letters and words are introduced.
- Introduction of capital letters

Letter formation is taught as part of phonics as well as in separate handwriting lessons.

Key Stage 1 (daily handwriting practice 10-15 mins)

- Carrying on with progress from Reception
- Summer Term - those ready and able starting to do joins.
- Air writing, sand and ribbons – using different mediums to learn.
- Ensuring that there are spaces in between words.
- By end of Year 2 most children will be able to join.
- Continuing with writing on lines.
- Distinguish between ascenders, descenders and overall relative size of letters
- Most children will have secure spaces in between words
- Understand which letters are in each letter group (see appendix 3)

Lower Key Stage 2 (4 -5 handwriting sessions a week approx. 5-10 mins)

- Ensuring writing formation develops so that it sits on the line and begins next to the margin.
- Ensuring consistency of size of writing.
- Develop fluency in joined writing
- By the end of Year 3, most children will use joined handwriting at all times.
- Children are aware that at times, other specific forms of writing are required e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.

Upper Key Stage 2 (4 -5 handwriting sessions a week approx. 5-10 mins)

- Children will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years.
- Experimentation with different styles and writing implements is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility.
- All children will write in pen from Year 4 onwards if they choose

✴Years 5 and 6 sessions are used to consolidate learning for those pupils who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Interventions may be applied.

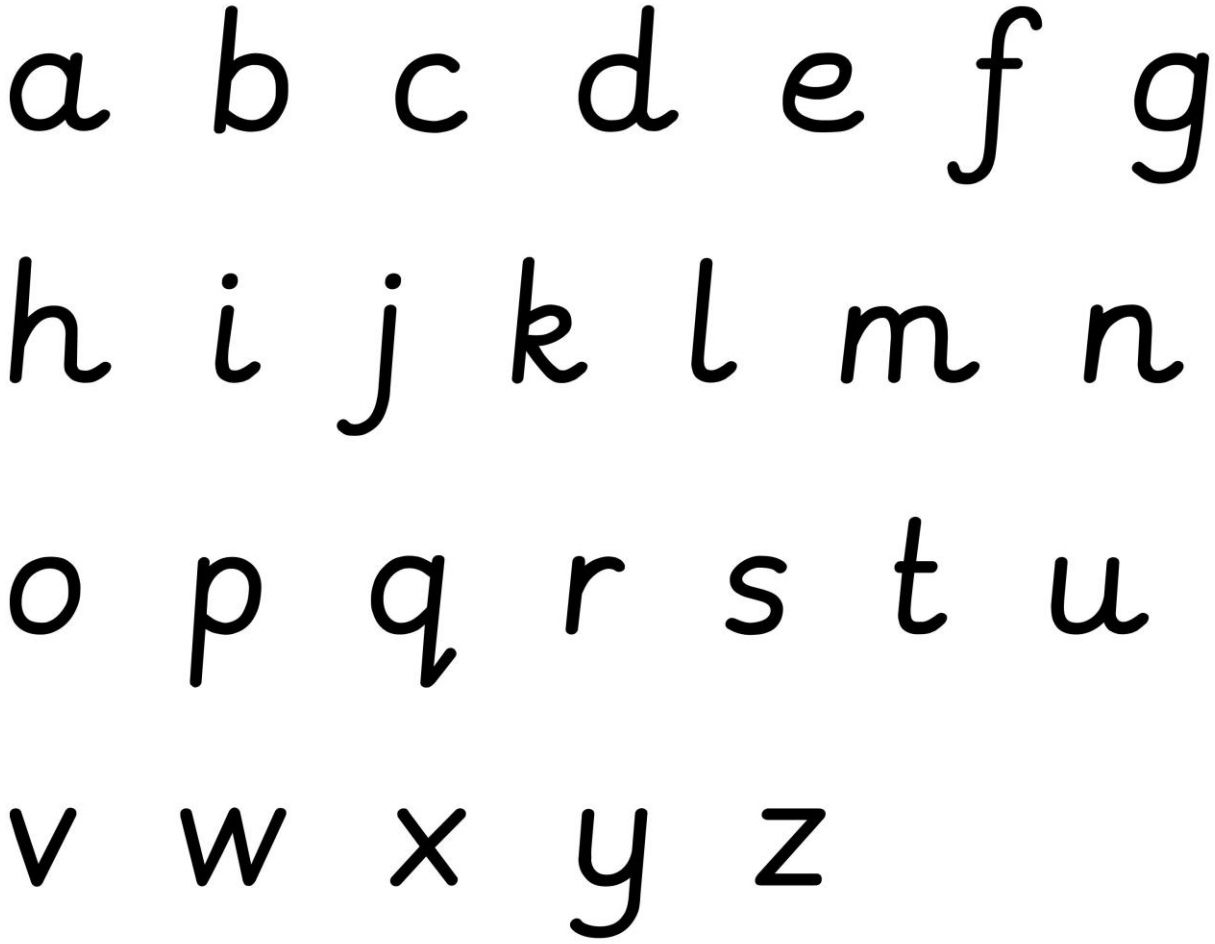
INCLUSION

For some children with additional needs, there may be a need to make more extensive adaptations including the use of technology to assist with typing and other ways to express their learning. Handwriting is an important and valuable skill but teachers are also very mindful of ensuring that all children can successfully engage with the curriculum. The ability to meaningfully record written responses may form part of a One Plan or EHCP statement. Occupational Therapists may also provide advice and support.

UKS2 teachers are especially mindful of this may part of a programme to make transition to secondary settings more successful. Teachers may also utilise resources such as pencil grips, specific pens or pencils, handwriting slopes etc.

APPENDIX 1

What letters should look like (Please see Nelson Resource for further details)

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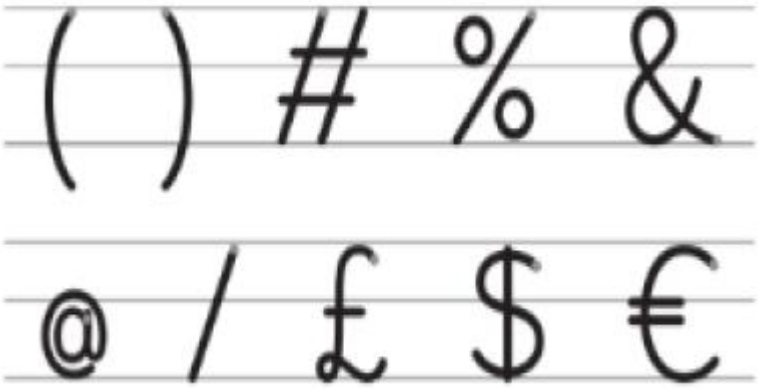


APPENDIX

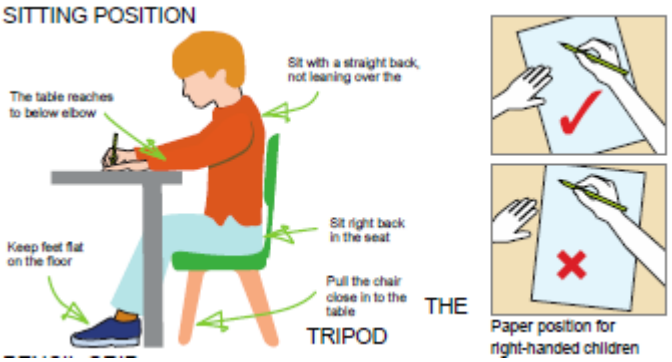
Posture and pencil grip

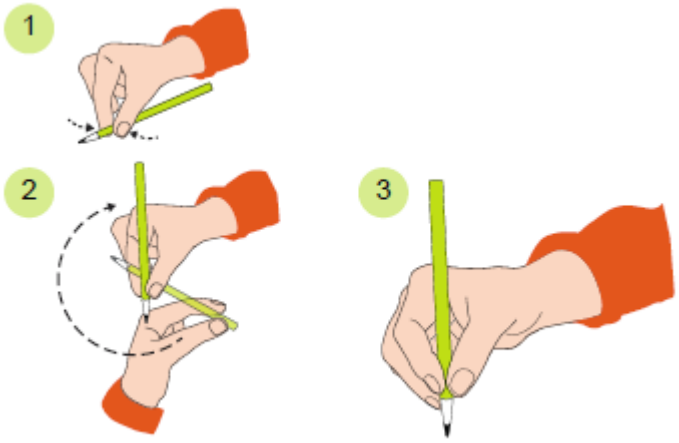
Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

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.





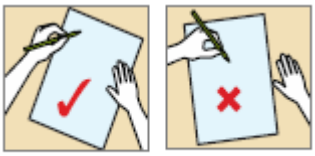
Left handed writers

Provision for left handed children

Left handed children always sit on the left side of right handed children, so their elbows don't bump and knock each other. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5cm from the point of their pencil. Pens appropriate for left handed writers will be provided, to avoid smudging.

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.



Paper position for left-handed children





Left handed writers can experience barriers to learning handwriting and partaking in handwriting activities. To ensure our left handed writers can learn and make progress our teachers will support left handed children by showing them how and where to sit when writing, and how to position their paper in a way that makes writing easier. When available to use, left handed writers will have access to pens designed specifically for left handed writers.

APPENDIX 5

Handwriting progression

Reception	The children are introduced to the precursive script as the new phonemes are introduced and practise the correct formation
Year 1	Children should be taught to: - 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"

Year 2	Children should be taught to: □ form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another □ 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 *N.B. If they have not already done so, children should begin to join their handwriting and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined*.
Year 3 and Year 4	Children should be taught to: □ increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting e.g. ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch
Year 5 and Year 6	Children 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 right implement that is best suited for a task