

Petworth CofE Primary School

Handwriting Policy



As a Rights Respecting School, all our policies are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child.

Article 2: The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 28: All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free.

Reviewed:	September 2021
Next Review:	September 2022
Person Responsible:	Rob Neary

AIM

We aim to teach children to write using a simple efficient legible speedy hand, and which can be written with any writing instrument.

It should be capable of being learnt by the youngest without having to be changed at a later stage. It should be a style which can be developed in character and personality at a later time.

We understand that handwriting is a developmental process involving many underlying skills. It is a learned, physical skill which requires the ability to recall and sequence muscle motor movements automatically when writing letters or numbers.

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. It is not sufficient to exhort children to improve their handwriting; the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

Handwriting in the classroom

The skill of handwriting needs to be taught. It is not a natural skill that will grow and develop like speaking or walking. Handwriting is a motor activity. A movement stored in the body rather than in the conscious memory. Our hands and fingers control the movements involved in handwriting. It is in our hands that the kinaesthetic memory lies. This controls the direction and shape of each letter.

Pupils should eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking. An automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, grammar, syntax, style and content. Handwriting should be taught alongside phonic and spelling knowledge at all stages.

Effective teaching of handwriting can only be achieved through modelling. Teachers must demonstrate letter formation and joins regularly and children must practice by carefully copying and repeating. It is important to observe children writing to ensure they are forming letters correctly.

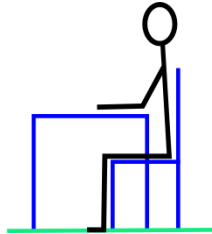
Handwriting Principles

Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It should be modelled by the teacher then supervised. Children should be self/peer assessing, looking for consistency. Where possible, it should be linked to phonic and spelling patterns. This will help with handwriting and with the 'muscle memory' of spellings. When ready, pupils should be practising on the lines they are going to use in their writing books. High expectations of handwriting are needed. Children need to repeat work that is not satisfactory.

Teachers need to model good handwriting at all times, e.g. when writing on the whiteboard and when marking books.

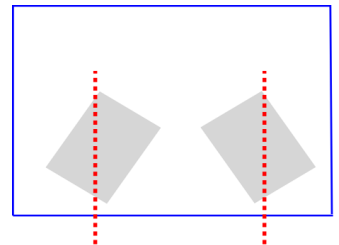
The following is a brief outline of our agreed policy:

- **Gross and fine motor skills:** activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are *essential* to the development of good handwriting.
- **Posture:** children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.



Pencil grip: children should develop a tripod grip, and should be supported with reminders until this is established. Triangular section pencils and shaped pencil holders are available in school for children who find them helpful. The progression of pencil grips is included in the Appendix.

- **Position of paper:** left handed children should be encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing, and to reduce smudging later on when they write in ink. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt paper slightly to the left. Paper should be steadied with the free hand.



- **Paper:** early writers will write on unlined paper so that they are able to write at a size appropriate to their needs. As soon as children are beginning to control the size of their writing, they will be given lined paper and exercise books, to encourage the correct placing of letters on the line. Lines at an interval of 15mm will be standard in KS1, and 8mm or 10mm in KS2, although some children may have different needs. For the teaching and practice of handwriting, it may sometimes be helpful to use handwriting exercise books or “handwriting paper” to give further support for the relative heights of parts of the letters.

Pre handwriting patterns: Throughout the teaching of handwriting, children will practise the pre handwriting patterns in order to develop the strength and coordination needed to form letters as well as the flow and fluidity needed to join letters.

- **Correct letter formation:** children are taught to form letters correctly, paying attention to the starting point for each letter, the direction of pencil movement, the shape and orientation of the letter, and the relative heights of the body of each letter, and any ascender and descender. Teaching will be multi-sensory and appropriate to the needs of the child. Our policy is to teach a letter shape which closely resembles print for early readers, and which will not need to be changed as handwriting becomes joined. The "pattern" used in Reception to accompany correct letter formation is included in the Appendix.
- **Writing implements;** In KS1 when children have achieved legible handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a fibre tip "school handwriting pen", which will then be used for all written work in school. In KS2 all children are encouraged to use a pen in line with presentation policy.
- **Challenges with handwriting:** If a child demonstrates a difficulty in handwriting, they will be assessed by the teacher and SENDCo to explore whether the difficulty is linked to challenges with their physical development, visual tracking, or motor memory. Interventions will be used to support children as appropriate. See progression of skills planning in Appendix used in interventions. Referrals to Outside Agencies such as Occupational Therapist will be made as appropriate.

National Curriculum 2015 Programme of study for Handwriting

Children need to pass through the various developmental handwriting stages in their own time. However, the statutory guidelines of the National Curriculum are as follows;

Year 1 Pupils should be taught to:

Sit correctly at the table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly

Begin to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the correct place

Form capital letters

Understand which letters belong to which handwriting families

Year 2 Pupils should be taught to;

Form lower case letters of the correct size relative to one another

Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes need to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined

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 reflect the size of letters

Year 3 – 4 Pupils should be taught to;

Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes need 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

Year 5-6 pupils should be taught to;

Write legibly, fluently with increasing speed by:

Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters

Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

Joined handwriting

Children in EYFS, will learn the correct letter formation, progressing to using lead-in strokes as appropriate for individual children's needs. The school policy will follow the National Curriculum progression outlined above. In 'published' work, there will be an explicit focus on handwriting and presentation in all year groups.

Appendix Developmental Stages of Pencil Grips

Stage 1 of Pencil Grip Development

When your child first picks up a crayon they will hold it in the same way as they pick up a knife and fork, other than the crayon tip will be facing downwards.

Through the initial mark making process it is normal for their arm and elbow to stay rigid, with the crayon movement coming from the shoulder.

Stage 2 of Pencil Grip Development

With improved arm and hand control your child will start to hold the crayon in the palm of their hand, with their thumb securing it in their hand. Note that the thumb is now close to the tip and not the end of the crayon. The grasp is similar to that of using a knife and fork to cut food.

The increased arm strength allows the elbow to be slightly away from the body, providing greater flexibility.

Stage 3 of Pencil Grip Development

Your child will hold the pencil with all five fingers resulting in the wrist being off the table. The grip is similar to a darts player holding the dart with all five fingers.

Movement of the crayon now comes from the wrist but as the hand strength improves there will start to be some finger movement.

Stage 4 of Pencil Grip Development

Your child will usually start to use the three finger, or **tripod grip**, by the age of 6.

Initially the fingers will be held rigidly but, as your child improves their control of the finger muscles, the fingers will start to move the pencil.



Every child is different, developing the skills needed to hold a pencil at a different time to their peers.

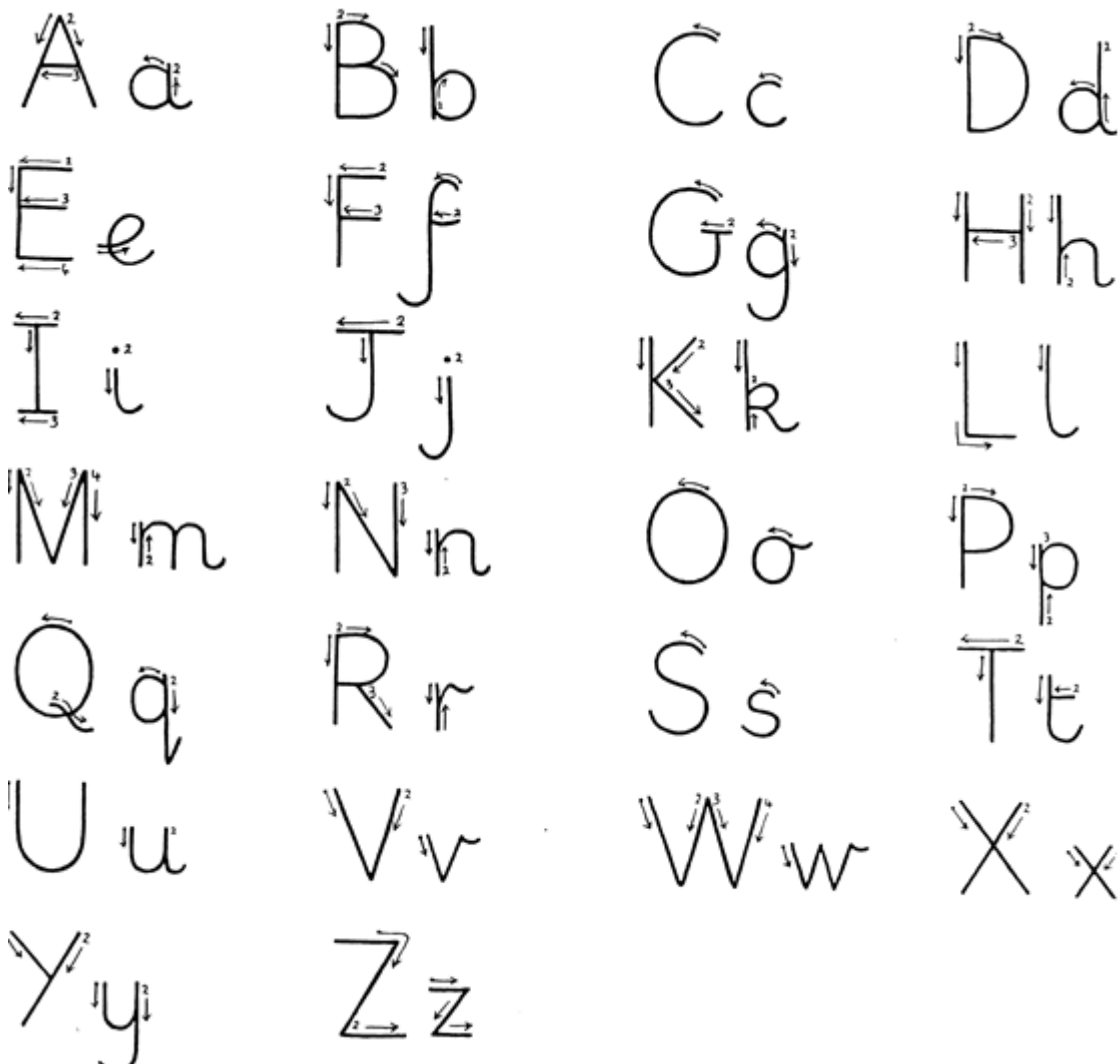
There are developmental stages, which your child needs to go through, before they can successfully use a mature tripod grip. They need to work through each stage and as their hand, shoulder and arm strength and mobility increases so does the ability to move to the next developmental stage of the grip.

There are principles of development called “big to small” and “proximal to distal” – basically this means that children develop the larger muscles of the trunk and arms before the smaller muscles of the hands and that the proximal muscles closer to the body centre (shoulder muscles, upper arm muscles) develop before the distal muscles which are further away (hand muscles).

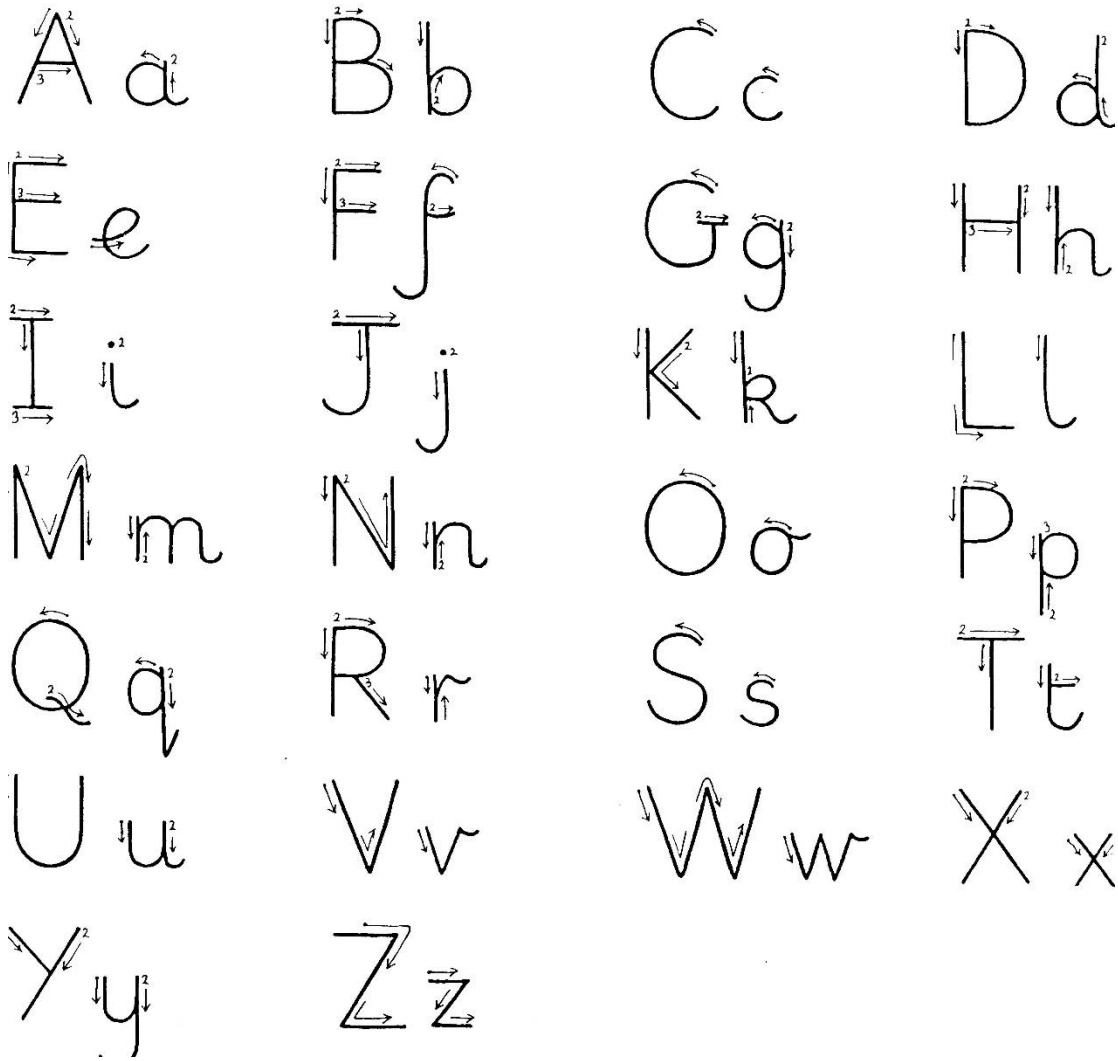
If a toddler is taught how to hold a pencil using the tripod grip before they are physically ready, they are inclined to develop a **poor pencil grip** which is difficult to change once they are older. These grips can make handwriting difficult and less fluid as well as making writing a very tiring task. It can also turn some children off colouring, drawing and handwriting as they are not pleasurable experiences.

A child may not develop a three finger tripod pencil grip until the age of 5/6. This is considered the most appropriate pencil grip, for right and left handed writers, as it allows the fingers and wrist to work together to provide a more free flowing movement.

Letter formation for left-handed children



Letter formation for right-handed children



Letter formation families

C group

c a d g q o

Tall group

l h t b k d

Mid air group link to next letter by bridge

o v r u

Letters with sticks

m n p r h b k

Letters with tails

j y g z f

Vowels

a e i o u

Capitals