



Handwriting Policy

Introduction

The ability to write in a legible style is paramount in order that written communication is effective and meaningful. A reader's perception of the content of writing may be influenced by clear, legible handwriting. Handwriting needs to become an automatic process which frees children to focus on the content of the writing.

As a school we fully acknowledge that handwriting is not a natural skill; rather it is a motor activity which needs to be taught explicitly through teachers modelling and children practising. Therefore, we will provide opportunities for all children to develop practise and perfect the skills of handwriting. Alongside this, we will also provide targeted support to any child who has been identified as experiencing difficulties.

This policy is intended to enable all children in the school to develop a consistent and legible script that will assist their writing. It follows the guidance of the National Curriculum. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly for children to practise by copying and repeating.

Aims

To enable all our children to:

- Become confident and independent in their approach to handwriting.
- Develop a comfortable handwriting style that is joined, clear and fluent.
- Adapt their handwriting to a range of tasks.
- Understand the importance of legible and neat presentation in communicating effectively, and in creating the right 'first' impression of their work.

Implementation

At Wheatlands, we teach the children cursive handwriting from Year One through to Year Six. Handwriting is taught explicitly in short, frequent sessions whereby it is modelled by the teacher. In EYFS and KS1 it is linked to phonics, which helps children to form 'muscle memory' of linking sounds to handwriting.

Technical Terms

- The word **cursive** means joined.
- The correct name for the joining bits between the letters is **ligatures**.
- The technical term for a tail is a **flourish**.
- The letters b, d, h, k and l are called **ascenders**. The top of the letter should go to nearly the top of the line.
- The letter t is **not an ascender**. It is an unusual letter because it is three quarters tall in comparison to an ascender.
- The letters j, p, q and y are called **descenders**. This is because the flourish that these letters have goes below the line.

- Letters that join at the top join **horizontally**.
- Letters that join at the bottom join **diagonally**.
- Capital letters should be the same size as **ascenders**.
- **Lower case letters** should all be the same size.
- The letters f, g and y **loop** on the descenders.

Joins

The following letters are joined horizontally:
o, r, v and w

The following letters are joined diagonally:
a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, s, t, u, y and z

The following letters loop:
f, g and y

The only letter that doesn't join is an x

Our agreed cursive style can be seen below:

Cursive Lower Case Letters



Organisation

Children are taught in whole class sessions explicitly for handwriting and also in conjunction with spelling in Read, Write, Inc.

Children are taught:

- How to hold a pencil in a comfortable grip.
- How to sit in a comfortable position.
- How to form individual letters.
- How to exercise control over size of letters
- How to exercise control over spacing of letters within and between words.

Foundation Stage

In EYFS handwriting outcomes are that:

- Children develop hand eye coordination, gross and fine motor skills needed to support handwriting.
- Children use a range of tools to develop drawing lines and circles using gross motor skills.

- Children use a range of materials to develop fine motor skills e.g. shaving foam, sponges, felt tips.
- Children practise manipulative skills through play.
- Children use a variety of tools and paper, both indoors and outdoors for the purpose of writing through role play and labelling their creations.
- Children introduced to letters through the Read, Write Inc programme, which will be further embedded with the class teacher modelling writing in class.
- Children taught to form letters using a variety of strategies and materials.

Year 1

Children are taught the basic leading lines and encouraged to start writing in a cursive script on a line as soon as they are able. Children are taught which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways).

Year 2

All children are expected to develop a legible cursive style.

Years 3 and 4

On entry to Year 3 children should continue to have short weekly sessions. The children consolidate their use of the basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. Handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practise. By the end of Year 3 cursive handwriting is used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.

Frequent, weekly handwriting sessions will continue in Year 4. The aim should be for the majority of children to be using a pen for English work by the Spring Term of Year 4.

Years 5 and 6

Years 5 and 6 are used to consolidate learning for those children who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years. Experimentation with writing implements is encouraged with the aim of increasing speed whilst maintaining legibility. Years 5 and 6 should have at least one weekly handwriting session, though some children may need extra practise, at the discretion of the class teacher.

Adult Handwriting

The teachers and support staff will model handwriting for the pupils. All should produce quality cursive writing at all times including when marking or commenting on pupils' work and on displays.

Inclusion

The vast majority of pupils learn quickly how to write legibly and fluently. Every child is encouraged to adopt the school's style of handwriting. If however a child has an established joined handwriting style that is acceptable but different from that taught at school, no attempts to modify the style will be taken.

Provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some pupils need more support to develop legible and fluent handwriting and a specific individual or group programme is drawn up in consultation with the SEND co-ordinator. Extra time may be given to complete work set. In some situations there may be a requirement for the children to use a word processor to complete tasks. Some children may need to use pencil grips, a sloping surface or a thick triangular pencil.

Provision for left-handed pupils

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.
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Extra practise with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left to right automatically. Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when they are modelled by a right-handed teacher and vice versa.

ICT

Pupils are encouraged to use and evaluate a range of fonts and to select whatever is appropriate to suit particular purposes.

Presentation

High quality presentation of all work is central. Work is to be completed in pencil until children have been awarded a **Pen Licence** by the Head Teacher. This is in the form of a credit card and certificate.



Teachers will send work samples through to the Head Teacher to check when she feels that handwriting is of gold standard. In cases where children have difficulties with fine motor control discretion will be used. All children are to use a pencil with all pieces of Maths work.

The layout of work in Years 1 and 2 is described below:

- For Writing and Topic work the long date should be used and for Maths, the short date. They should be placed on the left hand side of the page.
- Pencil errors are to be rubbed out or crossed out with a single line using a ruler and pencil.
- Paragraphs are indicated by missing a line.
- In Year 1 pupils do not underline the dates. In Year 2 the adults will underline/draw lines for the children but will encourage practise ruling lines so that by the end of Year 2 most are confidently able to underline using a ruler.

The layout of work in KS2 is described below:

- Date, Underline, L.O, Underline, miss a line
- For English and Topic work the long date should be written and for Maths the short date should be used and placed on the left hand side of the page, right of the margin and underlined.
- Within lists, numbers are to be placed on the left of the margin and bullet points to the right of the margin.

Handwriting Pen Licences

Our aim is to encourage children to become proficient with a pen, so that by the middle of Year 4 most children are writing with a pen for most of English and topic work. If a child has developed the skills required in joining, correct sizing and shaping and is also producing very neat work

consistently across the curriculum, then initially, the teacher will allow them to practise using a pen in handwriting sessions only in preparation for receiving their Pen Licence from the Head Teacher.

This will:

1. Give them a boost.
2. Allow them to 'iron out' the inevitable dip in quality when starting to use pen.
3. Allow them to become proficient in handwriting sessions where there is not so much pressure and emphasis on trying to finish a longer piece of English/Topic work.

Criteria for awarding Pen Licences

These criteria should be displayed in all classrooms (simplified for KS1) and children are asked to demonstrate the criteria within their work consistently. A Pen Licence could be withdrawn if a child's quality of handwriting deteriorates over a significant period of time.

To earn a Pen Licence your writing must show the following:
• The first letter of every word starts on the line.
• All letters are correctly formed.
• All short letters are the same size.
• All ascenders and descenders are the correct height/length.
• All ascenders and descenders are vertical, not sloping.
• Descenders on loops must be straight before looping.
• Loops must not be too long.
• Letters o, v, w join at the top and v and w are pointed, not rounded.
• All letters are correctly joined.
• Capital letters are the same height as letters with ascenders.
• Spaces between words are the right size (not too small or big)
• Date and Learning Objective underlined with a ruler.
• Spaces between letters are the right size (not too squashed or stretched)
• A fluent, legible style.