

Wickhambreaux CEPS

English - Handwriting Policy

Created: September 2022

To be reviewed: September 2025

Rationale Statement:

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Given effective teaching, handwriting can be mastered by most pupils by the time they are seven or eight years old enabling them, with practice, to go on to develop a faster and more mature hand ready for secondary school and adult life.

Handwriting is a movement skill and this is why children need to practise handwriting movements correctly and often.

First handwriting lessons are vital and the most important issue is to ensure that the children we teach learn to form the letters of the alphabet with the correct sequence of strokes from the beginning. Children who have been allowed to invent their own ways of forming letters will find it harder to change the longer they are allowed to persist, but unless these habits are 'unlearned' (often at great effort since the movement memory is very retentive and will tend to revert to old habits) it will be impossible for them to learn a fluent, joined hand. The correct formation of all letters needs to become quite automatic and may require a lot of practice.

This policy is to ensure that the competent teaching of early skills will be consistent across the school and continually developed throughout all year groups.

Useful definitions:

Gross Motor Control/Skills:

This refers to the development of controlled movements of the whole body or limbs. The specific Gross Motor foci for handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities such as dance, football, use of small apparatus, cycling, gripping and building large-scale construction kits, while encouraging the use of both sides of the body, all help to support this development.

Fine Motor Control/Skills:

Fine motor skills involve all of the small muscles of the body: more specifically **those that control precise movements of the hands, wrists, feet, toes, lips, and tongue**. The small muscles of the hands and fingers are the most important for developing handwriting skills. Fine motor skills allow for the demonstration of good handwriting legibility through the ability to control a handwriting tool with speed and accuracy over the course of activities such as fine motor precision, manual dexterity, and in-hand manipulation.

Activities such as playing tiddly winks; sorting coins etc; playing pegs around a container; picking up small objects with tweezers; chopping; peeling; threading beads; picking up cards; using stickers' popping bubble wrap; making paper clip chains; colouring with very short crayons; play with small construction toys; lacing or threading etc, help children to develop their fine motor skills.

Dynamic Tripod Grip/grasp/posture:

The dynamic tripod grasp, as mentioned earlier, is **when a child holds their pencil with their index and middle fingers and thumb**. The pencil movement should come from the fingers, resulting in dynamic control or a dynamic tripod.



Pre-Writing Preparation:

Posture and Postural Control

Focus upon development and strengthening of core, trunk and shoulder muscles to ensure being able to lean forward in a controlled manner and being able to sit without needing one's hands to support oneself.

Encouragement to sit on a chair with feet flat on the ground, one's bottom square in the chair, being right back in the seat, with knees and hips being bent to approximately 90 degrees. Paper should be tilted to the side, rather than straight on in front of a child

Fine and Motor Skills development

Children take part in activities to develop their fine and gross motor skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint (see **Appendix 1** for lists of suggested developmental activities)

Use of mark making activities to hone fine motor skills.

Children are taught to, and frequently reminded and encouraged to hold a pencil correctly and then how to use it and hold it effectively to form recognisable patterns and letters. Focus is upon encouraging children towards adopting and using a **dynamic tripod grip**.

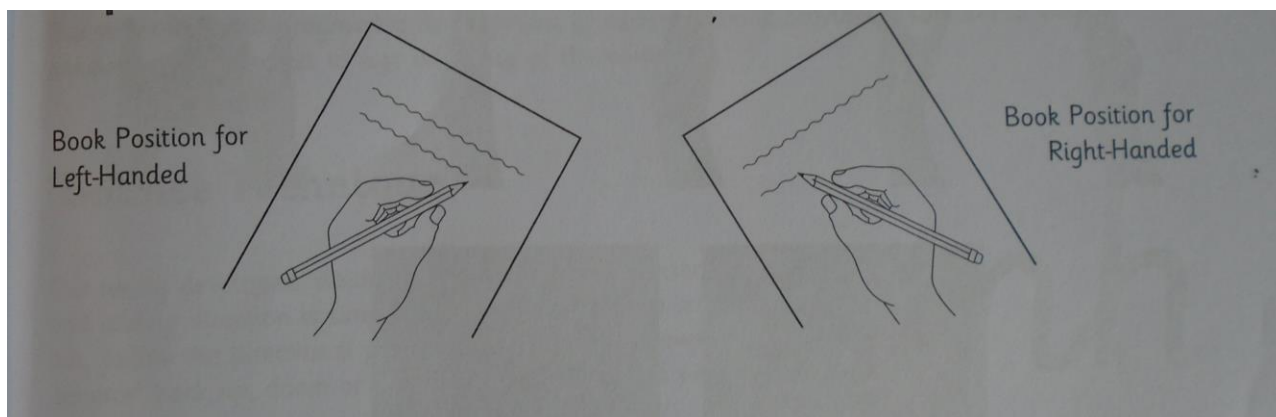
Left-Handed Writers

Left-handers often develop a poor grip and an awkward style with a hooked hand over the top of the writing, resulting in smudged work and a tired hand.

A left-hander should hold the thumb high enough up from the pencil or pen to allow them to see their writing. They should write with the hand below the writing line and the wrist straight because they need to push the pencil rather than pull is like a right-hander.

Left-handers should be seated on the left of the right-handed writers otherwise their writing arms will crash. Also, check that the light comes from their right-hand side, if possible, so that they are not writing in their own shadow.

Paper Position:



Teaching of Handwriting at Wickhambreaux CEPS:

Handwriting lessons, ie. the Class Teacher actively teaches handwriting skills – not just practice, should happen a minimum of twice a week for 15 minutes each time (by Y5/6, once a week).

It is necessary to teach the skills required so the specific join and focus should be modelled prior to the pupils independently rehearsing the skill.

Handwriting Books:

In YR and Y1, plain paged books – moving onto handwriting black/red lineguide books

Y2-4 – handwriting black/red lineguide books – moving onto regular lined books, once ascenders and descenders are regular and appropriate length.

Y3-6 – Lined A5 practice books – used solely for handwriting practice.

Writing implements:

EYFS	Y1	Y2	Y3/4	Y5/6
Chunky triangular pencils <i>Moving onto...</i> Fine pencils with moulded finger grips	Fine pencils with triangular finger grips for all pupils	Fine pencils (phasing out triangular grips as appropriate)	Y3: Fine pencils Y4: Introduce blue ink handwriting pens when legibility, spacing and regularity of letter formation, without copy, is well established	All pupils should be using blue ink handwriting pens for written work.

A typical handwriting lesson format:

Warm-up	Gross and Fine Motor Warm up	Find possible examples of this in:
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3 minutes		<p>- Dough Disco (see Appendix 2 for progression booklet – or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnpLLg6l6Nk) -for online beginner moves</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-lfzeG1aC4) - for online advanced progression</p> <p>- Funky Fingers - Sky writing - ‘Hand and shoulder Warm up Activities’ Morrells p7 (see Appendix 3 for other suggestions that can be used aside from HW lessons)</p>
Model 4 minutes	<p>Teacher models the new learning, join, etc (EYFS + KS1 using <i>Handwriting Patter</i> - see Appendix 4)</p> <p>Model sizing (within black/red lines if using handwriting practice books)</p>	<p>Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writing on the whiteboard - writing on large sheets of paper (with or without black/red HW guidelines) -tracing
Rehearse 8 minutes	Pupil rehearsal of new/focus skill	<p>Depending on age/stage, this may be on plain pages or worksheet based (more tracing/copying - esp. YR-2)</p> <p>Or, independent HW books (Y1-3/4)</p> <p>Or, lined practice books (Y3-6)</p>
Apply After the lesson	<p>Look for evidence of pupils applying their new learning in their HW opportunities in other subjects.</p> <p>Try to refer to this learning within introductions to other written tasks elsewhere in the day.</p>	

Sequences of Progression:

	Handwriting Progression
EYFS	<p>T1+ T2: Physical Development to specifically develop posture and both fine and gross motor skills and pincer grip</p> <p>Use of Write Dance, mark making and Funky Fingers/Dough Disco + other developmental activities (see Appendix 1 for suggestions). During this time, letter presentation and use by the children will be purely for familiarisation of letter forms as symbols to support GPCs. All letter forms of the alphabet will have been introduced in Phonics lessons by the end of Term 2.</p> <p>T3+4: Focus upon letter formation and pattern + correct sitting and paper position.</p> <p>Use of Morrells to teach pre-cursive/print forms of each letter, according to the 5 groups/families of letters (page 12-20), grouped by base writing pattern. 'Handwriting Patter' (see Appendix 4) is to be used to provide a multisensory reminder on how to form specific letters correctly and appropriately. This will be continued across KS1 teaching also (and beyond where necessary)</p> <p>T5+6: Emphasis upon appropriate pencil grip, ie dynamic tripod grip along with continued practice of correct letter formation (see T3+4) and sitting and paper position</p>
Year 1	<p><i>Throughout this Year Group there must be a strong focus upon correct sitting and paper position along with frequent encouragement of use of the dynamic tripod <u>pencil grip</u> (use of moulded grip guides to support this)</i></p> <p>T1+2: Review HW patterns of Letter Families, using plain paged books and utilising <i>Handwriting Patter</i> (see Appendix 4) where appropriate.</p> <p>T3+4: Introduction of use of handwriting, black/red lineguide books for guidance in correct proportion</p> <p>T5+6: Cursive Introduction - Move onto teaching the 'joins' between letters (see Morrells p50-58) by starting to use some of the diagonal an horizontal strokes needed to join letters, when adjacent to one another...also including the 'break letters' (p59 – Morrells) ALSO</p>

	<p>-have a specific focus upon uppercase letters and how these DO NOT join onto other letters in a word.</p> <p>-use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters</p>
Year 2	<p>Continue with cursive introduction teaching:</p> <p>- the 'joins' between letters (see Morrells p50-58) by starting to use some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters, when adjacent to one another...also including the 'break letters' (p59 – Morrells)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>-have a specific focus upon uppercase letters and how these DO NOT join onto other letters in a word.</p> <p>-use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters</p>
Year 3+4	<p>Cursive Rehearsal</p> <p>-use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined.</p> <p>-increase legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, eg. By ensuring 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 merge with writing above and below.</p> <p>Pupils should be using joined HW throughout their independent writing. HW should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say.</p> <p>Increase of writing stamina</p> <p>Joined HW should be the norm; pupils should be able to use it fast enough to keep pace with what they want to say.</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>Year 4's should start using blue ink handwriting pens once their legibility, spacing and regularity of letter formation is well established.</p>
Year 5+6	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed as they:</p> <p>-choose 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</p> <p>-choose the writing implement that is best suited for a task, eg. Quick notes, letters etc.</p>

<p>Pupils should continue to practise HW and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say.</p> <p>They should be clear about what standard of HW is appropriate for a particular task, eg. Quick notes or final copy etc. Also, they should know that an un-joined style can be appropriate for some tasks, eg. Labels; email address; algebra etc.</p>
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Important Note:

Although these progressions (see above) are listed in order of year group, it is extremely important to adjust expectations to meet the developmental stages of each child. This may mean moving expectations back to work with previous year group's teaching, according to how each child responds to the current teaching. However, there should be a level of expectation, that progression is made following the presented sequence of progression that moves through the year group recommendations.

Assessment of Progress:

Across all Key Stages, look for whether...

- the HW is legible
- the letters are correctly shaped and proportioned
- there are appropriate spaces between letters, words and lines

From end of Y2 Onwards:

- the joins are made correctly
- the punctuation is the correct size in relation to the text
- the writer writes with a good pace
- titles use capital letters correctly, ie. only the first letter of each word is uppercase and the rest of the word is in lower case – barring determiners and conjunctions.
- all written work starts from the margin
- any mistakes are either rubbed out neatly or crossed out with a neat line

-date and title at start of any piece of work should be underlined in pencil, using a ruler

Note: see Morrells, p11 for optional *Whole Class Assessment chart for Handwriting* (**Appendix 5**)

Yearly Assessment of Handwriting:

At the end of each year, each child will be expected to produce 2 half page examples of their handwriting: 1 copied + 1 free writing. These will be annotated with 'ways forward' indicated by the class teacher, following the 'Assessment of Progress' guidance above. To be stored in an ongoing handwriting progress folder for each child, which will pass on with the child as they progress through the year groups.

Correcting Handwriting Problems:

See Morrells, page 10 for suggestions of how to address common difficulties children can display with their handwriting.

Display:

Where possible, lesson slides, labels and displays within the classroom should reflect the style of letter formation currently being learnt by those children. Displays around the school should contain appropriate titles which are capitalised with uppercase letters at the start of each word, but lowercase lettering in the rest of the word – barring determiners and conjunctions ie. *The Days of the Week* rather than THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Suggested Activities for Gross + Fine Motor Skill Development

Appendix 2: *Dough Disco* activities

Appendix 3: Handwriting Warm-up exercises

Appendix 4: 'Handwriting Patter'

Appendix 5: Optional Whole Class Assessment Chart for Handwriting (Morrells p11)

Appendix 6: Examples of Handwriting Print Forms

Appendix 1

Suggested Activities for Gross and Fine Motor Skill Development

Activities to promote gross motor control	Activities to promote fine motor control
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dancing – wake and shake• Hula hoops• Bats & balls• Bouncing & catching balls• Write Dance• Crawling through tunnels, netting• Bikes, scooters• Activities on the floor eg. cars / trains• Digging in trays and in garden areas• Trampolining• Walking using stilts/walking cups• Climbing• Catching & throwing balls• Swimming• Bubble wands• Tennis ball in tights and bats (a cheap version of swingball)• Pom poms• Making marks with large sweeping brushes/mops• Sweeping the floor• Windscreen wiper• Whisks and soap suds• Marigold gloves with holes in the fingers filled with paint/water to make marks.• Sky writing with light sabres/swords to inspire boys must be led by adults initially.• Washing trikes / bikes with big circular movements using large sponges.• Large decorator brushes, pots of water, painting the outside fence/wall• Parachute games• Music & movement with ribbons/scarves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooking• Wood work• Write Dance• Zipping up coats, fastening buttons/buckles• Using tweezers/chopsticks• Puzzles• Opening and tightening lids on bottles/jars• Threading beads/sewing cards/buttons/pasta• Pouring into containers of varying sizes• Screwing nuts and bolts• Pegs on a washing line• Pegs & boards• Cutting and sticking activities• Playdough• Finger exercises• Tying laces• Small construction• Tap-a-shape• Spinning tops• Disc shooters• Wind up clocks• Wrap presents• Fastening mark making with paper fasteners or paper clips• Finger painting• Using a mouse on the computer• Keys in padlocks• Scrunching paper• Operating equipment such as hole punchers, tape dispensers, staplers etc.• Planting• Sorting seeds/pulses with fingers or tweezers• Stampers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale construction – crates, bricks, boxes etc. • Chunky chalk activities • Sand & water play using larger objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer keyboard/CD player • Mazes, dot to dots • Spaghetti hidden in soil • Finger rhymes/songs • Cooking activities • Clay & matchsticks • Sand & water using smaller objects
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Appendix 2 – Dough Disco Exercises

(we are unable to publish this due to copyright constraints – please go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnpLLg6l6Nk> - for further reference)

Appendix 3

Handwriting Warm-up Exercises

Before starting to work on letter formation, joins or even the pre-handwriting patterns it is a good idea to help focus a child's body on the activity that it is about to be performed in a fun and relaxed way.

The exercises only take a couple of minutes to do. Not only can they be done at the beginning of the session but throughout and at the end to help relax muscles and release tension that may build up over the session. Tense muscles can make handwriting activities difficult and tiring for a child.

There are five areas to support the body with handwriting which are covered in the following warm up exercises.

Try to do the exercises before starting handwriting. During or after a handwriting task, and depending on the area of the body which a child may say is aching or tired, repeat the appropriate exercise. For instance, if they say their shoulders or neck are aching repeat the 'Hand Pushes' exercise from the Shoulder Stability section.

Remember tense muscles can make handwriting hard work and will tire a child more quickly.



- Shoulder stability and strength

When we talk about the shoulder, we are actually referring to the shoulder girdle a number of bones, ligaments, muscles and tendons that work together to support arm strength and give the full range of arm movements.

EXERCISE FOR..

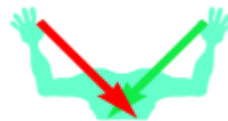
Shoulder stability

Hand Pushes

Place your palms together, with elbows out and forearms held horizontally.

Now push your hands together as hard as you can and hold for 5 seconds - you should feel all the muscles around your shoulder girdle contract.

Repeat a few times.



- Crossing the mid-line

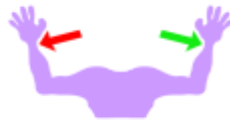
To make handwriting comfortable the writing arm has to be able to cross the vertical central line of the body (crossing the mid-line). It is a key skill that enables us to write comfortably with the paper positioned appropriately and to sit at a desk correctly.

EXERCISE FOR...

Crossing the mid-line

Lazy 8

Hold your right arm straight out in front of you. Keeping your arm straight trace a large "lazy eight" (a figure of 8 on its side) 5 - 8 times in the air, so that the drawing hand crosses the middle of the body. Repeat with the other arm. Track your hand with your eyes while keeping your head still.



- Wrist strength and flexibility

Having the full, pain free, range of wrist movements and the strength to hold the correct, slightly extended, position for handwriting is important. In this position the tendons, which run over the wrist bones, can work the finger muscles more easily giving better finger control for handwriting.

EXERCISE FOR...

Wrist strength

Wrist Circles

Extending your arms straight out in front of you with your palms facing down. Make a fist with your fingers wrapped around your thumb. Rotate your wrists clockwise and then counter-clockwise six times in each direction.



- Thumb and finger strength and dexterity

Thumb and finger strength are important for the coordinated movements and strengths required to hold and maintain an efficient pencil grip as well as to move the pencil effectively for handwriting and drawing.

EXERCISE FOR...

Thumb and finger strength

Circles

Hands held relaxed out in front of you start with the left hand first. Touch your thumb to your first fingertip and make a circle and then stretch your thumb out to the side. Repeat for each finger and then do it with the right hand. Repeat 2 - 3 times.



- Whole hand strength and dexterity

Whole hand dexterity and strength is important for in-hand manipulation, grip and grip release skills as well as being able to judge the appropriate amount of pressure required to hold and release items safely, all required for handwriting.

EXERCISE FOR...

Whole hand

Rolling Pencil

Start with the pencil held across all the fingertips of one hand. Use your thumb to roll the pencil into your palm and back to your fingertips. Repeat 2 - 3 times then try the other hand.

Appendix 4 – Handwriting ‘Patter’ for multisensory retention of handwriting formations

l	Go down the road
t	Go down the road and across the bridge
i	Go down the path and jump
h	Go down the road and bounce over the tunnel
n	Go down the path and bounce over the tunnel
m	Go down the path and bounce and bounce again
b	Go down the road and up the path and round the pond
p	Go down the road, up to the top and round the pond
u	Go under the tunnel, up the path and down again
y	Go under the tunnel, up the path, straight down and round the bend
j	Go down the road, round the bend and jump
k	Go down the road, up the path, round the rock and kick!
r	Go down and up the path and over the hill
c	Go round the cave
a	Go round the cave and shut the door
d	Go round the cave, up the road and down again
g	Go round the cave, shut the door and round the bend
q	Go round the cave, shut the door, down the road and kick
o	Go round the cave and sit on top
s	Slide down the snake
f	Go over the hill, down the road, round the bend and across the bridge

Appendix 6 - Examples of Handwriting Print Forms

Date: _____

First Letters

Write over the letters below. Start at the large dot and follow the arrow and direction of the lines.

Cc Oo
Aa Gg
Qq Dd

12 Teacher's Book

Date: _____

Second Letters

Write over the letters below. Start at the large dot and follow the arrow and direction of the lines.

Ii
Ll Tt
Kk Jj

Date: _____

Third Letters

Write over the letters below. Start at the large dot and follow the arrow and direction of the lines.

Vv
Ww Uu
Yy Ff

Date: _____

Fourth Letters

Write over the letters below. Start at the large dot and follow the arrow and direction of the lines.

Rr
Nn Mm
Hh Pp

18 Teacher's Book

Date: _____

Fifth Letters

Write over the letters below. Start at the large dot and follow the arrow and direction of the lines.

Bb
Ee Ss
Xx Zz