

# Policy for Handwriting

## Sutton Veny C of E Primary School



Here at Sutton Veny C of E Primary School we are very proud of our children's handwriting and take particular care in our cursive-joined-up handwriting style. We ensure that we cover all of the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum.

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy joined-up handwriting, and to understand that there are different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

We aim to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

### School Aims:

- We aim for our pupils to develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style, using continuing cursive letters. A child's ability to produce letters and words should be automatic during independent writing sessions.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils will understand the importance of neat presentation and the need for different letterforms (cursive, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring handwriting is consistent and in line with our school policy in their classrooms.

### Method:

- Our teachers and teaching partners are encouraged to use neat, joined-up cursive handwriting for all handwriting tasks, including any marking and comments. All adults should follow the agreed letter formation.
- All teachers will use the Sassoon Primary Infant font for any documents and for all IWB Notebook files, as this font most closely reflects our agreed letter formation.

### Consistency throughout the School

- Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years through consistent encouragement to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our aim is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting style with a sense of achievement and pride.

### Handwriting Frequency:

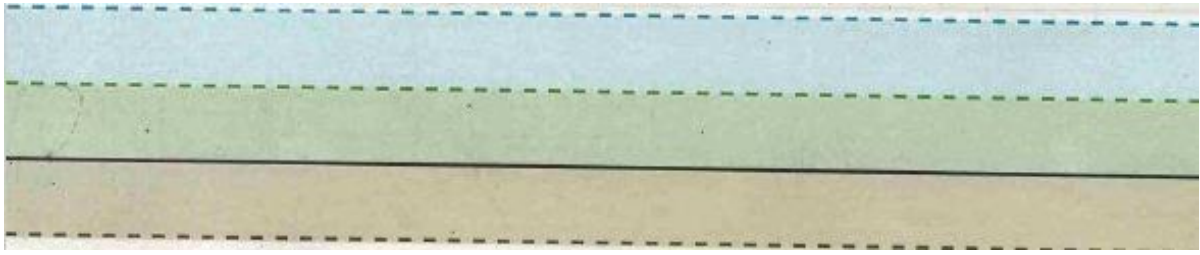
- Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during *all* lessons. Formal teaching of and opportunities to practise handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure Key Stage targets are met. Handwriting tasks will be marked regularly and responsively.

### HANDWRITING DURING FOUNDATION STAGE:

For our youngest pupils we teach one discrete session per week. We focus on:

- Movements to enhance gross motor skills such as air-writing and pattern marking.
- Exercises to develop fine motor skills such as making marks on paper, whiteboards, cutting and threading.
- 'Jingles' are used to familiarise Year R pupils with letter shapes and formation (*see Appendix A*). 'Jingles' can also be found at the front of the children's Green Home Link Books, so that new parents can see how the children can be encouraged to form letters correctly.

- Consistent teaching and reinforcement of letter formation through *Letters and Sounds* is implemented. (Please note that the discrete teaching of handwriting is taught in 'Handwriting Families', which may differentiate from the order in which phonics is taught).
- Using the 'grass, mud and sky' lines to acknowledge all ascenders and descenders.



### **AIMS OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE:**

- *Sit in the correct position and hold a pencil correctly to allow fluid movement of the nib.*
- *Improve fine and gross motor skills by enjoying drawing pre-cursive patterns using a variety of writing materials such as modelling clay, sand, air writing, felt-pens, crayons, pencils and the IWB.*
- *Understand the language needed to describe pencil movements in preparation for letter formation.*
- *Hold a pencil in an effective manner (referred to as "Froggy Fingers" or the tripod pencil grip) and be encouraged to correct any errors in grip or stature.*
- *Understand that letters are written on a base line and that all cursive letters 'start on the line' and some 'end with a flick'.*
- *Begin to form some recognisable cursive letters, capital letters and numerals.*
- *Have an understanding of writing their own name – each child will practise their first name and surname everyday on laminate papers. When a child succeeds they will just have only their initials as prompts. Successes are celebrated on display in the classroom.*
- *Understand different shaped letter families.*

**[For Skills Progression see 'FS2 and KS1 Handwriting Progression Overview' – see Appendix C].**

### **HANDWRITING DURING KEY STAGE ONE:**

Tuition will continue and focus on:

- Personalised handwriting teaching and reinforcement; learning and practice will take place in small groups at least once per week.
- Learning and practice of numerals, upper and lower case letters, as well as developing the children's understanding of where and when to use them.
- Continuing and completing teaching and learning of printed letters and words as appropriate to each child using the *Read, Write, Inc* as a basis for delivery.
- Introduction of the joined handwriting scheme – based on *Read, Write, Inc* – which will be personalised for individual pupils so that they are always working at the level most appropriate for their stage of development.
- Children are supported with different sized spaces between the handwriting guide lines depending on the size of their handwriting, as well as their fine motor ability. Pupils will learn the vocabulary of *top solid red line*, *top solid blue line*, *bottom solid blue line* and *bottom solid red line* to refer to each of the guide lines. The consistency in this means that all children and adults can explain where letters begin and how they are formed. There are two joins to be taught and they are referred to as the 'arm join' and 'the washing line join'.
- Year 1 pupils will be introduced to how to drop ascenders ('f' and 't').
- Year 1 pupils will be introduced to the 'k' and 'j' letter formation for joined letters.
- During all Handwriting sessions, children are encouraged to work at "speed one" so that they are always able to produce their most careful and meticulous handwriting.
- Once all of the joins are complete, children can progress to copying verses where they can regularly apply the techniques which they have learned.

Updated February 2020

- Progress and achievements will continue to be celebrated through stamps or other tools of recognition, such as 'Handwriting Hero Of The Week'.



**AIMS OF KEY STAGE ONE:**

- Write legibly using upper and lower case letters using the correct joins.
- Ensure that all letters sit on the base line and are consistent in size with ascenders and descenders that are the correct length and formation.
- Leave the correct space between words.
- Form capital letters and use these where appropriate.
- Show understanding that capital letters never join to the next letter.
- Form numerals which are consistent in size and which always sit on the base line.
- Begin to form joined letters.
- Improve their speed of writing and begin to write automatically, so as to promote creativity in independent writing.

**[For Skills Progression see 'FS2 and KS1 Handwriting Progression Overview' – see Appendix C].**

**HANDWRITING DURING KEY STAGE TWO:**

When embedded with joined handwriting techniques, children’s handwriting styles will become more individualised as they move through Key Stage 2. Children will practise their handwriting 3-4 times per week during Early Morning Activities. Handwriting sessions will focus on:

- Cursive handwriting re-enforcement as appropriate.
- Providing opportunities for children to develop their handwriting style through meaningful tasks ie SPAG related learning.

A 'Handwriting Goals' reference will be stuck at the front of Literacy during Year 3 for pupils to refer to [see Appendix D].

Where mistakes are made in writing tasks, children will put one neat line through the error. Additional and unnecessary markings in children’s books are actively discouraged through discussion with the children and through positive sharing of examples of work where children have taken pride in their work.

**AIMS OF KEY STAGE TWO:**

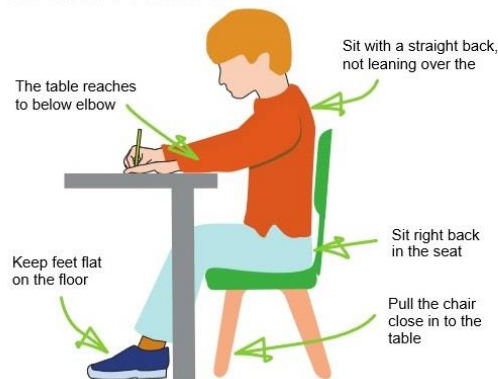
*Improve quality, speed and stamina of handwriting:*

- **QUALITY:** To ensure letters are consistently sized with equal spacing and to ensure that ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch words on the lines above and below.
- **SPEED:** Improve the speed of handwriting to allow creative writing to take precedence over the task of handwriting and to be able to take 'quick notes' at a faster pace.
- **STAMINA:** To have the strength and mobility to be able to write for longer periods of time without fatigue; to have full knowledge of the different forms of handwriting for different purposes: (i) Neat, joined, cursive letters for writing passages and large amounts of texts, lists and letters; (ii) Printed or capital letters for posters, notices, headings, labelling and form filling; (iii) Speedy handwriting for note-taking and dictation where neatness is not as important and shortcuts, such as + instead of 'and', can be used.

# Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

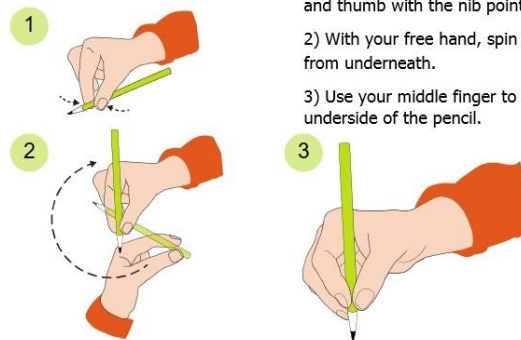
Pupils should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.

## 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.

## Left-handed children:

Left-handed are immediately identified for their new teacher during transition meetings in the Summer Term, so that teachers can take immediate note of the children's needs. Adjustments will be made where necessary for left-handed children, including:

- Left-handed pupils should sit on the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt the pupils' line of vision.
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before children write right-to-left automatically.

## 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 across all Key Stages as appropriate. Additional resources may be used (ie. writing grips, workbooks).

It is recognised that, from time to time, new pupils may not yet have learnt how to join their letters or they may have learnt a different letter formation at their previous school. Where a child's handwriting is neat and legible, variations from our school's agreed letter formation will be valued as a child's individualised handwriting style. Extra support will be provided as appropriate for those children who need to learn to join their letters, as we recognise that this is a fundamental National Curriculum requirement.

At Sutton Veny CE Primary School, we believe that our policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

**Pens and Pencils:**



























Children are encouraged to start handwriting using a soft pencil during Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. When fine motor skills have been embedded, children have the opportunity to work towards a 'pen licence' during Year 3 by achieving their 'Handwriting Goals' consistently across the curriculum.

Children in Key Stage Two will use blue handwriting pens. They may bring in their own fountain pens once they have earned their pen licence.

## Appendix A:

Jingles as taught in Foundation Stage, and reinforced through Key Stage One as appropriate:

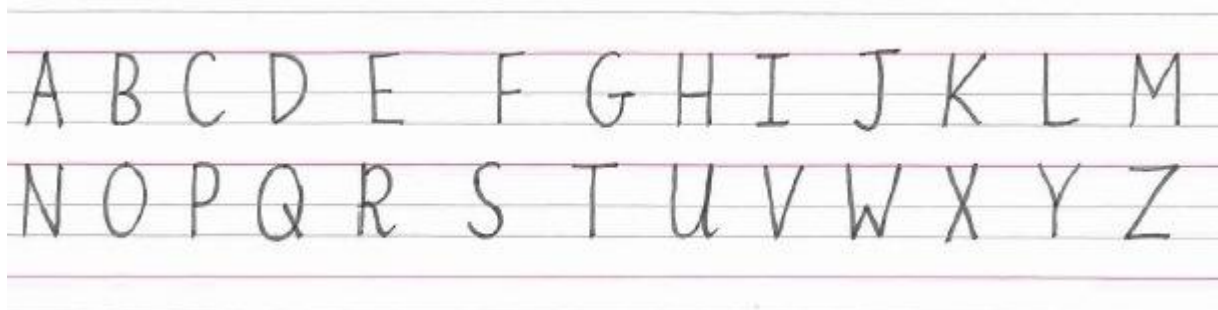
Reception/Yr1 still referred to in Yr2 handwriting

 Down, Mubbe, mountain, mountain	 Around the apple, down the leaf	 Slither down the snake	 Around his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet	 Down the tower, across the tower	 Down the body, a dot for the head	 Down Nobby, over his net	 Down the plait, over the pirate's face	 Around her face, down her hair, give her a curl
 All around the orange	 Curl around the caterpillar	 Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg	 Down, under, up to the top and draw the puddle	 Down the laces to the heel, round the toe	 Down the stem, and draw the leaves	 Lift off the top, scoop out the egg	 Down the long leg	 Down the head to the hooves, over his back
 Down his back, then curl over his arm	 Down his body, curl and die	 Down a wing, up a wing	 Down a horn, up a horn, under the head	 Down, up, down, up	 Zig, zag, zig	 Around her head, up past her earring, down her hair	 Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side	

## Appendix B:

**Notes regarding letter formation for of upper case letters:**

Upper case letters are never joined to lower case letters.



## Points of note regarding letter formation for lower case joined letters from Key Stage One:

- No lead-in strokes are taught.
- Certain letters end with a flick, as set out below.
- Lead-out lines are used when joining to another letter, but for letters which are the last letters of any given word, no lead out lines are to be used.
- In regards to ascenders, children who are using a red handwriting book at Key Stage One will not drop their ascenders. As the children move onto their purple handwriting books, it is at the discretion of the teacher whether dropping the ascenders suits an individual child's handwriting style or not.
- Year 1 pupils will be introduced to the 'k' and 'f' letter formation for joined letters. Please note that Year R will learn the simpler versions of 'k' and 'f' (see *Jingles*) as this is in line with what the youngest children see most regularly in any of their reading materials as they are learning their letters for the first time, thus making the acquisition of these particular letters as consistent as possible for them. In Key Stage One, children will be taught that the 'f' descends and touches the bottom red line with a little flick.
- The tail from the 'q' is joined to the next letter.
- During Year 1, children will be taught that the letters 'g', 'j' and 'y' will loop under, but the tail should not be wider than the letter.
- Children are actively discouraged from writing too small.



## Appendix C:

FS2	Year 1	Year 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the jingles for letter formation (Read, Write, Inc)</li> <li>• Use the correct pencil grip – 'Froggy Fingers'</li> <li>• Be able to form each letter of the alphabet using 'Sky, grass, mud' and the jingles.</li> <li>• Correctly orientate most letters of the alphabet</li> <li>• Form numbers 0 – 9</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the pencil correctly</li> <li>• Sit at a table properly, ready to write</li> <li>• Sit letters on the line</li> <li>• Learn the new formation of 'f' and 'k' in preparation for joining</li> <li>• Form letters correctly with ascenders and descenders.</li> <li>• Form all capital letters correctly</li> <li>• Form all letters of the alphabet with the correct orientation and sizing</li> <li>• Learn the two joins - 'arm join' and 'washing line'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined</li> <li>• Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters</li> <li>• Develop a fluid and joined handwriting style</li> <li>• Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Begin to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write on lines</li> <li>• Recognise and form some capital letters</li> <li>• Form ascenders and descenders correctly</li> </ul>	<p><b>Begin to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and refine joined handwriting</li> </ul>	

- Letter formation is taught by the Jingles from Read, Write Inc – Ruth Miskin
- FS2 to use the Sky Grass Mud concept to teach ascenders and descenders
- KS1 Classrooms should display the alphabet represented by Capital and Lower case letters

## Appendix D:

<b>Handwriting Goals</b>	
Make all my letters the same size. (Apart from capital letters)	✓
Have all of my letters and words sitting on the line.	✓
Show clear ascenders and descenders	✓
Put even spaces between my words.	✓
Copy correctly from the board.	✓
Present my handwriting neatly.	✓
Join my letters correctly	✓

### Explanation of Handwriting Terminology used at Sutton Veny:

**Arm Join:** The arm join is used when the join needs to start from the base line (in letters like 'a' and 'l').

**Ascenders:** A part of a letter that extends above the level of the top of an x (as in 'b' and 'd').

**Cursive:** Handwriting which is joined.

**Descenders:** A part of a letter that extends below the level of the bottom of an x (as in 'g' and 'p').

**'Dropping the ascender':** When the ascender no longer touches the top red line, but is slightly beneath it.

**'Froggy Fingers':** An alternative way of describing the Tripod pencil grip.





**Grass, Mud and Sky Lines:** Colour-coded areas within guidelines to assist children's understanding of the position of letters on the line. A teacher might say "make sure your 'p' goes into the mud".

**Jingles:** Each letter of the alphabet is drawn with a real life object incorporated into it with the purpose of helping Year R and Key Stage One children to associate the correct movement when forming given letters with a visual image. ie the letter 's' is formed with a snake in it and children are encouraged to "slither down the snake" when forming this letter.

**Pen licence:** Children earn a pen license in Year 3 when they have achieved all of their 'Handwriting Goals' and applied these skills across the curriculum in all writing. It is looked upon by the children as a privilege and it means that they will no longer write with a pencil for handwriting activities, but will use a blue handwriting pen.

**Read, Write, Inc:** A scheme which teaches children to form each letter correctly, with a focus also on spelling and reading.

**Speed One:** The speed at which children are encouraged to write during Handwriting sessions – particularly at Foundation Stage and Key Stage One – so that they can produce their best possible handwriting.

**Washing line:** The washing line join is used when the join needs to start at the top of the letter (in letters like 'o' and 'w').