



# *Whiteknights Primary School*

## **Handwriting Policy**

This Policy describes the handwriting that is expected at Whiteknights Primary School

Approved by staff meeting:

Date: July 2020

Date of next review: July 2025

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### 1. Handwriting Rationale

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically. Once pupils can form letters correctly by Year 1, we use Letter-join as the basis of our handwriting policy that covers all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum.

### 2. Handwriting Aims

At Whiteknights Primary School, our aim in teaching handwriting are that the pupils will:

- Achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in accordance with the cursive font;
- Develop flow and speed;
- Enjoy learning and develop their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.
- Eventually produce the letters automatically and in their independent writing.

### 3. Handwriting Method

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our teachers are encouraged to use the appropriate handwriting for their year group.

- Nursery, Reception and Year 1 – To use printed writing for all handwriting tasks including board writing, marking and comments. Teachers should use the printed font type that is available on all school laptops **Sassoon Infants**.
- Year 2 – Year 6 – To use joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including board writing, marking and comments. Teachers should use the joined cursive font type that is available on all school laptops **Letterjoin Plus 6**.

**Across the school, the pupils and teachers will refer to the letters by their size.**

#### Early Years and Year 1 – Sassoon Infants Font

- Tall letters (EYs and Year 1)– b, d, h, k, l, t
- Middle letters – a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z
- Long letters (EYs and KS1) – f, g, j, p, q, y

#### Year 2 – Year 6 – Letter Join Plus 6

- Ascenders (Year 2 - 6)– b, d, h, k, l, t

- Middle letters – a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z
- Descenders (KS2) – f, g, j, p, q, y

Capital letters and numbers are to be the same size as ascenders/tall letters.

Children will refer to a 'magic middle line' to ensure letters are written to the correct height (the magic middle line runs at the height of the middle letters). The height of the ascending or tall letters should go above the magic middle line.

### **Stage 1** – (Early Years and Year 1)

- At this stage, there are no entrance strokes or joining of letters, as the teaching is focused on letter formation. Letters are grouped into 'letter families' and are taught in order, starting with the first letter of the family. When pupils are able to form that letter correctly they are then introduced to the next letter of the family. Letter family names will be used when teaching the formation - curly caterpillar letters, long ladders, one armed robot and zigzag monsters letters
- The following letters end with a flick - a, d, h, i, k, l, m, n, t, u

See – Appendix 2 for Letter Families

### **Stage 2** (Year 2 and KS2)

**Once children can form the letter correctly, they are taught to join letters using different strokes:**

**Horizontal exit stroke** – This is a short horizontal stroke used for letters that do not end on the line. The following letters end with a horizontal stroke – o, r, v and w

**Diagonal exit stroke** – This is a stroke that is used after the letter is formed to prepare for it to flow into the next letter when joined up.

**Looped stroke** – These are descenders which are written with a loop – f, g, j, y. The loop then forms a diagonal stroke which will join the next letter.

- When joining any letter into an 'e' it follows a different rule. The letter before the e must have a dipped stroke which leads into the middle of the e.

## **4. Handwriting National Curriculum Requirements**

The following states the end of Key Stage National Curriculum expectations that our pupils will be working towards:

### **End of Early Years Foundation Stage**

#### **Expected:**

- Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements;
- They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing;
- They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others;
- Physical Development: Hold a pencil comfortably using the tripod grip.

**Exceeding:**

- They use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip;
- They are beginning to be able to write on lines and control letter size.

**End of Key Stage 1****Working at:**

- Pupils use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in some of their writing;
- Pupils write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters;
- Pupils use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.

**Greater Depth:**

- Pupils use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters in most of their writing.

**End of Key Stage 2**

- Pupils maintain legibility, fluency and speed in handwriting through choosing whether or not to join specific letters.

The following is a break down from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the English Programme of Study stating what the children are taught so they are secure in their year group's handwriting expectations:

**Nursery pupils should be:**

- drawing lines and circles using gross motor movements;
- holding pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp;
- holding pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control;
- can copy some letters e.g. letters from their name;
- sometimes giving meanings to marks as they draw and paint;
- ascribing meanings to marks that they see in different places.

**Reception pupils should be:**

- showing a preference for a dominant hand;
- beginning to use anti clockwise and retrace vertical lines;
- beginning to form recognisable letters;
- using a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

**Year 1 pupils should be taught to:**

- 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;
- form digits 0-9;
- understand which letters belong to which 'letter families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

**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 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.

**Year 3 and 4 pupils should be taught to:**

- 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 [for example, 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].

**Year 5 and 6 pupils 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 writing implement that is best suited for a task

**5. Handwriting Across the School**

Handwriting practise requires an adult to observe and help children maintain accurate letter formation.

Teachers will be walking around the class, continuously correcting pencil grips, sitting position, letter formation, size or placement, to prevent bad habits forming.

There is specific progression of how handwriting is taught:

**Early Years and Year 1**

- Children are taught correct letter and number formation in a printed style, moving from single letters to words and sentences;
- Children in Early Years are free to select a writing implement of their choice in child initiated learning;
- Correct sitting and pencil grip is taught;
- They are encouraged to write in a straight line from left to right;
- Use of rulers for labelling is modelled by teachers and rulers are available for child initiated learning;
- Children are taught how to write 'on the line'.

**Year 2**

- Children are taught how to join letters, maintain regular size and shape of letters and regular spaces between words;
- They develop the fluency of their joined handwriting at word and sentence level.

**Years 3 and 4**

- They work on securing joins, improving fluency and continuing spelling links;
- Children are expected and taught how to use a ruler to draw lines, including underlining, diagrams, labelling and crossing out;
- Children write in paragraphs;
- Children are taught to adapt the layout of their written work to fit the intended purpose, i.e. letter presentation, play script, etc.

**Years 5 and 6**

- They are expected to use a ruler to draw lines, including underlining, diagrams, labelling and crossing out;
- Teaching of handwriting continues to develop an efficient writing speed and aids spelling;
- Children learn to select the most appropriate presentation style for different writing genres;
- They begin to understand the balance between speed and legibility which is dependent on the purpose of the writing: the product or the final draft of a piece of writing.

**Inclusion:**

These expectations apply to the vast majority of pupils in our school. Occasionally, a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a pupil who has such specific needs that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress (e.g. a child with physical disability). Difficulties are addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment.

**Monitoring:**

Presentation of work, including handwriting, is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis through work scrutiny and lesson observations. Feedback will be shared with the class teacher and discussed at leadership meetings when appropriate. This will ensure that the policy leads to good practice.

**6. Handwriting for Parents**

We are aware of how much the parents of Whiteknights pupils want to help their child succeed. To support your child's handwriting, we would ask that you follow our school's policy to enable your child/children to only learn and become secure in one cohesive, effective approach to writing. It is also important to add that children are not taught to write in only capital letters.

For additional advice to help your child develop their fine motor skills to support their handwriting, please visit the Berkshire Health Care CYPIT website. You will find many different advice sheets on countless areas to support children.

CYPIT Toolkit for School Years:

<https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-healthcare/cypit-toolkit-the-school-years/>

CYPIT Toolkit for Early Years:

<https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-healthcare/cypit-toolkit-the-early-years/>

See also the following for additional support

Appendix 1 – Whiteknights lower case cursive letters

Appendix 2 – Letter families

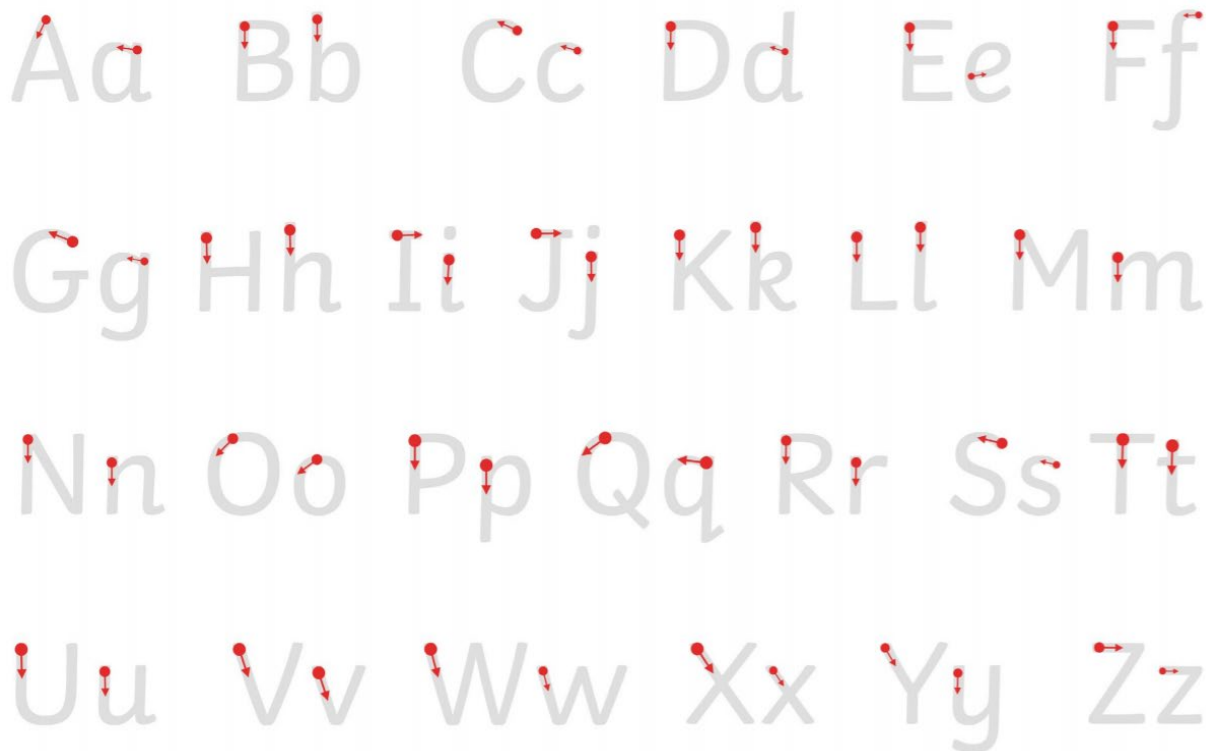
Appendix 3 – Whiteknights lower case letters when taught joins from Year 2.

Appendix 4 – Correct Posture for Handwriting

Appendix 5 – Correct Pencil Grip for Handwriting

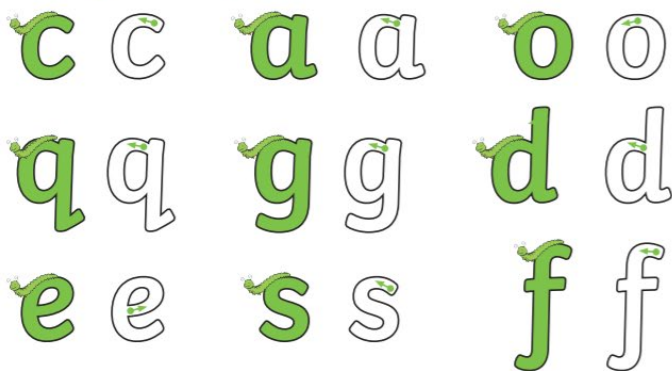
Appendix 6 – Left Handed writers

## Appendix 1 – Whiteknights upper and lower case letters for Early Years and Year 1

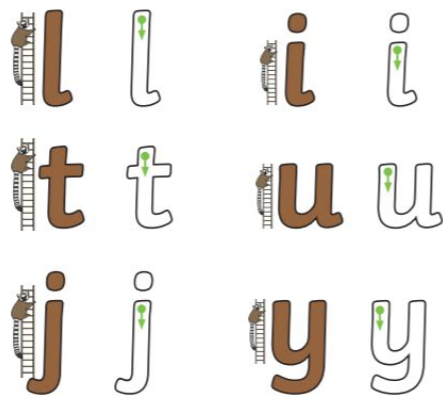


## Appendix 2: Letter Families (from Twinkl)

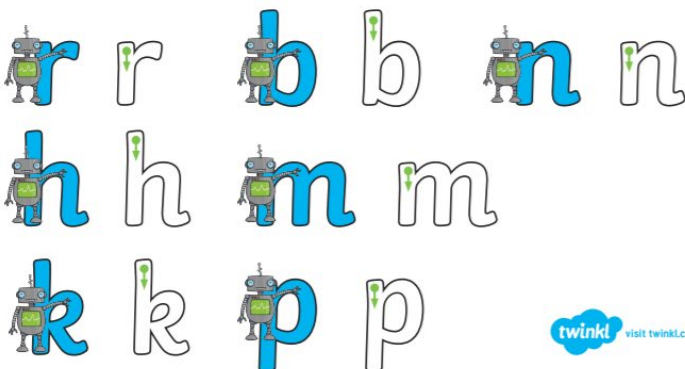
## Curly Caterpillar Letters



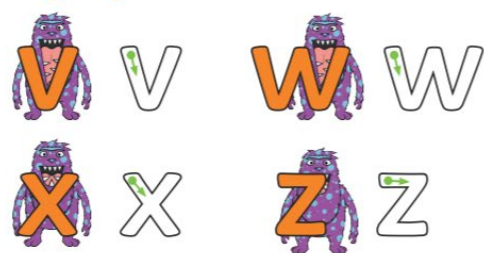
## Ladder Letters



## One Armed Robot Letters



## Zigzag Monster Letters





**Appendix 3: Whiteknights lower case letters when taught joins from Year 2.****Appendix 4 – Correct Posture for Handwriting**

Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

**SITTING POSITION**

The table reaches to below elbow height

Keep feet flat on the floor

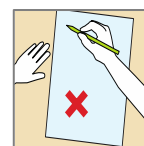


Sit with a straight back, not leaning over the

Sit right back in the seat

Pull the chair close in to the table

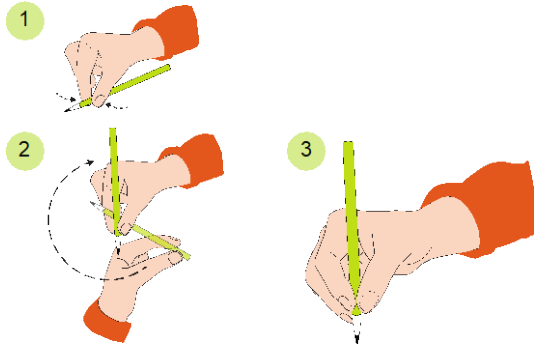
Paper position for right-handed children



## Appendix 5- Pencil Grip for Handwriting

### THE TRIPOD 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.



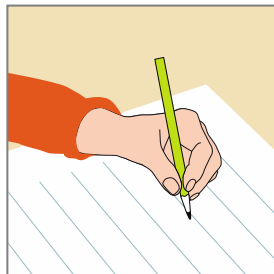
1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.

2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.

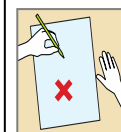
3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

## Appendix 6– Left Handed Children

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow right-handed teachers as they demonstrate letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers should demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.



Paper position for left-handed children



- 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.