

# Holy Family's Handwriting Policy

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## Rationale

Handwriting is a fundamental skill that supports literacy, cognitive development, and academic success. It remains essential even in a digital age, as fluent handwriting:

- Develops fine motor skills and executive function.
- Enhances memory, spelling, and composition.
- Enables children to write quickly and legibly for assessments.

This policy aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), National Curriculum, and the Writing Framework 2025, ensuring a clearly sequenced progression from Reception onwards.

## Policy Aims

- Provide consistent, high-quality handwriting teaching across all year groups.
- Ensure all pupils develop legible, fluent, and efficient handwriting.
- Maintain high standards of written presentation across the curriculum.

## Teaching Progression

### Reception

- Focus: correct pencil grip, posture, letter formation in families, capital letters. (See appendix for resources)
- Lessons: four short sessions (15 mins) weekly.
- Emphasis on gross and fine motor development, pattern practice, and "Ready to write" routines. (See appendix 2 for 'Ready to write' rhyme)

### Year 1

- Consolidate letter formation, introduce sizing and spacing, digits 0–9.
- Lessons: 10–15 mins, four times weekly, linked to phonics.
- Teach letter families explicitly.

### Year 2

- Correct sizing and spacing, introduce joins, maintain fluency.
- Lessons: 10–15 mins, four times weekly, linked to spelling patterns.

### Key Stage 2

- Develop fluent, joined handwriting and personal style.

### Teacher Approach

Handwriting is taught daily in discrete sessions, beginning in Reception alongside phonics. Each session should start with warm-up routines and posture checks before writing. (See appendix 2 and 4)

What follows is direct, explicit modelling. This could be done on flip chart, via the visualizer or using a digital tool such as: [Handwriting Repeater](#)

This modelled practice is followed by guided and independent practice.

At all opportunities teachers and support staff consistently model high-quality handwriting.

### Staff Modelling and Consistency of Handwriting Formation

To ensure consistency and high standards in handwriting across the school, all staff are expected to model the correct handwriting formation at all times. This includes:

- Using the agreed school handwriting scheme when writing on boards, in pupils' books, and in any shared written communication.
- Ensuring that all classroom displays, labels, and visual resources reflect the correct letter formation and style as outlined in the school's handwriting scheme.
- Reviewing and updating any printed or digital materials used in teaching to ensure alignment with the school's handwriting expectations.
- Supporting pupils in recognising and replicating the correct formation through consistent visual cues and adult modelling.

This approach reinforces the importance of handwriting across the curriculum and supports pupils in developing fluency and accuracy in their written work.

### Posture, Paper Position, and Pencil Grip

Establishing correct posture, paper placement, and pencil grip is essential for developing fluent and legible handwriting. When children sit with their **feet flat on the floor, knees at a 90° angle, and backs supported**, they maintain stability and reduce fatigue, allowing them to focus on forming letters accurately. Proper posture also supports core strength and prevents long-term strain or discomfort.

The **position of the paper** plays a crucial role in writing efficiency. Tilting the paper appropriately for right- and left-handed pupils ensures that the writing hand moves freely without smudging or obscuring the text. This adjustment

helps children maintain a clear view of their work and promotes consistent letter formation.

Teaching and reinforcing the **tripod grip**—where the pencil is held between the thumb and forefinger, supported by the middle finger—provides optimal control and precision. A correct grip reduces tension in the hand, supports smooth movement, and prevents the development of poor habits that can hinder speed and legibility later on.

By prioritising these fundamentals, we create the physical conditions necessary for handwriting success, enabling children to write comfortably, confidently, and with increasing fluency.

This can all be reinforced to children using the 'Ready to write' rhyme – see appendix 2

### **Inclusion, Adaptations and Intervention**

Our handwriting approach is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all pupils. While most children will progress through the expected stages with high-quality teaching and practice, some may require additional support. Early identification and intervention are essential to prevent difficulties from becoming entrenched.

We provide **specific support for left-handed pupils**, ensuring they are taught correct paper tilt, seating arrangements, and pencil grip adjustments to avoid smudging and maintain visibility of their writing. For pupils with additional needs—such as motor control difficulties, dyspraxia, or dysgraphia—we make appropriate adaptations, including the use of assistive tools like pencil grips, slanted boards, and specially lined paper.

**Daily monitoring and intervention** are a core part of our practice. Teachers observe handwriting during lessons and across the curriculum, providing immediate corrective feedback. Where pupils show persistent difficulty, we use a **handwriting screener** to identify specific areas of need and plan targeted intervention sessions. These interventions may include focused practice on posture, grip, letter formation, or fine motor skills.

If progress remains limited despite targeted support, we will consider a **referral to occupational therapy** for further assessment and specialist guidance. This ensures that every child receives the help they need to develop fluent, legible handwriting and avoids long-term barriers to learning.

### **Assessment, monitoring and feedback**

Assessment is integral to effective handwriting teaching and should take place continuously during lessons. Teachers use **Assessment for Learning** strategies to identify and address errors immediately, preventing them from becoming ingrained habits. This approach also helps to spot pupils who need additional support, including those who are left-handed, summer-born, or newly arrived.

Every handwriting lesson includes observation of key criteria:

- **Posture** – the child sits correctly with feet flat, knees at 90°, and back supported.
- **Pencil grip** – the tripod grip is used consistently.
- **Paper position** – the paper is tilted appropriately for the child's dominant hand.
- **Pressure** – the child applies appropriate pressure when writing.

In addition to these fundamentals, teachers assess letter-specific features such as starting point, orientation, and size. Outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit guide what should be checked in every lesson.

Where difficulties are identified, **same-day intervention** is recommended. These short, focused sessions—delivered by a trained adult—reinforce the letter formation taught that day and provide additional practice. Resources such as **Letter Formation Practice Sheets** can support this process.

If progress remains limited despite targeted intervention, a **handwriting screener** should be used to identify specific areas of need. Where persistent difficulties are evident, the school will consider a **referral to occupational therapy** for specialist assessment and advice.

This proactive approach ensures that all pupils receive timely support, enabling them to develop fluent, legible handwriting and avoid long-term barriers to learning.

### **Self-Assessment in Handwriting**

Children should be encouraged to reflect on their handwriting using a simple 'tick and circle' approach. After completing a line of practice, pupils:

**Tick** one letter or word they are most proud of.

**Circle** one letter or word they feel could be improved.

This method promotes self-reflection, helps pupils identify strengths and areas for development, and supports a growth mindset by balancing positive recognition with constructive improvement.

## Standards for written presentation

It is our expectation that each piece of learning reflects the following non negotiables:

KS1	KS2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sentences start from the margin.</li><li>• High standards of handwriting formation is upheld and written on the line.</li><li>• Sheets are trimmed and stuck in straight.</li><li>• Pupils authentically self-assess success criteria.</li><li>• Teachers check against success criteria.</li><li>• Feedback is provided in line with the school marking and feedback policy.</li><li>• Evidence of high-quality task design.</li><li>• Appropriate adaptations made for SEND learners.</li><li>• Knowledge organisers stuck in.</li><li>• Pupils take pride in their work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title written and underlined.</li><li>• Long date written and underlined.</li><li>• Learning objective recorded.</li><li>• Sentences start from the margin.</li><li>• High standards of handwriting formation is upheld and written on the line.</li><li>• Sheets are trimmed and stuck in straight.</li><li>• Pupils authentically self-assess success criteria.</li><li>• Teachers check against success criteria.</li><li>• Feedback is provided in line with the school marking and feedback policy.</li><li>• Pupils respond to marking in red.</li><li>• Completed work.</li><li>• Evidence of high-quality task design.</li><li>• Appropriate adaptations made for SEND learners.</li><li>• Knowledge organisers stuck in.</li><li>• Pupils take pride in their work.</li></ul>

## Resources

To maximise time efficiency, all resources should be prepared in advance of the lesson and easily accessible.

To teach the handwriting lessons, you will need:

- sharpened pencils
- pencil grips if needed
- pupil workbooks / practice sheets / handwriting books / lined paper
- the large Phase 2 grapheme card for the letters being taught and reviewed (Units 2 to 5)
- the large grapheme card for the letters being taught or reviewed (for Units 2 to 5)
- the lesson template for the lesson type being taught
- lower-case letter formation phrases (Unit 2 onwards)

- capital letter formation phrases (for Unit 6)
- unit guidance (Unit 2 onwards).

We also recommend the Little Wandle Wall Frieze for Reception: Phase 2 (available from Collins) which shows the lower-case and capital letters.

### **Engaging parents and carers**

Parents play a vital role in supporting the development of fluent handwriting. To ensure consistency between home and school, we actively engage parents through clear communication and practical guidance. Each year, we hold a parent workshop to explain the school's handwriting expectations, the style we teach, and why correct habits matter. During these sessions, parents are shown how to support their child effectively and are provided with lower-case and capital letter formation sheets for reference.

We emphasise three simple but powerful ways parents can help at home:

1. Encourage the correct pencil grip (tripod grip) – This is essential for control and comfort. Parents are shown how to check and correct grip using the same techniques taught in school.
2. Practise letters using school-provided sheets – These sheets reflect the letter families and formation patterns taught in class, ensuring consistency and preventing confusion.
3. Use the 'Ready to Write' rhyme before writing – This short routine reinforces posture, paper tilt, and grip, helping children prepare physically and mentally for writing.

By involving parents in this way, we create a strong partnership that reinforces good habits, prevents incorrect formation from becoming embedded, and supports every child in developing confidence and fluency in handwriting.

### **Leadership Responsibilities**

The Writing Lead has overall responsibility for the handwriting curriculum. They ensure consistency and progression across all year groups by:

- Reviewing and updating the handwriting policy regularly to reflect best practice and statutory guidance.
- Providing staff training and resources to maintain high standards of teaching.
- Monitoring the quality of handwriting instruction through lesson observations, book scrutiny, and pupil outcomes.
- Supporting teachers with targeted strategies and interventions where pupils are not meeting expected standards.




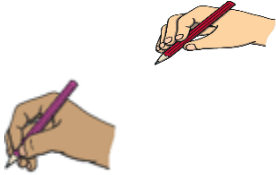

The SENCO works closely with the writing Lead to ensure inclusive provision for pupils with additional needs. This includes advising on adaptations,

assistive tools, and intervention strategies, as well as coordinating referrals to external specialists such as occupational therapists when required.

Both roles share responsibility for implementing the policy effectively, ensuring that any amendments are communicated clearly to staff and embedded in classroom practice. They also lead on evaluating the impact of the policy and making changes where necessary to secure continuous improvement.

Policy to be reviewed in: September 2026

### Appendix 1: Steps to appropriate pencil grip

1. Palmar Sulphate Grip	2. Digital Pronate Grip	3. Splayed Four Finger Grip	4. Static Tripod and Quadropod Grip	5. Dynamic Tripod Grip
				

Use the **“Pinch, Flip, Grip”** routine:

- Pinch the pencil near the tip with thumb and forefinger.
- Flip the pencil so it rests on the middle finger.
- Adjust for comfort.
- Encourage light pressure—writing should not leave deep marks on the paper.
- Provide short pencils for younger children (easier to control).

### Appendix 2: Posture resources

#### Why Posture Matters

Correct posture provides stability and reduces fatigue, enabling children to focus on handwriting rather than physical discomfort. Poor posture can lead to strain, slow writing speed, and inconsistent letter formation.

#### Key Principles

- **Feet flat on the floor** – promotes balance and prevents slouching.
- **Knees at 90° and back supported** – ensures core stability.
- **Table height** – should allow forearms to rest comfortably without shoulders lifting.
- **Paper tilt** – angled slightly to suit the dominant hand (top right corner down for right-handers, top left corner down for left-handers).
- **Non-writing hand** – used to steady the paper.

## Practical Tips for Teachers and Parents

- Use the **“Ready to Write” routine** before every handwriting session.

### ‘Ready to write’ rhyme

Let’s sit up straight, feet nice and flat,  
Tilt your paper – just like that!  
Pinch your pencil, give it a flip,  
Check your hold and then your grip.  
Now we can begin to write,  
But not too hard and not too light.



- Check posture regularly during lessons and correct gently.
- Provide footrests for children whose feet do not reach the floor.
- Ensure chairs and tables are appropriately sized for the child.

### Intervention Guidance

- If a child consistently struggles with posture, provide daily reminders and physical adjustments.
- Consider occupational therapy referral for pupils with persistent difficulties related to core strength or motor control.

## Appendix 3: Reception Units

### Unit 1: Patterns

By tracing and copying patterns, children build key skills that support early writing development, in particular, pencil control, as well as specific letter formation skills related to letter families and individual letters.

*(Pages below relate Little Wandle patterns practice book.)*

- Pages 2 to 5: Horizontal and vertical lines
- Pages 6 to 7: Wavy lines
- Pages 8 to 9: Circles Develops:
- Pages 10 to 11: Up curves Develops:
- Pages 12 to 13: Down curves Develops:
- Pages 14 to 15: Mixed height curves
- Pages 16 to 17: C shape
- Pages 18 to 19: Spirals
- Pages 20 to 21: Crosses
- Pages 22 to 23: Turrets
- Pages 24 to 25: Diagonals
- Pages 26 to 27: Zig-zags

Letter families:

Pupils should be taught to develop a consistent style by paying attention to how letters in each family are formed.

### **Unit 2: curly letter family**

In this unit, the children will:

- Form the letters from the curly letter family accurately, with a controlled curve
- Use the up and down movement for the letters 'a', 'd', 'g' and 'q'
- Form a straight descender for the letters 'g' and 'q'
- Lift the pencil off and cross the letter 'f'
- Make a loop for the letter 'e'
- Form ascenders and descenders with accuracy.

### **Unit 3: long letter family**

In this unit the children will:

- Form the letters from the long letter family accurately using the down movement for the letters 'l', 'i', 't' and 'j'
- Use the down and back up movement for the letters 'u' and 'y'
- Lift the pencil off and complete the letters 'i' and 't'
- Form ascenders and descenders with accuracy.

### **Unit 4: bouncy letter family**

In this unit the children will:

- Form the letters from the bouncy letter family accurately with a down, up and over movement for the letters 'r', 'n', 'm', 'h', 'p' and 'b'
- Form ascenders and descenders with accuracy.

### **Unit 5: zig-zag letter family**

In this unit, the children will:

- Form the letters from the zig-zag letter family accurately, with diagonal movements
- Use the down and up movement for the letters 'v' and 'w'
- Lift the pencil off and complete the letters 'x' and 'k'
- Form ascenders with accuracy

## **Appendix 4: Hand exercises**

Choose four of these exercises for the start of each lesson – try to include a variety each week. Watch the 'Hand exercises' videos on the Little Wandle website to see how to do the exercises.

1. Rub hands together Rub hands together until they feel warm. Move them up and down, or in circular motions to stimulate blood flow.
2. Push palms together Push the palms firmly together and hold for five seconds. Repeat a few times.
3. Finger stretches Open hands wide, stretching fingers as far apart as you can. Then make a tight fist, hiding fingers away inside the palm.

4. Drumming fingers Drum fingers on the table, one finger at a time. This can be extended to tapping a rhythm.
5. Squeeze forearms and hands Use the left hand to squeeze the right forearm and hand firmly, applying gentle pressure to stimulate the muscles and increase awareness. Swap hands.
6. Pulling fingers (like taking off a glove) With one hand, grasp each finger of the other hand in turn and gently pull downward, as if taking off a glove. Repeat for the other hand.
7. Oppose thumb to each fingertip Touch the thumb to each fingertip of the same hand in turn. For more challenge, this can be done with both hands at the same time, or with your eyes closed.
8. Finger circle tug Form a circle with the thumb and index finger. Then form another circle with the other hand, within that circle, and try to pull them apart.

### **Appendix 5: Parent-Friendly Summary**

Our school teaches handwriting from Reception onwards to help children develop fluent, legible writing.

Key points for parents:

- Reception: Focus on pencil grip and letter formation.
- Year 1: Consolidate letters, introduce sizing and spacing.
- Year 2: Begin joins and maintain fluency.

How you can help:

- Encourage correct pencil grip (tripod grip).
- Practise letters using school-provided sheets.
- Use the 'Ready to Write' rhyme before writing.

Together, we can build strong foundations for your child's writing success!