

**Isaac Newton Primary School**  
**Handwriting Policy**



**Intent**

At Isaac Newton, we recognise that handwriting is a fine motor skill which is not dependent on intelligence. Therefore, most children should be able to achieve a legible, attractive style of handwriting. When assessing pupils' writing, the standard of handwriting is assessed alongside the content of a pupil's written work. Therefore, our school places great emphasis on the teaching of an appropriate handwriting style so that pupils will not be at a disadvantage when their writing is assessed. Alongside this, a child's ability to write comfortably and legibly affects performance in many other areas of the curriculum and can have an effect on an individual's self esteem. We intend for our pupils to develop an appropriate, fluent and automatic handwriting style with which they are comfortable.

**Aims**

We aim for:

- all pupils to continually learn and practise handwriting skills in order to create a mature handwriting style which is:
  - legible:- easy to read, properly formed and joined, even and well spaced.
  - fluent and fast: - children should be able to write fast enough to do justice to themselves and their knowledge. The style should be cursive.
  - automatic and sustainable:- children should be able to write comfortably and consistently without undue focus for increasing periods of time.
- all pupils to have the opportunity to write in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum.
- provisions to be made for children who experience difficulties or who are left-handed.
- all pupils to take pride in well-presented writing.

All staff are expected to use and model the agreed handwriting conventions outline in this document, thus providing consistency and continuity throughout the school community. This will further reinforce handwriting expectations for the pupils.

**Implementation**

The teaching and practising of handwriting skills will take place regularly throughout the school and all children will work towards producing neat handwriting in all of their work. All classes should practise handwriting weekly. Particular attention is paid to handwriting in the final draft of a piece of written work.

Children are taught in their normal class groups.

All teachers are responsible for the teaching of handwriting but may also be delivered by non-teaching staff.

Children will be shown how to hold a pencil comfortably and will be encouraged to adopt a correct posture when writing. These requirements are reflected in the 'P Checks and S Factors', devised by the National Handwriting Association and outlined below. Posters explaining these are displayed in all KS1 and KS2 classrooms.



### The P Checks

These are visual reminders of how to prepare for the 'process' of handwriting. They are taught to all children as soon as they are ready to begin sitting to write (usually in reception). This ensures that good handwriting habits are established early and practised constantly.

**Posture      Pencil      Paper      Pressure**

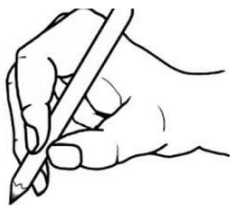
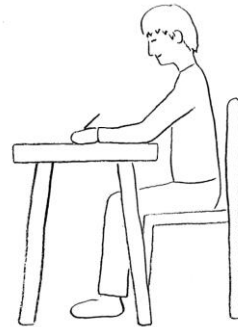
### The S Factors

These are the elements of the 'product' - successful handwriting and provide the sequence of teaching steps: **shape, space, size, sitting on the line, stringing (joining), slant, speed, style**. Children working at greater depth in Y6 could add **stamina**.

#### Posture

Children are shown how to sit well:

- Back is supported by the chair
- Body leaning slightly forward
- Hips, knees and ankles at 90°
- Feet flat on the floor
- Arms resting comfortably on the table
- Sitting a 'fist distance' from the table
- Non-dominant hand used to stabilise the paper



#### Pencil

A dynamic tripod grasp, with the pencil held between the thumb, index and middle finger is modelled and encouraged as soon as children are developmentally ready to begin writing. This grip must be supported by a stable wrist resting on the writing surface and positioned below the writing line.

#### Paper

Children are taught how to position their writing paper correctly and to stabilise it with the non-writing hand. The paper should be positioned at the child's midline (or just beyond) with the bottom angle placed about 2-3cm from the lower edge of the desk.

*Left-handed writers: the paper should be slanted to the right at about a 30-45° angle.*

*Right-handed writers: the paper should be slanted to the left at about a 20-35° angle.*

#### Pressure

Before beginning a writing activity, children do warm-up exercises, then relax the whole body. They are helped to become aware of how much pressure to exert on their pencils, especially when this is excessive.

## **The S Factors**

### **Shape**

- Letters are taught in stroke related families (as outlined in Pen Pals. Posters are displayed in all classrooms.)
- All letters (except e and d) begin at the top. We do not teach entry strokes.
- The Curly Caterpillar letter family all start at 1 o'clock (except e)
- Letters that end on the base line have a rounded exit stroke (so that they will have little difficulty in learning to join up their letters when they are ready to do so).
- Capital letters sit on the baseline

### **Space**

- There should be an even space between words
- There should be an even space between letters

### **Size**

- The relative height of the letters should be consistent (ascenders, descenders and x-height letters)
- Capital letters are all the same height, sit on the baseline and do not join the lowercase letters.
- The overall size of writing should be appropriate for age and stage.

### **Sitting on the line**

- All letters relate to the baseline

### **Stringing (joining)**

- Letter joins are diagonal or horizontal
- Some letters are better left unjoined
- The children will begin to learn to join in Year 2.

### **Slant**

- All 'down lines' should be uniformly parallel and not 'a mix of slants'

### **Speed**

- Speed is developed in KS2 and reflects the level of automation

### **Style**

- As handwriting develops legibly, fluently with increasing speed, Year 5 and 6 children will create their own personal style. They are taught that this must be easily read by others and that they should keep it comfortable, quick, fluent and, most importantly, automatic. Children are taught to adapt their writing according to its purpose, e.g. unjoined style for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, for algebra and 'block' capital letters.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Handwriting is a taught developmental process with its own distinct stages of progressions. The school handwriting curriculum is guided by the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and the National Curriculum for English.

At the end of Reception, children are assessed against Early Learning Goals. The ELG in writing outlines that children at the expected level of development will write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Fine motor skills are recognised as vital in the development of handwriting. The ELG in fine motor skills indicate that children at the expected level will hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases; use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery; and begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

The handwriting objectives of the 2014 National Curriculum will be delivered within the framework of this policy. See Appendix A.

Handwriting will be closely linked with spelling so that the teaching of common letter strings will be taught in the context of handwriting lessons. Children will be taught that there is a balance between speed and legibility which is dependent on the purpose of writing. Correct letter formation will be taught in a subject specific way. Cross curricular opportunities will be used, whenever possible, for providing real purposes for using handwriting skills.

Children in EYFS will follow the Pen Pals handwriting programme. Alongside this, Bug Club Phonics also provide opportunities to learn correct letter formation and pencil grip.

Children in Year 1 will follow the Andrew Brodie handwriting scheme, which build on the Pen Pals programme used in EYFS. As in the EYFS, daily phonics sessions also provide opportunities to learn correct letter formation and pencil grip.

Children from Year 2 onwards will follow the Andrew Brodie handwriting scheme linked to their spelling patterns.

### **Timetabling**

In EYFS, formal handwriting lessons will take place twice a week and will be evidenced in handwriting books. Handwriting lessons will take place four times a week in Y1 for 10 minutes. Pupils in Year 2 and LKS2 will practise handwriting a minimum of three times a week. Pupils in UKS2 will practise handwriting at least weekly, alongside their spellings (additional intervention will be provided for those who require further teaching). This will give the pupils the opportunity to further develop a fluent handwriting style.

### **Classroom Resources**

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of different tools for different purposes and styles of writing. These tools include:

- A wide range of mixed media for mark making
- Pencils
- Handwriting pens
- Whiteboard pens used throughout school
- Art supplies, including coloured pencils, pastels, felt tips and paints

Pre-writing skills will be developed using a range of tools and working with a range of different media. Writing will be encouraged through structured, multi-sensory play. The motor skills necessary for handwriting will also be developed through a variety of activities, including dough disco, tweezers, elastic bands and threading.

Writing slopes, pencil grips and wedge cushions are available for any children who need these. Additional resources may be provided where a child has handwriting difficulties.

Pupils in EYFS, Years 1 and 2 will write in pencil at all times. In KS2 pupils may be introduced to ink pens for presentation purposes when writing the final draft of a piece of written work. In Y5/6 ink pen is introduced when a pupil has developed a fluent, neat and legible handwriting style. In order for our pupils to be prepared for life in secondary school, all children will use pen in Year 6 after May Half Term. Pupils are not permitted to use biro at any time.

### **Agreed Language**

All staff use language consistently to describe handwriting, including: letter families (see Appendix B), lowercase, uppercase, capital letters, ascenders, descenders, x-height letters, exits strokes, joining strokes, diagonal strokes, horizontal strokes.

In EYFS and Year One, demonstration writing (by staff) will be printed for reading purposes. It will be joined from Year Two onwards.

### **Parental Involvement**

Information for parents of pre school children, on the development of handwriting skills, will be provided. Teachers will report any handwriting difficulties to parents in a timely manner and will guide parents towards appropriate intervention strategies.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal entitlement and equal access to handwriting materials. These materials have been carefully chosen so that issues relating to race, gender, religious beliefs and social background are handled sensitively.

All children will be given the opportunity to practise and develop their handwriting. All children's handwriting skills will be valued and built upon. The particular needs of left-handed pupils will always be taken into consideration. "No imposed hand can be as fast or consistent as a natural hand".

We recognise that some children will take longer to develop the skills necessary for handwriting, and we supply these children with additional opportunities and tools to develop these skills. We aim to identify handwriting problems as early as possible and seek support as necessary.

Children who join the school with an effective handwriting style that differs from the school style may continue to use it

### **Assessment**

All staff will make regular assessments against our standards in writing (Appendix C) to ensure that progress is regularly monitored.

### **Impact**

The impact of our handwriting curriculum will be measured through:

- Pupil voice/confidence
- Feedback from children's work across the curriculum
- Internal and external moderation of writing assessments
- Within children's writing across the curriculum.

Our pupils will make good progress from their own personal starting points. By the time they leave our school, pupils will be able to write for prolonged periods of time in a handwriting style that is neat, automatic and fluent. More importantly, children will take pride in the presentation of their work.

### **REVIEW**

The Headteacher and staff will review this policy as part of the curriculum policy review cycle.

**Appendix A**  
**National Curriculum requirements for handwriting**

	<b>Statutory Requirements</b>	<b>Non-Statutory Notes and Guidance</b>
<b>Year 1, Age 5– 6</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly</li> <li>• begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place</li> <li>• form capital letters</li> <li>• form digits 0–9</li> <li>• understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.</li> </ul>	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.</p> <p>Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>
<b>Year 2, Age 6– 7</b>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</li> <li>• use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</p>

<p><b>Years 3–4, Age 7–9</b></p>	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that 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 touch).</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting 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. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>
<p><b>Years 5–6, Age 10–11</b></p>	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters</li> <li>• choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task.</li> </ul>	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting 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. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra; and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.</p>



The family of long ladder letters

l i t u j y  
l i t u j y



The family of curly caterpillar letters

c a d o s g q e f  
c a d o s g q e f



The family of one-armed robot letters

r b n h m k p  
r b n h m k p



The family of zig-zag monster letters

z v w x  
z v w x



Appendix C  
School standards for handwriting and written work.

EYFS	Form letters by tracing over and copy writing to achieve good formation. Write in the right direction using an acceptable and comfortable grip.
Y1	Letters standard size, a good formation and flicks for joining.
Y2	Some evidence of joining letters and letters correctly orientated.
Y3	Joined script – reasonably consistent in size and space.
Y4	Joined script – correct letter sizes and joins. Clear ascenders, descenders and spacing.
Y5	A consistent style of joined up writing in all of their work.
Y6	All writing should be consistently neat, joined and legible, allowing children to develop own style.

Once the standard of writing has been achieved, it should always be expected. In recognition of achievement in handwriting a child may not always need to practice as frequently but should maintain the standard.