

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School



HANDWRITING POLICY

Mission Statement

Our children are all unique, beautiful **individuals** but together we are a **masterpiece**, brothers and sisters in **Christ**.

As witnesses of Christ, working together as a **Team**, we strive to promote the **Gospel Values** and Teachings of Jesus by providing a **caring, stimulating environment**, with **nurture, trust, love** and **tolerance** through our spirituality, learning and play. By making connections with Jesus, we promote **high ambitions** and **confidence** to achieve our goals.

What is handwriting?

Handwriting is writing done with the hand using a pencil, pen, digital stylus or other marking instrument. It is used as a mode of expressing and communicating language. Handwriting involves using a recognised system of symbols. It is sometimes referred to as language by hand.

Aims

At English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, we aim to develop fluent, legible, and efficient handwriting for all pupils. Handwriting is taught as a developmental skill, directly supporting spelling, composition, and overall literacy.

We follow:

- **LPDS Handwriting Progression**
- **Red Rose Phonics structure**
- **Read Write Inc (RWI)-style letter formation patter**

Our approach ensures:

- Systematic progression from mark-making to fluent joined handwriting
- Consistency of teaching across all year groups
- Explicit teaching of letter formation and joins
- Inclusion of all learners through adaptive teaching

Progression Overview

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Key Features</i>
<i>Nursery</i>	Pre-writing & gross motor	Mark-making, patterns, lead-in awareness
<i>Reception</i>	Letter formation (lead-ins)	RWI patter, correct orientation
<i>Year 1</i>	Secure letter formation	Consistent lead-ins, size and spacing
<i>Year 2</i>	Introduction of joins	Lead-outs and basic joins
<i>KS2</i>	Fluency and style	Automatic joins, speed, consistency



Teaching Approach

Core Principles

- Explicit modelling in every session
- Consistent language (RWI-style patter)
- Frequent short practice sessions
- Immediate feedback
- Multi-sensory approaches (air writing, sand, whiteboards)

Readiness to Write



These are a visual reminder of how to prepare for the 'process' of handwriting. They are taught to all children as soon as they are ready to begin sitting to write (usually mid-way through Foundation Stage). This ensures that good handwriting habits are established early and practised constantly.

Posture

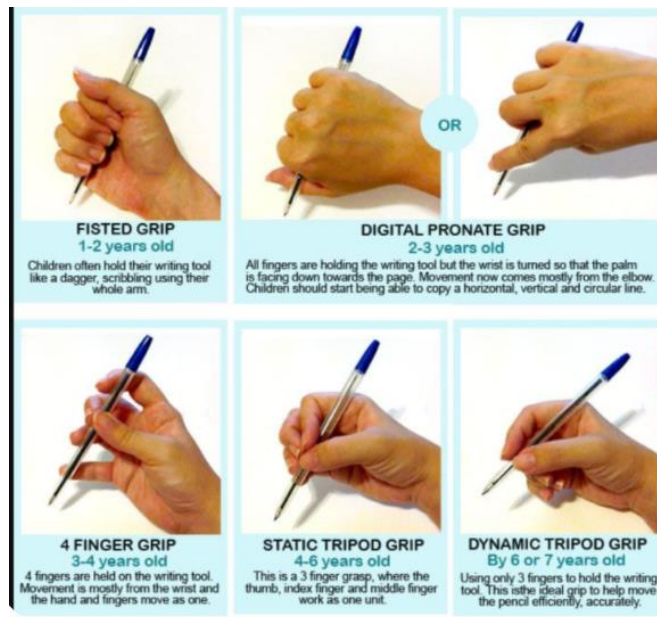
Children are shown how to sit well:

- Back is supported by the chair.
- Body leaning slightly forward.
- Hips, knees and ankles at 90°, feet flat on the floor.
- Arms resting comfortably on the table.
- Sitting a 'fist distance' from the table.
- Non-dominant hand used to stabilise paper.

Pencil Grip

An effective pencil grip is essential for legible, comfortable and fluent handwriting. Once children are developmentally ready, they should be shown how to hold a pencil correctly. Developmentally this begins with the 'pincer grip' moving onto the 'dynamic tripod grip' which is considered to be the most effective grip for both left and right-handed writers.





Pen Licenses

Children in KS2 will earn a pen license if they show they are able to:

- Form letters of a consistent size
- Join letters with the correct formation
- Sit letters/words on the line
- Correctly space words to ensure legibility

The Class Teacher will make the decision once the child demonstrates the above consistently.

Paper

The paper should be placed slightly to the side rather than directly in front of the child (slightly to the right for a right hander; to the left for a left-hander.) Children should use their non-writing hand to hold the page still. The writing hand is supported by the wrist, which should be kept stable and should rest on the table below the writing line.

Exercise books with line spacing are given to children to suit their age, natural size of writing and stage of development.

Pressure

Pressure through the pencil can affect the flow of writing. Pressing too hard can cause discomfort and slow handwriting down. Pressing too lightly will result in handwriting that is too faint to be easily legible. Children need to apply just the right amount of pressure to ensure that writing can flow along. This involves using a combination of thumb, finger and wrist movements. Children usually learn through experience how much pressure is needed.



Letter Formation and Families

Letters are taught in **families** to support motor memory:

Curly Caterpillar Family

c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s

Long Ladder Family

i, j, l, t, u

One-Armed Robot Family

b, h, m, n, p, r

Zig-Zag Family

k, v, w, x, y, z

Phase-Specific Expectations

Nursery

Focus

- Gross and fine motor development
- Mark-making and pattern formation
- Introduction to movement patterns (pre-cursive shapes)

Teaching Approaches

- Play dough play, threading, large-scale drawing
- Horizontal and vertical marks, circles, waves
- Early introduction to **lead-in movement (left-to-right flow)**
- Squiggle movements daily

Expected Outcomes

- Holds mark-making tools with increasing control
- Begins to make shapes resembling letters
- Demonstrates left-to-right movement



Reception

Focus

- Correct letter formation using **RWI patter**
- Consistent **lead-in strokes**

Teaching Features

- Daily phonics-linked handwriting following Red Rose Phonics
- Verbal patter (e.g., “up we go, round the apple, down the leaf”)
- Multi-sensory practice in enhanced provision

Expected Outcomes

- Forms lowercase letters correctly
- Uses consistent starting points
- Letters sit correctly on the line
- Begins spacing between words

Year 1

Key Learning

- Securing correct formation
- Consistent lead-ins for all letters
- Form digits 0 – 9 correctly and consistently (see appendix B)

Teaching Features

- Reinforcement of letter families
- Increased independence
- Writing on lines with appropriate size

Expected Outcomes

- Accurate formation of all lowercase letters with clear ascenders and descenders
- Capital letters introduced correctly
- Improved spacing between words
- Writing is mostly legible



Year 2

Key Learning

- Introduction of **lead-outs and joining**
- Transition to **fully joined handwriting**

Teaching Features

- Teach entry and exit strokes
- Begin joins:
 - Diagonal joins (e.g., ai, ar)
 - Horizontal joins (e.g., oo)
 - Orientate capital letters correctly

Expected Outcomes

- Most letters joined appropriately
- Consistent size and orientation
- Writing is fluent and legible
- **Fully joined handwriting by end of Year 2**

Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5, 6)

Key Learning

- Fluency, speed, and personal style
- Consistent joins in all writing

Teaching Features

- Regular handwriting practice – 10 minutes per day
- Emphasis on presentation across curriculum
- Refinement of ascenders/descenders

Expected Outcomes

- Automatic, fluent joined handwriting
- Consistent size, spacing, and alignment
- Adaptation for different purposes (e.g., note-taking vs presentation)



	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Key Learning	- Sit correctly at a table and hold pencil correctly. - Hold a pencil with an effective grip. - Form lower-case letters correctly – starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round, correctly oriented. - Form digits 0-9 correctly. - Practise forming letters in handwriting families: ‘Long ladders’ – i, j, l, t, u, ‘One armed robots’ – b, h, m, n, p, r ‘Curly caterpillars’ – c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s ‘Zig-zag letters’ – k, v, w, x, y, z - Have clear ascenders (‘tall letters’) and descenders (‘tails’). - Form capital letters correctly.	- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. - Write capital letters and digits of the correct size relative to one another and to lower case letters. - Use spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters. - 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. - Use capital letters appropriately, e.g. <i>not always writing A as a capital; not using capitals within words.</i> - Orientate capital letters correctly.	- Write legibly. - Form and use the four basic handwriting joins.	- Write with consistency in size and proportion of letters, e.g. <i>by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.</i> - Use a joined style throughout their independent writing.	- Choose when it is appropriate to print (lower case or upper case) rather than to join writing, e.g. <i>printing for labelling a scientific diagram or data; filling in a form, writing an e mail address.</i> - Write fluently using a joined style as appropriate for independent writing.	- Choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task, e.g. <i>pencil for quick notes, handwriting pen for letters, marker pens for posters.</i> - Write, using a joined style, with increasing speed.

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Presentation Expectations

Across all year groups when taught in Key Learning:

- Sit letters on the line
- Consistent letter size
- Clear spacing between words
- Correct use of capitals and punctuation
- Neat, legible handwriting in all subjects

Left-Handed Writers

- Some letter formation movements are made in a direction that is not natural
- A left-hander cannot see what they are writing
- Writing is more likely to get smudged
- A left-hander makes more pushing movements when writing that are more difficult to control than pulling movements

Adaptations for Left-Handed Writers

- A higher seat
- A sloped writing surface
- Good lighting – making sure the writing hand does not cast a shadow on the writing
- Sit on the left-hand side of a right-handed writer so elbows do not bump
- Paper tilted clockwise in the left-handed writer position
- Pencils and pens to suit – ergonomic good grip, soft lead, fast drying ink
- Left-handed scissors
- Investigate arm, hand, pen positions to find those that suit
- Explore changes to letter formation and joining movements (in line with this policy)

Adaptations for SEND

We are committed to ensuring all pupils can access handwriting development and offer a keep up not catch-up approach.

Universal Support

- Larger writing spaces or wider lines
- Use of pencil grips or adapted tools
- Additional modelling and repetition
- Visual prompts (alphabet strips, formation guides)
- Reduced quantity but maintained quality

Targeted Support

- Fine motor intervention programmes (e.g., dough disco, funky fingers)
- Pre-writing pattern practice
- Multi-sensory approaches (sand, tracing, air writing)
- Adult support during writing tasks

Specialist Support

- Individual handwriting plans.
- This may include a small number of children who print their writing due to their individual needs
- Occupational therapy guidance (where appropriate)
- Use of alternative recording methods if needed (e.g., typing, voice-to-text)

Key Principles

- Focus on **progress over perfection**
- Break tasks into manageable steps
- Allow extra time
- Reinforce success to build confidence



Assessment and Monitoring

- Children in EYFS need to be continually assessed throughout their learning to ensure misconceptions and bad habits do not form.
- At the end of EYFS, children need to be assessed against the ELG and this assessment information must be passed to the Year 1 teacher to ensure a confident start to handwriting in Key Stage 1.
- Ongoing formative assessment by teachers in all classes must be an integral part of classroom practice as per the *Feedback and Marking Policy*. This is to ensure all children have the opportunity to meet the LPDS *Key Learning Progression in Handwriting*.
- Moderation across year groups.
- Identification of individual pupils who require interventions and/or adaptive teaching.

Role of Adults

All staff:

- Model high-quality handwriting at all times
- Use consistent language and formation
- Reinforce expectations across the curriculum
- Provide immediate feedback

This structured, consistent approach ensures that all pupils:

- Develop strong handwriting foundations from Nursery
- Achieve fluent, joined handwriting by the end of Year 2
- Refine and apply these skills confidently throughout KS2

Handwriting on Displays

At English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, staff should display print, cursive and pre-cursive joins on displays.

Children should be given opportunities to read from a range of fonts.

Staff should model print in EYFS and Year 1.

Staff should model cursive writing from Year 2.

Letter formation must be displayed in classrooms.

Handwriting display is to be used and celebrated frequently.



Policy written

July 2026

To be reviewed: June 2027 or sooner in line with new initiatives and developments



Appendix A

Letter Patter

 Up we go...around the apple and down the leaf ... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the laces to the heel then around the toe ... and off we go 	 Up we go... curl around the caterpillar 	 Up we go... around the dinosaur's bottom, up his tall neck and down to his toes ... and off we go 
 Up we go... lift off the top and scoop out the egg 	 Up we go... down the stem and draw the leaf 	 Up we go... around the girl's face, down her hair and give her a curl 	 Up we go... tall and down the head to the hooves then across his back... and off we go 
 Up we go...down the insect ... and off we go... dot for the head 	 Up we go... down his body, curl and dot for his head 	 Up we go... down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the long leg... and off we go 
 Up we go... Maisie, mountain, mountain... and off we go 	 Up we go... down Nobby's net... and off we go 	 Up we go... around the orange... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the pirate's plait and around his face 

 Up we go...around her head, up past her earring, down her hair and flick 	 Up we go... down the robot's back and curl over his arm... 	 Up we go... slither down the snake... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the tower ... and off we go... across the tower 
 Up we go... down and under, up to the top... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the wing, up the wing... and off we go 	 Up we go... down, up, down, up... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the arm and leg, repeat the other side... and off we go 

 Up we go...down a horn, up a horn and under the head 	 Up we go... zig, zag, zig ... and off we go 		
 Up we go...around the apple and down the leaf ... and off we go 	 Up we go... down the laces to the heel then around the toe ... and off we go 	 Up we go... curl around the caterpillar 	 Up we go... around the dinosaur's bottom, up his tall neck and down to his toes ... and off we go 

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 Up we go...down a horn, up a horn and under the head 	 Up we go... zig, zag, zig ... and off we go 		

Appendix B

Number Patter

 Back around the lemon.	 Straight down the birthday candle.	 Round the swan's head, across its body and stop. Glide to the wings.
 Round the seahorse's head and stop. Curve round its body.	 Down the branch and stop. Across the branch and cut through the cactus!	 Put the King's crown on and stop. Down his head and round his tummy.
 Curl around the snail's shell.	 Nibble along the crust and stop. Eat across the pizza.	 Slither around the snake, back round its body and tie it up!
 Back around the ice cream and stop. Straight down the cone.		



Appendix C

Progression in Handwriting (LPDS)

Progression in Handwriting						
						
Key Learning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	- Sit correctly at a table and hold pencil correctly. - Hold a pencil with an effective grip. - Form lower-case letters correctly – starting and finishing in the right place, going the right way round, correctly oriented. - Form digits 0-9 correctly. - Practise forming letters in handwriting families: - ‘Long ladders’ – i, j, l, t, u, - ‘One armed robots’ – b, h, m, n p, r - ‘Curly caterpillars’ – c, a, d, e, g, o, q, f, s - ‘Zig-zag letters’ – k, v, w, x, y, z - Have clear ascenders (‘tall letters’) and descenders (‘tails’). - Form capital letters correctly.	- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another. - Write capital letters and digits of the correct size relative to one another and to lower case letters. - Use spacing between words which reflects the size of the letters. - 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. - Use capital letters appropriately, e.g. <i>not always writing A as a capital; not using capitals within words.</i> - Orientate capital letters correctly.	- Write legibly. - Form and use the four basic handwriting joins.	- Write with consistency in size and proportion of letters, e.g. <i>by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.</i> - Use a joined style throughout their independent writing.	- Choose when it is appropriate to print (lower case or upper case) rather than to join writing, e.g. <i>printing for labelling a scientific diagram or data; filling in a form, writing an e mail address.</i> - Write fluently using a joined style as appropriate for independent writing.	- Choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task, e.g. <i>pencil for quick notes, handwriting pen for letters, marker pens for posters.</i> - Write, using a joined style, with increasing speed.
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