

# 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.

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|---------------------|------------|
| Reviewed:           | March 2025 |
| Next Review:        | March 2026 |
| Person Responsible: | Rob Neary  |

## **Aims:**

We aim to teach children to write using a fluent, efficient and legible style of handwriting.

Children should use an appropriate pencil/pen grip for their stage of development.

Children should understand the purpose of handwriting and adapt their writing for different audiences/purposes.

Children will, in time, develop automaticity in writing so that they can focus on the composition of their work.

## **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.

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.

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

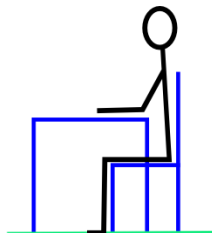
## **Handwriting principles:**

Handwriting should be taught explicitly, in short, frequent sessions. It should be modelled by the teacher, then supervised. High expectations of handwriting are needed.

*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:

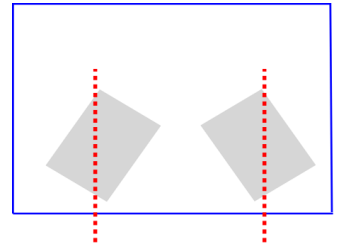
- **Gross and fine motor skills:** activities to develop gross and fine motor skills are essential to the development of good handwriting.
- **Posture:** children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.



- **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 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 make an appropriate choice of writing implement.
- **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 may be used to support children as appropriate. Supports, including a range

of line guides will be used to support children who struggle with letter-sizing, orientation or position.

### **Programme of study for Handwriting**

Petworth Primary follows the progression outlined in the National Curriculum as outlined below. Children will be taught cursive letter formation **without** lead-in strokes from reception. In reception and year one, the focus will be primarily on formation, orientation and sizing of letters. Year 2 will introduce joins between some letter groups and this will be built-upon and/or practised throughout primary school.

#### **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 handwriting 'families' (ie 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 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 reflects the size of the letters

#### **Year 3 – 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 un-joined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting, [for example, by ensuring that the down-strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

#### **Year 5-6 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

## 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.

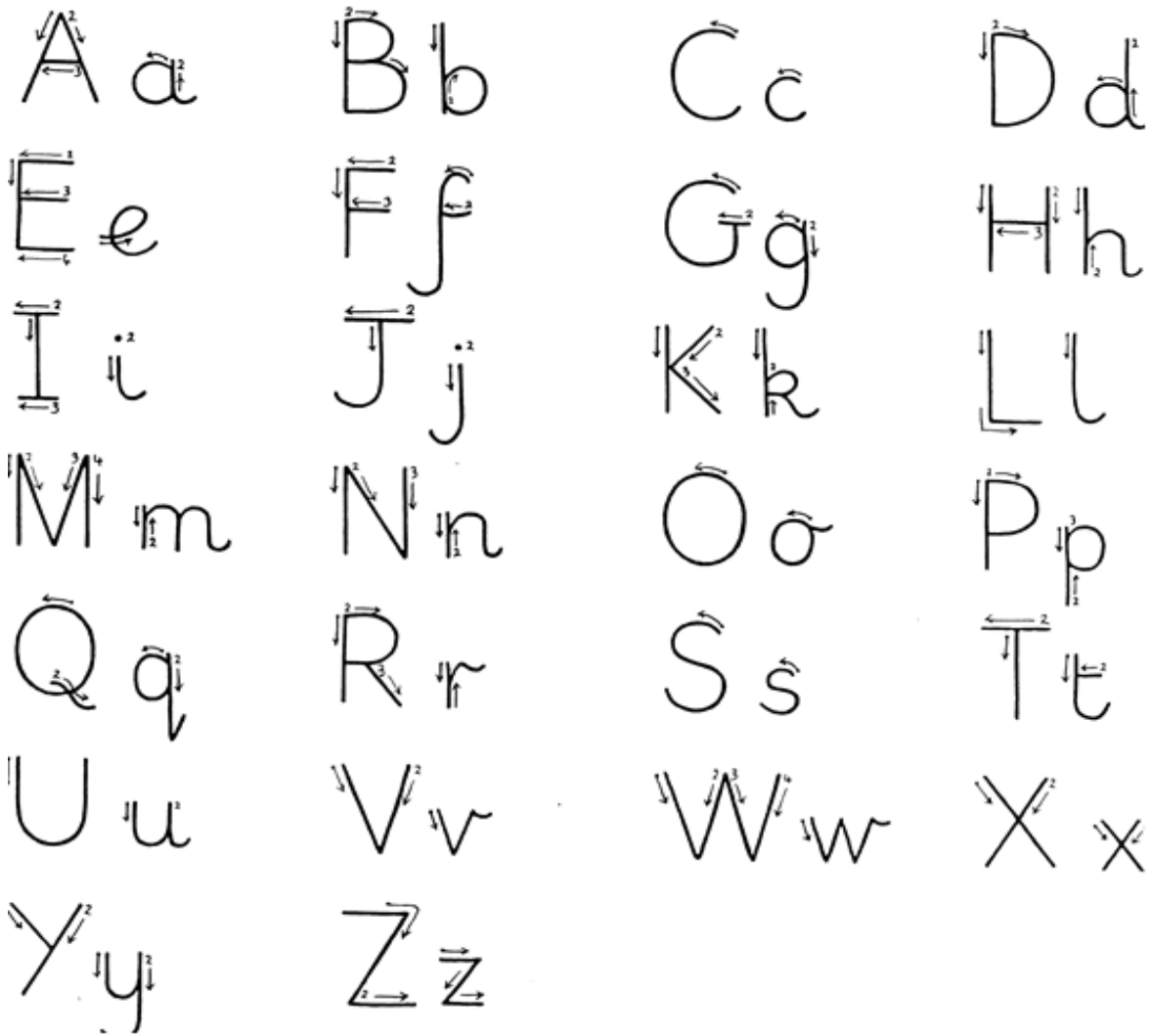
Initially the fingers will be held rigidly but, as your child improves their control of the finger muscles, the fingers will start to move the pencil.

#### Note:

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

### Letter Formation

c a d g q e s f o

l i t j y u

r b n h m k p

v w x z