



Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School  
Excellence for All

**‘We are a small school that makes a big difference’**

**‘To provide excellence for all within a happy, safe, and stimulating learning environment’**

# **HANDWRITING POLICY**

<b>SNAPE WOOD PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL</b>	
Approved by: Full Governing Body	Date: Autumn 2022
Review Date:	Autumn 2024

**Aim:**

At Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School, we will focus on the development of handwriting automaticity in order to support the raising attainment for all pupils.

**Rationale:**

Writing is a task which many learners have difficulties with due its inherent demands: recalling letter sounds, recalling letter shape, physical application and spatial awareness. Pupils are expected to do all this whilst generating independent ideas and embedding new learning. As such, this places a large cognitive load on the writer and often means that children spend time thinking about letter production rather than the focus of the lesson. Pupils are more able to access higher curricular demands if automaticity is emphasised. Automaticity is achieved when the writing process can be effected swiftly, accurately and without the need for conscious attention.

A consistently high standard of presentation and handwriting is promoted across the whole school which all children and staff recognise, understand and follow. For children and teachers this aims to foster a sense of pride and respect in their work. Self-esteem is raised when children are able to communicate meaning accurately.

**Presentation across the school:**

- All books are named with the school labels
- All work has a Learning Objective (FS and KS1 are typed and glued into books)
- Modelled examples are used to introduce new skills and reinforce expectations
- Children use guidelines if they are writing on plain paper (from Y2 onwards)
- All drawings and diagrams are in pencil
- Pencils, not felt pens, are used in exercise books
- Coloured pens are used for specific reasons by children e.g. self– correcting, editing or peer assessment
- One single line is used to cross out mistakes or edit writing
- Books are well kept with no writing or doodling on the outside or inside of covers
- Children are taught where to start a new piece of work
- Poor presentation is challenged through verbal feedback
- Tippex and correction pens are not to be used by children
- All adult handwriting to model expected standard. Foundation all in print. KS1 and Year 3 all in pre-cursive and Years 4, 5, 6 in cursive
- Spelling not in cursive in any year
- Teachers teach 'pick, flip, grip' to ensure children are using correct pen(cil) grip
- In KS2, and some pupils in KS1 may practice using a pen during handwriting lessons.

## Guidance for Foundation

Children are taught to use an efficient pencil grip starting in foundation stage.



They are explicitly taught the letter name, sound and shape of each letter without entrance and exit strokes. Within Foundation stage, children are given the opportunity to develop their fine and gross motor skills which will help develop the core strength needed to write. In addition:

- Pre-cursive not taught in Foundation
- taught how to sit for writing (appendix 1)
- all resources designed for children to read should be in print
- Dough Disco and Squiggle While you Wiggle used to develop letter formation

## Guidance for Years 1-3:

Children are taught to use an efficient pencil grip as well as being explicitly taught handwriting and that every letter should begin and end on the line using an entrance and exit flick. In addition:

- Formal handwriting practice is undertaken daily for 10 minutes
- Emphasis should focus on writing on the line and producing consistent letter size
- Pencil grips, a range of pencils to try out, wider lines and writing slopes are used by the children who experience major problems writing
- Squiggle While you Wiggle used to develop letter formation

## Guidance for Year 4-6:

Children are taught to write cursively. The emphasis in taught sessions is that of fluency and speed as lifting the pencil from the paper slows the writer down. Children are taught which letters to join and which they may leave due to efficiency.


- Children will have daily 10 minute handwriting lessons
- Pencil grips, a range of pencils, wider lines and writing slopes are used by the children who experience major problems writing cursively.
- Blue pens can be used from year 4 onwards – child and teacher should choose whether a pen or pencil works best. Children learn to use a pen confidently in handwriting before using across the curriculum.
- Pupils having real difficulty will use 'The Handwriting Support Frame' during handwriting practice in order to correct handwriting style.
- The agreed format for setting out work is followed
- Purple pens are used by pupils when answering questions
- All children in year 6 to use a pen to aid transition into secondary school


**Inclusion:**

Pupils with additional requirements will be supported in their handwriting work. Their progress will be monitored by the Class Teacher, the Teaching Assistant and the SENDCO. Occasionally, a decision will be made to personalise expectations for a child who has such specific needs, that these expectations could be a barrier to their progress (e.g. a child with physical difficulties). Difficulties are addressed through appropriate interventions or specific equipment.

To further support our pupils with handwriting. We use a programme developed by South Warwickshire NHS. All resources are sequenced and planned to develop handwriting across 6 key areas: Foundation Skills, Hand Skills, Skilled Hand Use, Visual Perception, Handwriting: Letter Join, Handwriting: Fluency and speed.

*Click on the image below to see resources*





### School Skills

#### Which programme? Fine motor skills screening form

Name ..... Date of birth .....

Use this checklist to help decide which intervention programme to use with each child. Tick the areas in which they are having difficulty. You may find that more than 2 intervention programmes are suggested. In this case, always start with the lowest-numbered programme. For example, if the child is having difficulties with letter reversals, but also struggling with opening and closing scissors, start with programme 2: Hand Skills. When they have completed that intervention block, review their progress and select the next programme.

Area of difficulty	No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Suggested intervention programme
<b>Functional Skills</b>				
Unable to open and close scissors well				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Difficulty using knife and fork together				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Puts clothes on back to front				1: Foundation skills
Difficulties with zips, buttons and laces				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Slow to get changed				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
<b>Handwriting</b>				
Holds pencil in an unconventional way				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Slouches in their seat or hooks their feet around the chair legs				1: Foundation skills
Fidgets in their chair				Classroom strategies 1: Foundation skills
Swapping hands when writing or drawing				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Poor control of the pencil				2: Hand skills 3: Skilled hand use
Produces letters which are not formed, spaced and sized well				5: Handwriting: Letter formation

[continued overleaf]

## Monitoring:

Presentation is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis through work scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews. Feedback will be shared with the class teacher and at Leadership meetings. This ensures that the policy leads to good practice.

## Left-handedness

Sometimes children who are left-handed can find handwriting difficult. Having to push the pen across the page towards their body can be awkward for them. Changing their body, paper or hand position for writing, their pen hold or changing the equipment they use can all help them achieve a fast, fluent writing style.

## Body position

Left-handed writers should:

Sit with light coming from the right-hand side, to avoid working in the shadow of their hand.

Sit slightly to the right of the desk space so they have plenty of room to their left.

Sit on the left hand side of right-handed writers – to avoid their paper and elbows bumping.

Not sit in a hunched or stiff way. Usually this happens because the paper position isn't right.

Hold their pencil further up to give space to see. The class teacher models this hold and the writing process to ensure left-handed children have the opportunity to see writing performed in a left-hand style.

## Equipment

Try different types of pens, to see how they affect your child's writing. Avoid using fountain pens for left-handed children – use ones especially for left-handers. Attaching a 'pencil-grip' can help if the pencil/pen is slippery.

## Paper position

A key way of improving handwriting by left-handers is by positioning the paper correctly.

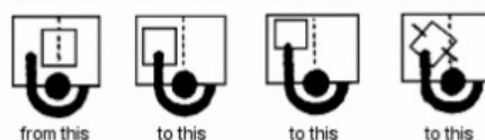
Place the paper alongside your child on the left, push the paper away from them slightly and turn the paper so the top is angled to the right towards the table.

Place the paper alongside your child on the left.

Push the paper away from them slightly.

Turn the paper so the top is angled to the right towards the table.

Figure 1: Correct positioning of paper for left-handed writer



This allows freer movement and for the writing to be more vertical. Your child's hand is in a more comfortable position below the writing, making it easier for them to see what's being written and avoid smudging.

If your child has developed a 'hooked hand' position (with their hand above the writing line) and finds it difficult to change, there is one method of 'hooking' better than others. To encourage this:

- place the paper as for right-handed writers
- ask your child to place their wrist on its edge rather than flat
- flex the wrist when writing.

A smooth pointed pen – for example, ball-point – should be used, rather than a fountain pen.

### Pen hold and hand position

Does your child:

- say it hurts to write
- have to stop often when writing
- want to write faster
- find their handwriting is distorted because the pens restricts the movement of the arm?

Different ways of holding the pen may help avoid these. Your child will need to experiment to find the best way for their fingers, wrist and arms to move freely and loosely.

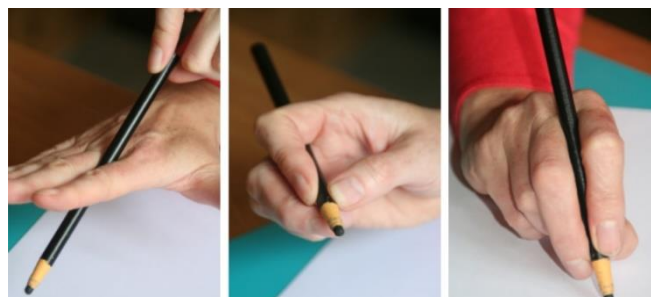
The traditional way of holding a pen – the 'tripod grip' (see figure 2) – has the thumb and first finger placed either side of the pencil and the middle finger underneath.

The traditional way of holding a pen – the 'tripod grip'

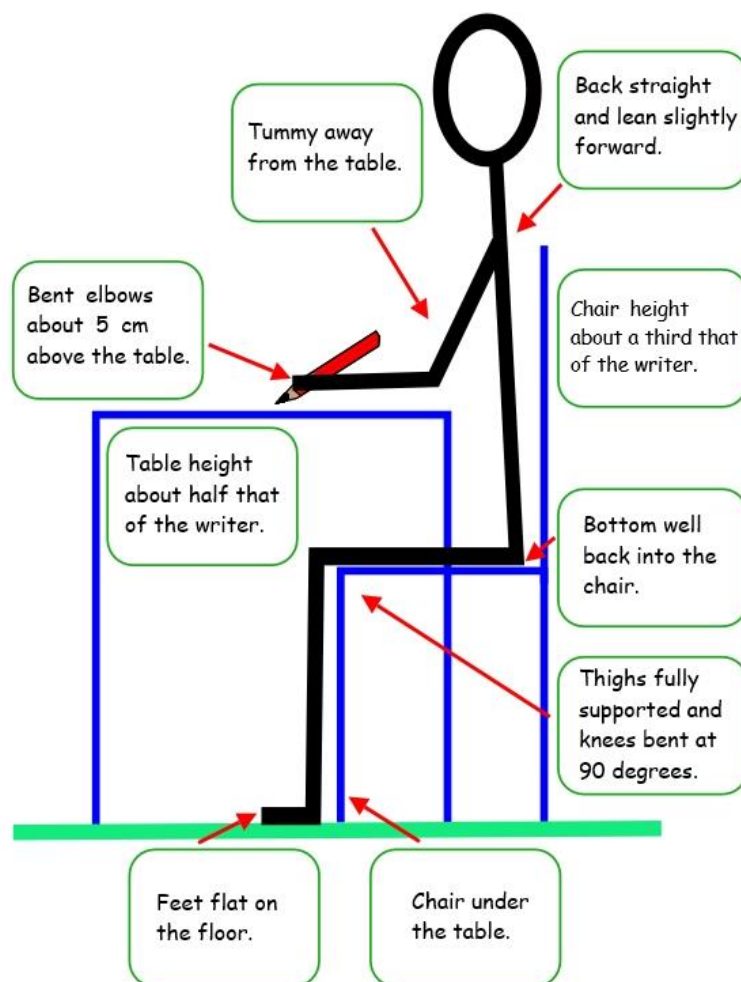
Left-handed children should be encouraged to:

- Hold the pen so that the first finger is closer to the end point than their thumb.
- Hold the pen slightly further away from the point, than a right hander would.
- Position the wrist by rotating the hand slightly towards the paper.

There is another pen hold to consider (see below) which has the pen placed between the first and middle finger, resting on the thumb.



## Appendix 1: Seating position



**Appendix 2: Rules for handwriting**

1. Good writing is based on a pattern of ovals and parallel lines.	o i o i o i o i o i o
2. All small letters start at the top (Foundation only).	a b m c s
3. All the down strokes are parallel.	m h n a d
4. All similar letters are the same height.	r o n c e u l h b k d
5. All down strokes are equidistant.	minimum
6. The space between words is the width of the small letter o.	will o you o be o mine
7. Ascenders and descenders are no more than twice the height of small letters, preferably less.	h g l p d
8. Capital letters are no higher than the ascenders	Ch Br Dl Ph
9. Lines of writing are far enough apart for ascenders and descenders not to touch.	you go joy get pit home back doll
10. Letters which finish at the top join horizontally.	o r v w l
11. Letters which finish at the bottom join diagonally.	aim aim
12. Letters which finish on a stroke moving left, are best left unjoined.	b g j p s y
13. The letter f ascends and descends. Children should only join when confident	e f      e f