



HANDWRITING POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	
POLICY VERSION:	VERSION 1.0
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MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	MIKE FISH
THIS POLICY WAS CONSULTED WITH:	LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD
THIS POLICY WAS DISTRIBUTED TO:	MARLEIGH PRIMARY ACADEMY STAFF

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
2	Values and aims.....	3
3	Handwriting in Early Years.....	3
	Appendix 1: Letter formations	7

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is based on guidance from the National Handwriting Association (NHA): www.nha-handwriting.org.uk.

2 Values and aims

- 2.1 Marleigh Primary Academy (MPA) believe that handwriting remains important in an increasingly digital world, as the skill of handwriting allows children to express and communicate their ideas fluently, clearly and with increasing speed.
- 2.2 We recognise that this skill will be easier for some to master than for others and so will support all children to steadily improve their handwriting from their individual baseline positions. A few children may find that handwriting is a continuing barrier to their learning and will be especially supported in communicating and expressing their ideas in other forms such as through typing or speech recognition.
- 2.3 The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent and agreed approach to the teaching of handwriting, throughout children's time at MPA.

3 Handwriting in Early Years

- 3.1 By the end of Reception, the statutory [EYFS profile](#) states that: '*children at the expected level of development will:*
- *hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;*
 - *write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;*
 - *write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.'*
- 3.2 The NHA webpage: [Development of Handwriting in the EYFS](#), concludes with the statement: '*Handwriting is predominantly a motor skill, so reversing the damage is difficult.*'
- 3.3 It is therefore important that children in nursery and reception focus on preparation for writing by developing a range of physical skills, as a weakness in any of these will affect a child's handwriting skills. These physical skills consist of the following (hyperlinked to information about each):

- [Gross Motor Skills \(Posture Base\)](#)
- [Gross Motor Skills \(Bilateral Coordination\)](#)
- [Fine Motor Skills \(Sensory Perception\)](#)
- [Fine Motor Skills \(Hand and Finger Muscles\)](#)
- [Eye Tracking Ability](#)
- [Spatial Awareness](#)
- [Motor Memory](#)
- [Visual Memory](#)

3.4 At MPA, we therefore ensure a focus on gross-motor skill development, primarily through learning outdoors and in our forest.

3.5 Reception children receive daily instruction in, and opportunity to practise, letter formation as part of phonics teaching (Rising Stars Rocket Phonics scheme). This is then reinforced by playful letter forming activities using a wide variety of media and tools, such as in sand, in the air, chalk on the ground, paint brushes, as well as with pencils. See appendix 1 for letter formations.

3.6 In line with [DfE guidance](#) (2021) and [Ofsted guidance](#) (2022), children are **not** taught to start every letter on the line with a 'lead in stroke' and resources must avoid this formation being modelled to children.

3.7 Detailed information supporting the teaching of handwriting in EYFS is available at: <https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/foundation-stage-handwriting.html> covering:

- the best seating position;
- development of pencil grip;
- paper position for left and right-hand writers;
- warm-up activities; and
- teaching tips.

4 Handwriting in KS1

4.1 The national curriculum states that in Year 1 '*pupils should be taught 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.’*

4.2 In Year 2, the national curriculum states: *‘pupils should be taught 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;*
- *use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters.’*

4.3 The correct formation of letters continues to be taught and reinforced through daily phonics sessions throughout Year 1 and 2.

4.4 In addition, children are actively encouraged to form letters correctly when writing in English and across the curriculum.

4.5 They are also taught handwriting sessions focusing on ‘families’ of letters formed in similar ways:

- [Curly letters](#): d e g s o c a f q
- [Ladder letters](#): t l y j l u
- [Zigzag letters](#): w x v z
- [Robot letters](#): b m n r h p k

4.6 In line with [DfE guidance](#) (2021) and [Ofsted guidance](#) (2022) children are **not** taught to start every letter on the line with a ‘lead in stroke’ and resources must avoid this formation being modelled to children.

4.7 In line with the Ofsted guidance linked above (*Delaying teaching joined handwriting gives teachers and children time to focus on other aspects of the writing process, such as composition, spelling and forming letters correctly.*) children are not taught to join their handwriting until they are secure in forming letters correctly; this may not be until KS2.

5 Handwriting in KS2

- 5.1 In Years 3-6 children have a weekly handwriting lesson, usually using a handwriting book with extra lines to encourage regular sizing of letters. As long as their letter formation is correct, they will be increasingly encouraged to join their handwriting in order to help them write more quickly. The first stage of this teaching will be encouraging children to use well formed letter exit strokes.
- 5.2 In addition, children are actively encouraged to form letters correctly (and to join) when writing in English and across the curriculum.

6 Support for children struggling to form letters correctly & for left-handers

- 6.1 Some children may find accurate letter formation and/or a tripod pencil grip difficult. We will endeavour to identify the root issue of these problems and provide children opportunities to practise activities such as those linked in section 3.3 above.
- 6.2 We will also endeavour to provide children with suitable writing aids, such as pencil grips, writing slopes, highlighted paper lines and possibly left-handed pens.
- 6.3 Further advice to support left-handers:
- <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/handwriting-advice-for-left-handers/>
 - <http://handedness.org/action/leftwrite.html>
 - <https://www.lwtears.com/blog/left-handed-handwriting-tips-guide>





















Appendix 1: Letter formations

In the order in which they are introduced to children through Rocket Phonics

Letter-formation scripts

In Reception, children should be taught the print formation of lower-case and capital letters, with clear start and finish points. The following letter formation scripts can be used to support the correct modelling to children.

Lower-case letters

 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left. I curl around like a snake (which sits on a writing line).</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and go straight down through the writing line. Then I go straight back up to form a half bridge, which curves round to form a bowl (and sits on the writing line).</i>
 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down, and flick.</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and go straight down to the line. Then I go straight back up to form a full bridge, then flick.</i>
 <i>I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line and flick. I take my pencil off. I cross the stick from left to right (just above the half-way point).</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and go straight down to the line. Then I go back up to form a full bridge, then another bridge, then flick.</i>
 <i>I start in the middle, go straight down to the line and flick. Then I take my pencil off and put a little dot above the stick</i>	 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left, and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then keep going straight up (to just below the top writing line) to make a tall letter. Then I go straight back down (to the bottom writing line) and flick.</i>
 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left, and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down through the writing line. I curl to make a tail below the writing line (from right to left).</i>	 <i>Starting tall, I go up and over the hill from right to left, then I go straight down through the writing line. I curl to make a tail below the writing line from right to left (like the /g/). I take my pencil off and draw a short straight line across.</i>
 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left, then curl right around to form a circle (which sits on the writing line).</i>	 <i>I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom writing line, and flick.</i>
 <i>I start in the middle and go up and over the hill from right to left, and curl around (to sit on the line).</i>	 <i>I go straight down through the writing line. Then I curl to make a tail below the writing line from right to left (like the /g/ and /f/). Then I take my pencil off and put a little dot above the stick.</i>
 <i>I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I go back up (to half-height) to form half a bridge then turn it into a bow shape, like this.</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and form a single zigzag which sits on the writing line.</i>
 <i>I set off from left to right then sweep round, over the hill from right to left and curl around (to sit on the writing line).</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and form a double zigzag which sits on the writing line.</i>
 <i>I start in the middle and go straight down then curl to form a bowl sitting on the writing line. I go back up to half-height, then straight back down to the writing line and flick.</i>	 <i>I form a diagonal line similar to the first line of the /v/. I take my pencil off and start on the bottom writing line to form a diagonal up to half-height which crosses the first line.</i>
 <i>I start in the middle and go straight down to the line. I go back up to form a half bridge.</i>	 <i>I go straight down and curl to form a bowl sitting on the writing line. I go back up to half-height, then straight back down through the writing line. Then I curl to make a tail below the writing line from right to left.</i>
 <i>I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I go back up (to half-height) to form a full bridge, then flick.</i>	 <i>I start in the middle and form a short straight line across from left to right. Then I form a diagonal line back down to the line. Then, I form another short straight line across from left to right (which is along the bottom writing line).</i>
 <i>I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I go back up (to half-height) to form half a bridge then curve to meet the bottom of the stick.</i>	 <i>I go up and over the hill from right to left, and curl around. I straighten up to catch the hook, then go straight down through the writing line. I kick back at the bottom with a short diagonal tail.</i>

Capital letters

All capital letters are tall and sit on the writing line.



I go up and over the hill from right to left. I curl around like a snake (which sits on a writing line).



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. I lift my pencil off, start at the top and form a curve down to the writing line.



I start at the top and draw a diagonal line down to the left. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and draw a diagonal line down to the right. Then I lift my pencil off and draw a straight line from left to right.



I go up and over the hill from right to left, then curl right around (to sit on the writing line). I bend around and go a little way up, then finish off with a short straight line across from left to right.



I start at the top and draw a straight line from left to right. I find the middle of the line and draw a line straight down (to the writing line).



I go up and over the hill from right to left, then curl right around to form a circle (which sits on the writing line).



I start at the top and draw a short straight line from left to right. I take my pencil off, find the middle of the line, and draw a straight line down. I take my pencil off and draw a straight line from left to right.



I start at the top and go up and over the hill from right to left, and curl around (to sit on the line).



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. I lift my pencil off and start back at the top to form a loop from left to right which curls under and stops at the mid-point.



I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I lift my pen off, find the middle of the line and go out and up in a diagonal line. Then I lift my pencil off, go back to the middle and go out and down in a diagonal line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. I lift my pencil off and draw a diagonal line down from left to right. I keep my pencil on the page and draw a line straight up to the top.



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line, then go across from left to right in a straight line. Then I lift my pencil off and go across at the top in a straight line from left to right, and again in the middle with a shorter straight line from left to right.



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and draw a zigzag down to the line and back up, then I draw a straight line down (back to the writing line).



I start at the top and go straight down then curl to form a bowl sitting on the writing line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I lift my pencil off, go back to the top and form a small loop back to the middle of the line. Then I draw a diagonal line to the writing line.



I start at the top and form a single zigzag which sits on the writing line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I lift my pencil off, leave a gap and start again at the top to go straight down to the bottom line. Then I lift my pencil off and form a line across the middle from left to right.



I start at the top and form a double zigzag which sits on the writing line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the bottom line. I lift my pencil off, start back at the top and form a loop to the mid-point and a loop to the bottom.



I form a diagonal line similar to the first line of the /v/. I take my pencil off and start on the bottom writing line to form a diagonal up to the top which crosses the first line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line. Then I lift my pencil off and go across at the top in a straight line from left to right, and again in the middle with a shorter straight line from left to right.



I start at the top and form a diagonal down to the mid-point. I take my pencil off, leave a space and form another diagonal down from the top to the mid-point. Then I go straight down from the mid-point to the bottom writing line.



I start at the top and go straight down to the writing line, then go across in a straight line from left to right.



I start at the top and form a short straight line across from left to right. Then I form a diagonal line back down to the line. Then, I form another short straight line across from left to right (which is along the bottom writing line).



I start at the top and draw a line from left to right. I take my pencil off, find the middle of the line, then go straight down and curl around from right to left to form a tail that sits on the writing line.



I go up and over the hill from right to left, then curl right around to form a circle (which sits on the writing line). Then I lift my pen off and form a short straight diagonal line through the bottom right of the circle.