

## **Eastfield Handwriting Policy**

### **Overview**

At Eastfield Primary School we believe handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum therefore handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically. We strongly believe pre-cursive and cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns and supports pupils to write with ease, speed and legibility.

### **Aims**

- To encourage children to develop a sense of pride in their work, enabling them to present work neatly for an audience.
- To teach print initially in EYFS in line with the DfE, then pre-cursive script, forming letter shapes with 'leads in and out', and finally cursive script.
- To teach cursive handwriting to our children.
- To support pupils to eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking in an automatic style response. This releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas i.e. spelling, syntax, grammar, style and content. Through purposeful, guided practice, pupils will foster a comfortable and legible handwriting style.
- To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency by;
  - Having the correct pencil grip.
  - Sitting correctly in the seat.
  - Knowing that all lower-case letters start from the line when using cursive.
  - Forming all letters correctly.
  - Knowing the size and orientation of letters, including ascenders and descenders travelling in the correct direction.

**See Appendix 1 for further details of handwriting letter styles.**

### **EYFS**

#### **Teaching sequence for pre-writing**

- Hand and finger strength
- Seating position
- Pencil Grip
- Mark making
- Tracing
- Patterns
- Over teacher's writing (highlighter)
- Under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)
- Independence
- For the order of teaching letters and joins see Appendix 3 and 4 and the handwriting progression map

**See Appendix 2 for further details on seating and grip.**

### **Techniques for teaching letter formation:**

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate how to form letters in the correct style and the correct size
- Talk through the process
- Encourage children to verbalise the process
- Children form letters in the air
- Finger trace over tactile letters
- Write over highlighter pen
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard/ marker on whiteboard

### **EYFS**

During the autumn term, pupils will initially focus on mark making and developing fine motor skills, manipulative skills and hand-eye coordination through a range of activities, such as 'Dough Disco' and 'Flippy Flappy', before being introduced to letter formation through a series of letter families. Pupils' will have practised all letters and digits by the end of the school year, using handwriting grid paper that is a height appropriate to individual needs. This will enhance their muscle memory and most pupils will be able to form the majority of the letters correctly by the end of the year. However, some pupils will require further consolidation within Year 1. Children will also learn how to form the letter shapes as they learn the letter sounds in phonic work. In phonics lessons, pupils will be taught to print the letters without lead-in strokes following the Little Wandle print font.

Teachers should model neat printing, often verbally explaining how they are forming letters. The same print font should be used in all marking to show a consistent printed style.

The correct pencil grip will be taught; pupils will be offered a variety of tools such as large triangular pencils and pencil grips before they progress onto smaller pencils by the summer term.

Children are taught how to form lower case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place, including position on the line. They will be taught all capital letters briefly in the summer term and additionally will be encouraged to use a capital letter on their own name from spring onwards.

They will also be taught how to form the digits 0-9.

**See appendix 2 for further details on pencil grip.**

It is acknowledged that patterning, drawing and colouring helps establish the feeling of continuous flow and teaches the hands the most frequently used movements. Multi-sensory experiences ensure that the techniques are not only fun to learn, but that the skill is learnt effectively by pupils with a variety of learning styles.

Likely activities include:

- Create patterns using a variety of tools e.g. felt tips, paint, chalk, glitter pens, sticks.
- Go outside and use playground chalks or water from squeeze bottles to create patterns on the ground.
- Develop fine motor control by embellishing the finished patterns with felt tip pens.
- Use a variety of surfaces e.g. white boards, chalk boards, different coloured paper on a horizontal or vertical surface.
- Stimulate touch by using different materials such as textured boards made of velour, carpet, sandpaper.
- Use trays containing sand, salt, shaving foam to practise patterns.
- Encourage motor memory by tracing in the air or on other children's backs or in the palms of their hands.
- Develop physical strength and co-ordination by teaching finger rhymes and games.
- Introduce play-dough activities involving pulling, shaping and squeezing.
- Develop confident pencil control through fun activities such as dot to dot, tracing, driving through mazes, drawing and colouring.

## **KS1 – Year 1**

Building on the foundation stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a legible style. This is achieved in Year 1 by continuing to develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip and by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling, phonic work and English lessons. Correct letter orientation, formation and proportion are taught initially in print in the Autumn term and later in the pre-cursive handwriting style. Pupils will be exposed to the pre-cursive font from the beginning of the year to support their transition to using this font in the following two terms.

The letters are practised in the same order and in the same family groups as outlined in appendix 2 and alongside phonic work. Pupils will learn that all lower case letters begin on the line and have a lead out (referred to as a 'flick'). Pupils will use print and then pre-cursive styles in discrete handwriting lessons as appropriate and will be encouraged to use pre-cursive in all writing in books by the summer term.

Teachers should ensure children have an understanding from the outset that letters can be written differently to what they have originally been exposed to, showing children the pre-cursive font and explaining that these letters make the same sounds as their printed counterparts. All phonic work should continue to be read in print, particularly when teaching new sounds in line with the Little Wandle phonics programme.

### *KPI – Handwriting*

- *form all lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (descenders and ascenders are clear).*
- *form capital letters which are correctly sized.*

## **KS1 – Year 2**

Children continue to be taught handwriting regularly and will begin to join letters in discrete handwriting lessons. Language of descenders and ascenders will be reinforced. Handwriting will continue to be taught in discrete lessons, in handwriting books but will be reinforced in all written work. Teachers will specifically model using joins when modelling writing during English lessons and other written work where joins taught in handwriting lessons are being used.

Pupils will use hand-writing books with grids on for discrete handwriting lessons throughout KS1. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words using a cursive style. The majority will be forming some basic joins within all of their written work.

Teachers should model the pre-cursive handwriting style in the autumn term and gradually introduce joins as they are taught in discrete handwriting lessons. For example, when teaching the first join (diagonal joins from letters without ascenders or descenders), teachers should model the use of this join.

### *KPI- Handwriting*

- *form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.*
- *form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another in some of their writing.*
- *form capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower-case letters.*
- *use the diagonal stroke needed to join some letters. (GD)*

## **Key Stage 2 – Year 3 and 4**

Children will have a regular handwriting lesson to continue with focusing on learning to join correctly, with a particular focus on more complex joins listed in the appendix. They will continue to practise joined writing to aid presentation, legibility and the finer points of the joins. This will be demonstrated in handwriting books and linked to spellings. By Year 4 we aim for all pupils to use joined handwriting at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes. We aim for them to develop a clear and fluent style and by the end of Year 4.

Individual pupil mistakes / misconceptions will be addressed during these handwriting sessions as and when required to ensure children are joining accurately. Pupils will be encouraged to use their 'best handwriting' during written pieces in all subjects but particularly in pupils' final drafts in English books.

Teachers should model persistent joined up writing across the curriculum and in marking to demonstrate a consistent approach to legible handwriting, using all joins/strokes highlighted in Appendix 5 and the handwriting progression map, unless specifically required to print.

### *KPI Handwriting*

- *(Y3) use more complex diagonal strokes needed to join letters with ascenders and descenders.*
- *(Y3) be introduced to the horizontal stroke needed to join some letters.*
- *(Y4) use the horizontal stroke needed to join some letters.*
- *(Y4) use more complex diagonal strokes to join letters with ascenders/descenders to other letters with ascenders/descenders.*
- *(Y4) write using joined up writing, following the different strokes taught.*

### **Key Stage 2 – Year 5 and 6**

Children will be encouraged to develop their own style, whilst still maintaining legibility. They will be taught to maintain this legibility when writing at speed. Children will need reminders about joins and any inconsistencies of style should be worked on. Discrete lessons will be taught twice a week and linked with spelling work. Individual pupil mistakes / misconceptions will be addressed during these handwriting sessions as and when required to ensure children are joining accurately. Pupils will be encouraged to use their ‘best handwriting’ during written pieces in all subjects but particularly in pupils’ final drafts in English books.

Pupils will be allowed to use a pen when they have earned their ‘Pen License’ after producing several polished pieces of work and at the teacher’s discretion.

Teachers should model persistent joined up writing across the curriculum and in marking to demonstrate a consistent approach to legible handwriting, using all joins/strokes highlighted in Appendix 5 and the handwriting progression map, unless specifically required to print.

### ***KPI Handwriting***

- *(Y5) increase the legibility, consistency and quality of handwriting.*
- *(Y6) begin to develop own personal style of joined up writing.*
- *(Y6) write using own personal style of joined up writing that is consistent and legible to all readers.*
- *(Y6) maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed.*

### **Teaching Time**

There are daily mark making activities in EYFS and a discreet weekly lesson from the second half of the autumn term onwards. Year 1 – 4 will have discrete handwriting lessons weekly to focus on specific letters or joins within each term. (See Appendix 3 and 4 and the handwriting progression map). Y5-6: Discrete lessons will be taught twice a week and linked with spelling work. Pupils will be encouraged to use their ‘best handwriting’ during written pieces in all subjects but particularly in pupils’ final drafts in English books.

Some pupils who find handwriting difficult will have further intervention.

Discrete teaching requires clearly structured and focused teaching and learning. It involves explanation, demonstration and practice of the skill of handwriting. This skill can then be applied or used in contexts across the curriculum. Discrete teaching can help to prevent poor handwriting by clearly indicating the relationships between letters and the relationship of each letter to the writing base line. In the discrete teaching of handwriting, each lesson should have a clear and simple focus (e.g. the correct formation of a single letter, revision of a group of letters such as those requiring clockwise movements, the introduction of a particular aspect of linking such as hooks, or the practice of linking letters in commonly found patterns). Letters should be taught in letter family groups or be linked to phonics and weekly spellings. This will be demonstrated in handwriting books but then reinforced in literacy books and across other subjects.

### **Left Handers**

We recognise that left-handers have difficulty with handwriting, because the movements required have been developed by right-handers. The natural inclination is to write in an outward direction from the body, which results in left-handers writing mirror wise. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Left-handed pupils should sit away from another pupils' writing hand and to the left of a right-handed child, but not with their left to a wall or an obstruction.
- The left hander needs to be distanced from the paper by sitting in the right-hand half of his or her writing space.
- Left-handed pupils should be encouraged to use a grip, which is higher up the shaft and with the pencil pointing back up in line.
- 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 well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- Left-handed pupils will explore the different pencils to see which best suits their needs. For example, triangular pencils, pencil grips.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal opportunities to reach their full potential in handwriting, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, and ability, or of any physical or sensory disability.

### **Inclusion**

Our pupils are taught challenging age-related content and it is our expectation that the vast majority of our pupils will achieve age-related expectations at the end of each year and key stage.

Class teachers will differentiate the handwriting curriculum to ensure those pupils are able to progress, succeed and close gaps in their handwriting skills.

If a pupil needs additional support in handwriting, the following strategies may be used, with the direction from either the SENDCo or class teacher:

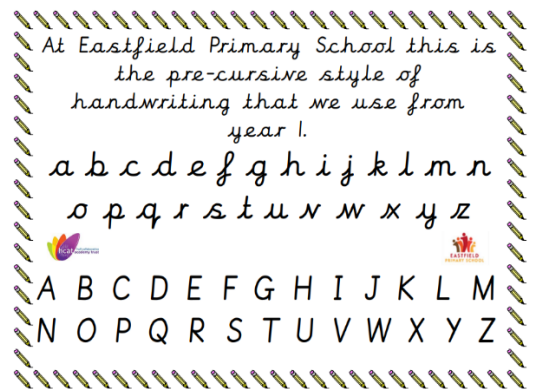
- Adult support.
- Small group handwriting work.
- SEND intervention (if highlighted on a child's graduated response form).

## Appendix 1 – Letter and Number Formations

### Print (EYFS and Y1 Autumn)



### Pre-cursive (Year 1 Spring & Summer)



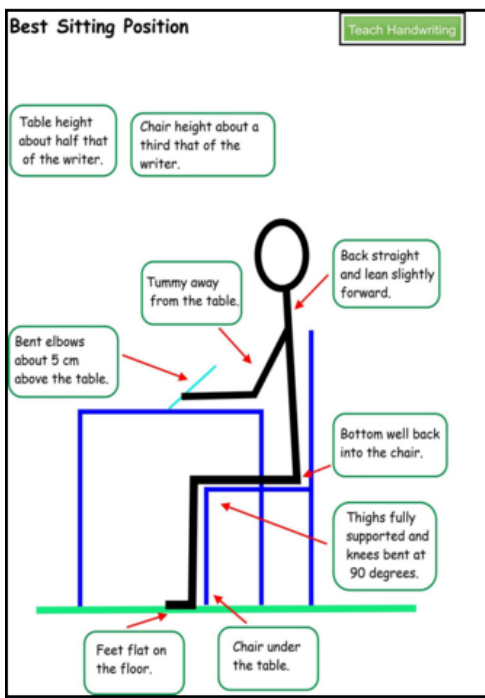
### Cursive (Year 2 - onwards)



**Number formation**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**

**Appendix 2 - Seating/pencil grip**



Grip 1 – Palmer-supinate grasp

Grip 2 – Palmer or digital-pronate grasp





Grip 3 – Four finger and thumb grip



Grip 4 – Static quadruped or tripod grip



### **Appendix 3 – Sequence of Teaching**

#### Four Handwriting Families – first in print, then pre-cursive

Curly Caterpillar Letters: c, a, o, d, g, q, e, s

Ladder Letters: l, i, t, u

One-Armed Robot Letters: b, n, h, m, k, p, r

Zigzag Monster Letters: v, w, x, z

More complex letters from the 4 families: f, j, y

#### Digits 0-9

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

#### Capital Letters

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

#### Appendix 4: Joining letters

- **First join: Diagonal join.**
  - Diagonal join *from* and *to* letters without ascenders or descenders.
  - Diagonal join *to* letters with ascenders and descenders.
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with ascenders.
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with descenders.(e.g. ai, it, le, qu)
- **Second join: Horizontal join.**  
(e.g. oo, ra, vi, wn)
- **Third join: Ascenders/descenders *to* ascenders/descenders.**
  - Diagonal join *from* letters with ascenders/descenders *to* letters with ascenders/descenders.
  - Horizontal join *from* letters with ascenders/descenders *to* letters with ascenders/descenders.(e.g. lb, pl, ob, rt)
- **Fourth join: Join *to* letters with hooks, lines and loops.**  
(e.g. ju, fa, ge, wh, yo)