



Southfields Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Date agreed: September 2023
Review Date: September 2025

This policy, having been presented to, and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governors, will be distributed to:

- All teaching staff
- School governors

A copy of the policy will also be available in:

- The Staffroom
- The Head's office
- School web site

This will ensure that the policy is readily available to visiting teachers, support staff and parents.

Southfields Primary is totally committed to social justice and improving life chances for potentially vulnerable children. It is dedicated to sharing its work and findings beyond the school to improve outcomes for as many children as it can reach and has a particular specialism in Speech and Language development.

1. Aims

- 1 To have high expectations of the children of Southfields Primary School in terms of presentation and style of writing.
- 2 To write legibly in both joined and printed styles with increasing fluency and speed by:
 - Having a correct pencil grip
 - Knowing that all letters start from the top, except d and e which start in the middle
 - Forming all letters correctly
 - To be able to use line guides accurately when copying up work neatly by knowing the size and orientation of letters.

2. National Curriculum expectations for handwriting.

Year One

- 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) i.e letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

The formation of all capital letters and numbers should be taught in Year 1.

Letter formation: Capital letters

Use this document to ensure correct letter formation when you are teaching children to form capital letters.

Letter	Capital letter formation phrase
A	From the top, diagonally down to the left, up to the top, diagonally down to the right. Lift up and across.
B	From the top, down, back to the top. Round to the middle, round to the bottom.
C	From the top, curl around to the left to sit on the line.
D	From the top, down, back to the top. Curve right, down to the bottom.
E	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle. Lift up and across the bottom line.
F	From the top, down, back to the top. Across, back. Lift up and across the middle.
G	From the top, curl around to the line, carry on up, then straight down. Lift up and across.
H	From the top and down. Space. From the top and down. Lift up and join the lines across the middle.
I	From the top to the bottom and stop.
J	From the top, all the way down, then short curl to the left.
K	From the top, down, up to the middle. Diagonally up, back and diagonally down to the line.
L	From the top, down and across the line.
M	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, diagonally up. Straight down to the line.
N	From the top, down, back to the top. Diagonally down, then straight up to the top.
O	From the top – all around the o.
P	From the top, down then back up. Curve right to halfway down.
Q	From the top – all around the o. Lift off. Short line diagonally down.
R	From the top, down, then back up. Curve right to halfway down. Diagonally down to the line.
S	From the top, under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.
T	From the top, down and stop. Lift up and from the left, make a line across the top.
U	From the top, down and curve right, then straight up to the top.
V	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, then diagonally up to the top.
W	From the top diagonally right to the bottom, diagonally up to the top, diagonally down to the line, then diagonally up again.
X	From the top, diagonally right to the bottom. Space. Start at the top, then diagonally left to the bottom.
Y	From the top diagonally right to the middle. Space. From the top diagonally left to the middle. Straight down to the bottom.
Z	From the top go across, diagonally down to the left and across the bottom.

Year Two

- 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.
- The following joins will be taught:
 - practising joining to the letter s
 - practising joining from the letter r
 - practising joining to and from the letter a
 - practising joining from the letter e
 - practising joining from the letter o
 - practising joining to the letter y
 - practising joining to the letter a
 - practising joining from the letter o
 - practising joining to the letter r
 - practising the horizontal join to the letter e
 - practising the horizontal join to the letter u
 - practising joining to ascenders

Years Three and Four

- 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, e.g. by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant.
- In addition, that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch.

Years Five and Six

- To write legibly, fluently and with increased speed by:
- Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether to join specific letters.
- Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.

3. Time allocated for Handwriting

- Handwriting should be taught to the children at least 3 times per week. Handwriting is best taught as a whole class lesson with children being able to see the Interactive Whiteboard/ whiteboard.
- Children who find handwriting difficult should be targeted for daily intervention. Morning work is the ideal for time for children to practise.
- Frequent practice and repetition is at the heart of Nelson Handwriting.

- Handwriting will be taught alongside 'DEW' (Daily Exercise Writing), an activity which will happen for 5 minutes every morning. This entails children practising sentence writing.

4. Model used

In Year 1 and EYFS letter formation is taught in line with the Little Wandle scheme. There are corresponding rhymes and sounds that connect with the formation of each letter, starting in Term 1 of Year R.

These documents are found here, under Teaching Handwriting outside the Phonics Lesson

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/my-letters-and-sounds/weekly-reading-and-phonics/>

Year 1 will consolidate individual letter formation, by writing these as digraphs, trigraphs and words, following the Little Wandle teaching sequence.

By Year 1, most children should be secure forming individual letters. However, some may still need small group support.

From Year 2 (from Spring 1) to Year 6, Southfields Primary School's handwriting policy and practice is based on the revised 2016 Nelson Handwriting Scheme with the following letter formation. We expect handwriting to be upright throughout the school. We do not join 'looped' letters.

Lower case letters

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Capitals

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

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Letter Families - These are letters that are formed in similar ways:

Set 1

c a o d g q s f e

Set 2

l t u j y

Set 3

r n m h k b p

Set 4

V W X Z

The Four Joins

(These groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters)

- a. to letters without ascenders
- b. to letters with ascenders
- c. horizontal joins
- d. horizontal joins to letters with ascenders

The joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

Group 1

a c d e h l k l m n s t u (13 letters with exit flicks plus s)

Group 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y (19 letters which start at the top of the x height)

Group 3

b f h k l t (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender)

Group 4

f o r v w (6 letters which start at the top of the ascender)

The break letters

b g j p q x y z (8 letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.)

Please note in the nelson scheme joins are made to and from an s.

See appendix 2 for examples of the break letters

5. Where and how is handwriting practised?

As motor skills increase then the size of writing should decrease. As the children move through the school the size of the lines in exercise books will decrease. From Year 1 to Year 6 all children will practise their letters in handwriting books with line guides that reflect the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

Handwriting can also be practised and used for a specific purpose, e.g. copying up a special piece of work to put on display. In this case the children will write on A4 paper which is attached to line guides as set out at the back of the Nelson handwriting Resources and Assessment books for each year group

We currently have an online subscription to Nelson Handwriting which will support the teacher in delivering handwriting lessons.

EYFS and Year 1

Children will practice their handwriting on whiteboards and handwriting books, with additional practise of letter formation during Little Wandle Phonics sessions.

Year 4 upwards

- In Year 4 if a child joins fluently, their handwriting is consistent and upright, then they will be awarded a pen.
- In line with the STEPs programme, there will not be licences issued for pens.
- Joining letters is introduced midway in year one when children can form and write letters correctly.
- The joins are split into 4 groups as outlined on Pg. 12 and 13 of the Teacher's Book 2. Please read for reference.
- As joined handwriting is a movement skill, it is essential for teachers to provide demonstrations.
- Observe individuals as they practise.
- Talk to the children about the process using correct vocabulary. Practise!

6. Techniques for teaching letter formation

- Model good handwriting all the time
- Demonstrate
- 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 (or dotted letters)
- Draw round templates
- Write in sand with finger or stick
- Write with chalk on chalkboard
- Wax resist letters

- Form letters with pegs on pegboard
- Form letters with beads in plasticine
- Finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you
- Handwriting art patterns (Pie Corbett)

6.1 Getting ready to write

Seating and posture:

- Chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- The table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- Encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- The height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- Tables should be free of clutter
- Left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

See Appendix 1 for warm up exercises.

6.2 Pencil grip

- Children should write with a pencil (or pen as soon as a neat cursive script has been developed) with a rounded nib.
- Pencils should be reasonably sharp.
- A tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil
- Rooms should be well lit

For right handers

- Hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point The paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- Use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- Hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- Hold about 3cm from the tip
- The hand should be kept below the writing line
- The paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 -30°
- Use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right handed child is NOT seated on the left hand side of a left handed child as their elbows will collide!

Please refer to Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book p10 for further information

7. Assessment

Phase leaders in team meetings and senior leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?
- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with the Level Descriptors in the National Curriculum?

7.1 Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. Teachers also need to monitor and mark whole pieces of writing. The following should be considered:

- Is the posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?
- Is the pupil's handwriting development in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum.

8. Links to spelling

Linking handwriting with spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing the visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Two spelling strategies that link particularly well to handwriting are:
Look – Say – Cover – Write – Check

The child:

- Looks at the word carefully
- Says the word
- Covers the word so that it can't be seen
- writes the whole word from memory
- Checks the word is written correctly
- If not, repeat

or

- Spelling steps
 - School
 - s
 - sc
 - sch
 - scho
 - schoo
 - school

9. Sequence of Teaching which links to phonics

We follow the Little Wandle teaching sequence for letter formation, starting in Term 1 of Year R.

These documents are found here, under Teaching Handwriting outside the Phonics Lesson: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/my-letters-and-sounds/weekly-reading-and-phonics/>

Year 1

Year 1 will consolidate individual letter formation, by writing these as digraphs, trigraphs and words, following the Little Wandle teaching sequence.

By Year 1, most children should be secure forming individual letters. However, some may still need small group support.

The formation of all capital letters and numbers should be taught in Year 1

Year Two Sequence of Teaching

- ai ay ey (practising joining to the top)
- ee ea ey (practising the join from the letter e)
- ie ide igh (practising joining to the letter i)
- oa ow oe (practising the horizontal join)
- oo ue ew (practising the size and height of letters) · oi ou oy (practising the join from the letter o)
- Practising capital letters
- ea ear ead (practising the join to the letter a)
- er ir ur (practising the join to the letter r)
- ou out ow (practising the horizontal join)
- or aw au (practising the small letters)
- ar air are (practising the join to the letter r)
- al all alk (practising joining to ascenders)
- ot on oe (practising the join from the letter o)

Practising printing

- ice ace cel (practising the join to and from the letter c)
- age dge nge gen (practising writing the letter g)
- ie el al il (practising the diagonal join)
- sh as es

- ky hy ly (practising the join to the letter y)
- ting ring king practising the join to the letter g)
- kn mb wr wh (revision of the 4 joins)
- war wan wap (practising the join from the letter w)
- ily ely kly (correct size and height)
- I'm I'll he's she's (punctuation)
- Cian sion tion (practising the join to and from the letter i)
- Less ness (practising the join to and from the letter s)
- er ier est iest (practising the join from the letter e)

Year Three Sequence of Teaching

- sp spr pri pru (forming descenders accurately)
- al all at (forming ascenders accurately)
- ci cir cer cen (diagonal join)
- mb imb umb amb (diagonal join)
- ale dle ele tle (join to and from the letter l)
- ly illy iky iny (join to and from the letter y)
- es ies ses eys (letter s)
- ie in il ill (joining from the letter i)
- ed ned hed ked (spacing between letters)

Capital letters

- ti tio cti ati (correct height)
- ewe v ex (spacing)
- ii ll tt rr nn mm cc o odd ss ff ee (forming double letters) · he we re (practising joining to the letter e)
- ick uck ack (practising joining to the letter k)
- ch che cho cha chi (practising the second join)
- ey ei eigh (practising joining from the letter e)
- ous mous jous (horizontal join)
- ap ar an (practising joining from the letter a)

Punctuation

- ly ky ny (practising joining to the letter y)
- ure sure ture (practising joining to and from the letter r) · who wha whe (practising joining from the letter w) · Numbers
- wra wri kni (silent letters)
- fte fir fin (practising joining from the letter f)

Year Four Sequence of Teaching

- eat eac ead (practising joining to and from the letter e) ask asp ast (practising joining to the letter s)
- ried ries rief (correct size)
- tt ll rr ee (double letters)
- sce sca sci (consistency of spacing)
- un unn inn imm (diagonal join)

- rep rem rea reo (horizontal join)
- ly ily ity ify (practising joining to the letter y)

Speedwriting

- size and height of letters
- spacing within words
- owf owb owm owd (practising joining to and from the letter w)
- circumnavigate, circumference (practising joining from the letter m)
- wan wax was wav (practising joining to and from the letter w)
- ship ment ness less (diagonal joining line)
- lig rig tig (practising joining from the letter i)
- al all alt afl (diagonal join to ascenders)
- ff lfs lfe ife (practising joining to and from the letter f)
- rec red ved ves (practising joining to and from the letter e)

Punctuation

- Printing for captions
- live tive (practising joining to and from the letter v)
- bl pl gl (break letters)
- Drafting and editing

Year Five Sequence of Teaching

- are stare share (practising joining to and from the letter r)
- Consistency in height and sizing
- ire fire shire (developing fluency)
- The letter t and size
- The letter s
- Practising break letters
- Practising writing a play script
- Printing
- Forming ascenders correctly
- Presentation
- Correct formation of the letter k
- Correct formation of the letter y
- Speed and fluency
- Punctuation
- Forming small letters correctly
- Joining to the letter f
- Revising difficult joins

Year Six Sequence of Teaching

- Developing the fluency of their handwriting, revising the four joins, sizing and spacing of letters and words.
- Forming and joining ascenders
- Forming and joining descenders
- Forming and joining the letter t

- Practising joining to and from the letter o
- Punctuation
- Speed and legibility
- Forming and joining to the letter r
- Forming and joining double letters

10. Resources

- Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Books and Resources and Assessment books for Year 2 onwards
- Handwriting books
- Line guides to use on the IWB
- line guides for each year group, found at the back of the Resources and Assessment books. The expectation is that these are laminated and a set is kept in each classroom.

11. Presentation of Children's work in at Southfields Primary

We expect there to be high quality pieces of children's work up on display in the classroom. Ideally, these should be copied up pieces of work rather than photocopies of work from a children's book. These pieces could be illustrated. These pieces of work should not contain crossings out. Children could use handwriting patterns as borders.

We also expect that teachers will model handwriting in their own presentation when marking or writing the children's names on their exercise books.

We have bought in the Nelson font software and will begin to use this in school.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be evaluated annually with responses from teachers, teaching assistants and the children being taken into consideration.

Appendix 1

Here's a warm up that's great for posture and a positive attitude. Use it before cursive handwriting lessons and during the day. It's refreshing and can be done even in a crowded class. If it's manageable, let your students jump in place first.

APPENDIX 1



Push palms



Pull hands



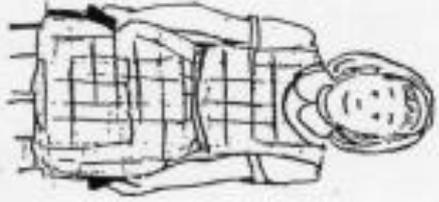
Hug yourself tightly



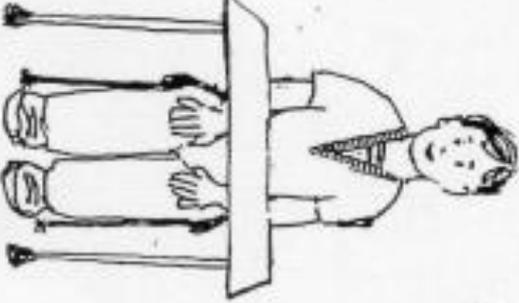
Reach high, one hand, then other
Reach - make circles in the air



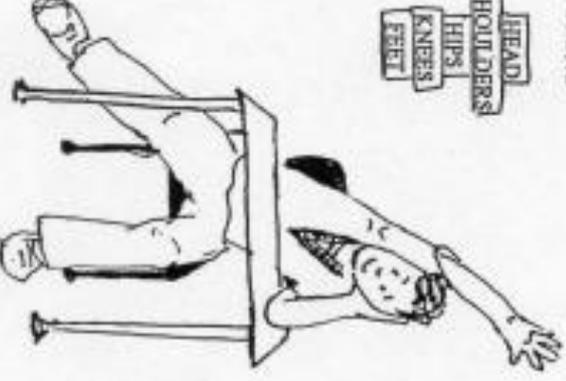
★ BLOCKS



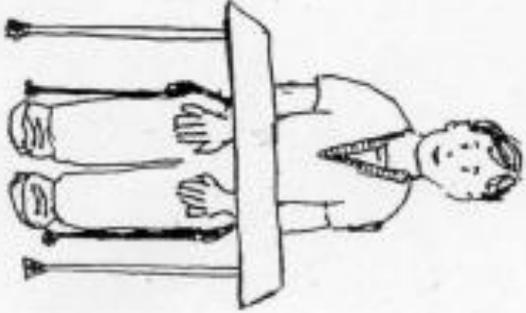
Pull up on chair



Stack your blocks



Assume an outrageous posture



Stack your blocks again!

Appendix 2

Examples of the joins for each Year Group using the Nelson Handwriting Scheme

aaa bbb ccc ddd eee fff ggg

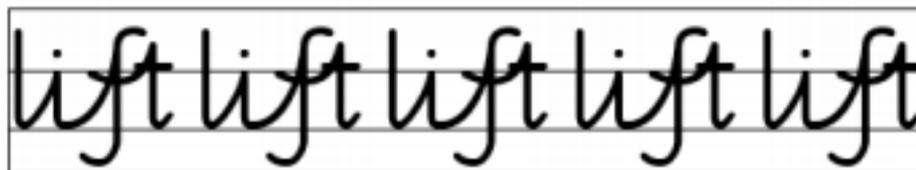
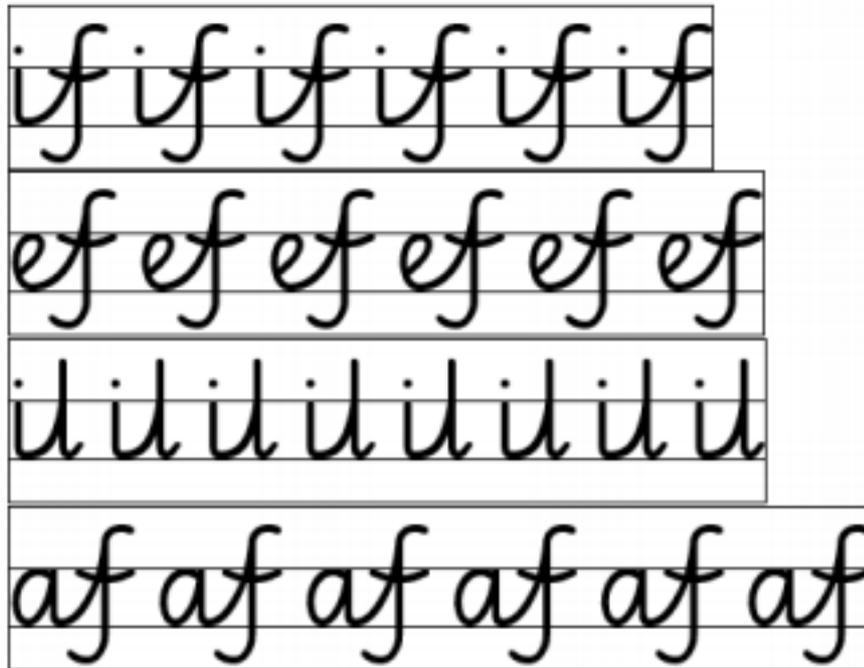
hhh iii jjj kkk lll mmm nnn

ooo ppp qqq rrr sss ttt uuu

vvv www xxx yyy zzz

Samples of handwriting from each year group

Year One



Year Two

Blow me push me
On my windy way
whirling, twirling
It's just another day!

Year Three

I eat my corn with honey
I've done it all my life.
It makes the corn taste funny.
But I've done it all my life

A man and a mouse lived on the moon,
In a mansion made from cheese,
Every day at a minute to noon,
The man would murmur, "Please,
Cut me a slice of cheese from the wall
And a piece from the chimney too,
There's some lovely Edam in the hall,
There's enough for me and you."
And the man and the mouse would munch,
As their house became their lunch.

Year Five

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead,
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand:
“If this were only cleared away,”
They said, “it would be grand!”

Year Six

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogroves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”