

# Cursive Handwriting Statement

At Avondale Primary School, we believe that neat, well-formed handwriting and presentation of written work helps to raise standards as the pupils take pride in and have a sense of ownership of their work.

## Why is handwriting important?

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the whole curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Joined up handwriting is taught with a sequential and progressive approach from EYFS. Handwriting should be taught regularly and teachers and TAs are expected to model the handwriting style.

## Aim

Our aims in teaching handwriting are to teach children the correct letter formation, joining and good handwriting habits, so that they can write fluently and legibly, and by the end of KS2 begin to develop a distinctive style. Each aim is considered equally important:

- To teach children to write with a flowing hand which is legible, swift and pleasant to look at, of which they can be proud.
- To ensure that children of differing abilities are provided with appropriate and achievable goals.
- To teach correct letter formation.
- To establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets the standard.
- To ensure all pupils and staff understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- To experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching of handwriting across the school.

Handwriting is taught regularly at the beginning of every English lesson to ensure pupils have regular practice.

Our practitioners are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive writing for all handwriting tasks including report writing (when not word-processed), marking and comments. Staff should take care to use the correct script when writing on the board, when marking and when writing for display purposes.

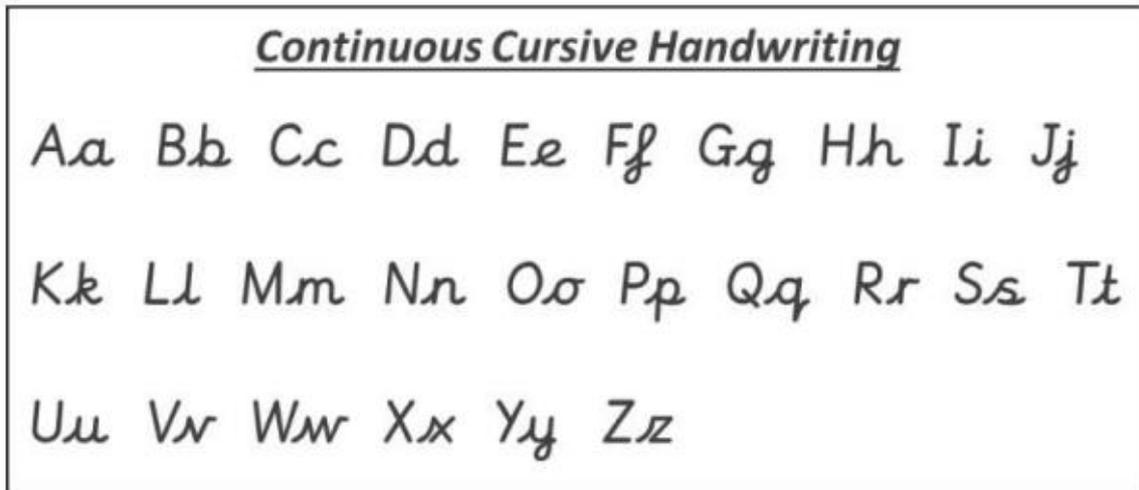
Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met.

## CONTINUOUS CURSIVE STYLE KEY FEATURES

At Avondale we use the style what is known as the 'continuous cursive' which means we use joined up writing where each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper, so each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case letters.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed, spelling and fluency.
- The majority of letters start on the line with an 'approach stroke'.
- The majority of letters end on the line with a 'flick'.
- The pencil does not leave the paper until the word is complete.
- 'ts' and 'xs' are crossed and 'i's' are dotted when the whole word is complete.
- There are six basic joins that children are taught.
- Alphabet is organised into stroke-related letter groups for easy teaching.
- Children should be taught to use the handwriting lines efficiently to ensure that they cap height of letters and descenders and ascenders are formed correctly.

## Continuous Cursive Handwriting



## CONTINUOUS SCRIPT LETTER FAMILIES

| LETTER FAMILIES for teaching letter formation                |               |
|--|---------------|
| Ladder Letters<br><i>(Down and off in another direction)</i> | l i t j u y   |
| Robot Letters<br><i>(Down and retrace upwards)</i>           | m n r b p h k |
| Curly Caterpillar Letters<br><i>(Anticlockwise round)</i>    | c a d o q g s |
| Loop the Loop Letters  | e f           |
| Zig-zag Monster Letters<br><i>(zig-zag letters)</i>          | v w x z       |

## KS1 & KS2 THE SIX BASIC JOINS

- Basic joins taught in Year 1
- Basic joins taught in Year 2

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders | ai ar au av ae ea er ev ee ie<br>ir ur ue air ear |
|---|---|

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
|   | in an as us ss se           |
| Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders | ou oe oi oo or ow oa ur ure |
|   | vi ve wi we on ov ere re ri |
| Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders      | ch ll sh th                 |
|   | ab ul it kn ed be de br     |
| Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders    |                             |
|   | ol ot of ok od wh wl fl     |
| Diagonal joins to letters with descenders     | ff ph qu igh ng             |
|   | squ fe ge pe                |
| Horizontal joins to letters with descenders   | oy                          |
|   | op og of                    |

## Teaching Sequence and Whole School Expectations:

### Early Years Foundation Stage

#### Term 1

In the early stages of handwriting development, children are introduced to activities to establish fine motor skills. 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. Children experience a wide range of handwriting-related skills, e.g. letter and number formation in sand trays, through tracing, use of ribbons, with chalk, felt tips, pencils, crayons, writing over and under teacher models in various forms, word building with magnetic letters and pattern making in various media. Coloured felt tip pens and pencils are used in conjunction with the handwriting exercise books. Pencil grips for correction of pencil hold are also used where appropriate.

#### Terms 2 & 3

In order to prepare the children to be successful in continuous cursive, pupils are taught continuous cursive from the start. Pupils are introduced to basic letter formation. The basic letter formations are taught in this order:

- Ladder Letters: i l t u y j
- Robot Letters: r n h b p k m
- Curly Caterpillar: c a g q d o s
- Loop the Loop: Letters: e f
- Zig Zag monster Letters: v w

Although the letters are taught in this order, Reception teachers can choose to teach the letter that the children have been learning in phonics that day. Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly - 10 mins every day.

Children continue to practice forming their letters and are given the opportunity to practice CVC and Reception High Frequency Words.

In reception, pupils are introduced to the basic joins during phonic sessions. During phase 3 the adult models how to join digraph sounds correctly.

## **YEAR 1**

### **TERM 1**

In Term 1, Pupils continue to consolidate the 'continuous cursive' handwriting style. Pupils are taught the 'continuous cursive' letter groups in this order:

- Ladder Letters: i l t u y j
- Robot Letters: r n h b p k m
- Curly Caterpillar: c a g q d o s
- Loop the Loop Letters: e f
- Zig Zag monster Letters: v w

*Pupils are taught how to correctly form numerals 0 – 9*

### **TERM 2 & 3**

When pupils are ready, they move on to learn the 'continuous cursive' six joins and practice words with these joins.

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
- Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy

Pupils are taught the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence for sounds as outlined in the Spelling Appendix in the National Curriculum. Children focus on a different vowel digraph or trigraph each day and practise joining words containing the focus sound. Where possible these will be linked to year 1 spellings

Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly - 10 mins every day.

## **YEAR 2**

### **TERM 1**

- Pupils begin the year refreshing on the six joins and revising the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence for the vowel digraph and trigraphs as taught in Year 1.

- This is followed by children being introduced to a new spelling focus each day as outlined in the Spelling Appendix in the National Curriculum.

### **TERMS 2 & 3**

Pupils continue to learn the 'continuous cursive' six joins and practice words with these joins.

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
- Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy

It is expected at this stage that all children are able to join consistently and correctly by the end of Year 2.

Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly - 10 mins every day.

### **KEY STAGE 2 OVERVIEW**

- Pupils should enter KS2 with a clear understanding of all the cursive letter groups.
- Any children who have left KS1 unable to join, need to be quickly identified for Daily Supported Handwriting Intervention. Progress needs to be monitored and assessed against the cursive handwriting joins
- Supported handwriting practice in Lower KS2 should take place three times a week.

### **YEAR 3**

#### **Term 1:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins from Year 1

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
- Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy

To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words.

#### **Term 2:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins from Year 2:

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it

- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
- Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy

To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words.  
To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice.

### **Term 3:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins (according to cohort need) and use these in independent writing:

- Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us
- Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi
- Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it
- Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot
- Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh
- Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy

To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and the spacing between letters and words.  
To build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility through practice.

Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly - 10 mins - 3 times per week.

## **YEAR 4**

### **Term 1:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins (according to cohort need) and use these in independent writing:

To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.

To know when to use:

- a clear neat hand for finished, presented work;
- informal writing for rough drafting etc.

To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words.

### **Term 2:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins (according to cohort need) and use these in independent writing:

To use joined handwriting for all writing except where other special forms are required.

To build up speed, particularly for notes, drafts, lists etc.

To know when to use:

- a clear neat hand for finished, presented work;

- informal writing for rough drafting etc.

To ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words.

### **Term 3:**

To practise correct formation of the six basic handwriting joins (according to cohort need) and use these in independent writing:

To build up speed and ensure consistency in size and proportions of letters and spacing between letters and words.

To use a range of presentational skills, e.g.:

- print script for captions, sub-headings and labels;
- capital letters for posters, title plates, headings;
- a range of computer-generated fonts and point sizes.

Supported handwriting needs to take place regularly - 10 mins 3 times per week.

### **YEAR 5**

TO USE FLUENT JOINED UP HANDWRITING FOR ALL WRITING EXCEPT WHERE OTHER SPECIAL FORMS ARE REQUIRED

Supported handwriting needs to take place as required to meet individual needs.

### **YEAR 6**

TO USE FLUENT JOINED UP HANDWRITING FOR ALL WRITING EXCEPT WHERE OTHER SPECIAL FORMS ARE REQUIRED

### **PEN LICENCE**

- As children become confident in their joined up writing, children begin to work towards their 'Pen Licence'. The 'Pen Licence' is a certificate awarded to each child by the Headteacher, granting them the permission to use a pen during all lessons (except mathematics). Pupils who successfully achieve their pen licence will have it presented to them during an Achievement assembly.
- The pen licence is to be awarded once a pupil has achieved the criteria on the handwriting checklist.
- It is at the teacher's discretion when to award a child with the 'Pen Licence', but all children should aim to have achieved the award by the time they leave Year 3.
- There could be a display in classrooms celebrating children who have been awarded pen licences.

### **PEN LICENCE CHECKLIST –**

To earn a Pen Licence, all handwriting (not just in handwriting book) must show the following:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • All letters are correctly formed |  |
|------------------------------------|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| • All 'x-height' letters are consistent in size                             |  |
| • All ascenders and descenders are the correct height/length                |  |
| • All letters are joined correctly  |  |
| ❖ Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ai, ar, us               |  |
| ❖ Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders: eg. ou, vi, wi             |  |
| ❖ Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ab, ul, it                  |  |
| ❖ Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders: eg. ol, wh, ot                |  |
| ❖ Diagonal joins to letters with descenders: eg. ff, ph, qu, igh            |  |
| ❖ Horizontal joins to letters with descenders: eg. op, oy                   |  |
| • Capital letters are larger than lower case letters                        |  |
| • Spaces between letters are the right size (not too squashed or stretched) |  |
| • Spaces between words are the right size (not too small or big)            |  |
| • Date and WALT underlined with a ruler                                     |  |
| • Work looks neat   |  |

## Supporting correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

### Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

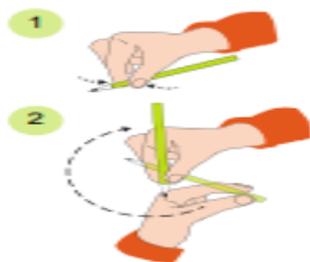
Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

#### SITTING POSITION

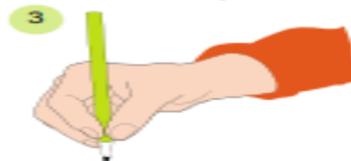


#### THE TRIPOD PENCIL GRIP

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.



- 1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
- 2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.



#### Provision for left-handed children:

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;
- pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.
- Children should be encouraged to have the correct sitting posture for good handwriting e.g. the bottom of the back to go into the back of the chair

### **INCLUSION**

Children whose handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills, including left-handed children, and children with special educational needs, will be given additional support. Additional resources may also be used (i.e. a writing slant).

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:**

Equality of opportunity is a high priority and reference to the School's Equal Opportunity and Racial Equality Policies will provide examples of how this is achieved. Inclusion: The vast majority of pupils are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this within the class or through a IEPs. Teachers of children, whose handwriting is limited, by problems with fine motor skills, should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child.

### **Useful websites & resources**

- <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-difficulties.html>
- <https://www.letterjoin.co.uk/>
- <https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/teaching-support/pages/nelson-handwriting/?region=uk#>
- <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/how-to-teach-handwriting.html>

Last reviewed: December 2018