



Handwriting and Presentation at Glebelands Primary Academy

Guidelines and Procedures

A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. Therefore, handwriting must be actively taught and the skills applied to everyday use. Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth: from readiness for handwriting to letter joins, practising speed and fluency and higher presentation skills.

Aims

1. Children should develop a clear, comfortable, legible style of writing.
2. In handwriting, pupils should be taught to:
 - hold a pencil comfortably (the tripod grip should be encouraged) in order to develop a legible style that includes writing from left to right, from the top to the bottom of the page, starting and finishing letters correctly;
 - they should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version;
 - develop a regularity of size and shape of letters and a regularity of spacing of letters and words.
3. Children need to appreciate that their work is usually presented for others to read and, therefore, attention needs to be given to layout, presentation and accuracy.
4. The introduction of a consistently joined style needs to be developed in order that writing may be fluent whilst retaining good presentation. Children should be helped to develop a comfortable, flowing and legible joined-up style once they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

Teaching and Learning

Handwriting is a skill which needs to be taught explicitly. Since handwriting is essentially a movement skill, correct modelling of the agreed style is essential. All adults working with children should correctly form their handwriting so as to be good role models for the children.

Model Used

Glebelands Primary Academy uses the Nelson Handwriting (Appendix 1 provides examples of this style). Appendix 3 provides an overview of the teaching sequence to be used across school.

Continuity and Progression:

Reception

Children will begin Reception with a wide variety of writing skills ranging from mark-making to writing their own name unaided. They will move from gross to fine motor skills using a variety of tactile methods. To aid co-ordination, sand trays, paint and large brushes, chalk and modelling materials will be used. The children will be taught the formation of letters in line with the FFT Success for All phonics programme. Through the phonic sessions, the children are taught letter formation cues for each letter (see appendix 6) and practise the formation using actions in the air and also writing on paper. This is then embedded within the wider curriculum provision in the setting. They will be taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences. All children will write in lined exercise books.

In addition to the handwriting taught within the FFT SFA phonics sessions, there will be separate handwriting sessions throughout the week further embedding the handwriting skills need and ensuring that pupils are using the tri-pod grip.

Children in Reception need to develop the following skills:

- good gross and fine motor control
- a recognition of pattern
- a language to talk about shapes and movements
- the main handwriting movements involved in the three basic letter shapes (l, c, r)

Developing letter shapes using gross motor movements:

- encourage children to sky write using both hands
- make patterns in the air/on the floor/on a partner's back
- use ribbons to make letter shapes/patterns in the air
- use of sand tray/seeds and other tactile materials to form letters
- use large paper and brushes to make writing patterns/use of chalk outside and on blackboards
- use of plasticine/playdough/clay to mould/score letters

All adults must use the letter formation cue as part of the Success for All phonics provision and this must be reinforced across all areas of the curriculum. This can be found on the SFA phonics portal and as appendix 6 in this document.

Handwriting and Emergent Writing:

Handwriting should complement phonics so that the children become used to thinking about letter shapes and sounds together. This needs to be done daily as a short directed activity either on

whiteboards, air writing or paper. The children will also be able to use elements of continuous provision to practise these skills and further develop fine motor control.

Teaching letter patterns:

Focus on patterns which build on the basic letter shapes: l, c, r, and zig-zag letters (v, w, x, z).

Year 1 (minimum of three, fifteen-minute sessions per week)

Although some children in Year 1 may start the year needing to consolidate the skills above, most children in Year 1 should be writing unaided, using capital letters where appropriate and presenting their written work legibly. Children should be able to write on lined paper with a reasonable degree of accuracy. HB pencils will be used at this stage. During Y1, children should be moving towards a joined style once they can form letters securely with the correct orientation. Adults must continue to use the letter formation cues as set out in the SfA phonics guidance.

Children should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters using the correct formation, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' and to practise these
- gain control over the size of the letters on the lines, ensuring consistency and also showing that the ascenders and descenders are the same size as the body of the letter

Year 2 (minimum of three, fifteen-minute sessions per week)

Children in Y2 should revise and practise letter formation frequently and be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely, with correct orientation. Adults must continue to use the letter formation cues as set out in the SfA phonics guidance.

Children 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 (approximately the same size as an 'o')

Years 3 and 4 (minimum of three, fifteen-minute sessions per week)

The introduction of handwriting pens will begin at this stage. Once a child has developed a clearly formed and consistently accurate joined style, the use of a pen may be considered. Look at the guidance in appendix 5 to help decide whether a child is ready to use pen. The use of pen may also be considered for children with motor control needs or for those who find it difficult to apply enough pressure when using pencil. Pen must not be used for maths or for diagrams. The pupils should increasingly be developing speed and accuracy in Years 3 and 4 and making a start on higher presentation skills. Adults must continue to use the letter formation cues as set out in the SFA phonics guidance.

Children should be taught to:

- use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined
- increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting

Years 5 and 6 (minimum of two, fifteen-minute sessions per week)

Children should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it. Children should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, for example, for labelling a diagram, writing an email address or for algebra and capital letters. Pen must not be used for maths or for drawing diagrams. Adults must continue to use the letter formation cues as set out in the SFA phonics guidance.

Children should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

- choosing which shape of letter to use when given choices and deciding, as part of their personal style, whether or not to join specific letters
- choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Teaching Sequence

- warm up (see the following link for videos of warm activity ideas:
<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/oxford-owl-videos/handwriting-videos--1/>
<https://youtu.be/K7QJ4pdNzvo?si=eXfPRk82XbaluGyU>
- physical preparation – posture, paper, pencil grip
- patterns
- over teacher's writing (highlighter/dotted font)
- under teacher's writing (directly under words – write in large letters, leave large spaces between words)

- copying from teacher's model - independence

Techniques for teaching letter formation

- model good handwriting all the time
- demonstrate when introducing and teaching letter shapes
- talk through the process using appropriate language
- encourage children to verbalise the process
- children form letters in the air
- finger trace over tactile letters
- write over highlighter pen (or dotted letters)
- draw round templates
- write in sand with finger or stick
- write with chalk on chalkboard
- form letters with pegs on pegboard
- form letters with beads in plasticine
- finger trace the outline of letters on the back of the person in front of you

Getting ready to write

Seating and posture

- chair and table should be at a comfortable height
- the table should support the forearm so that it rests lightly on the surface and is parallel to the floor
- encourage children to sit up straight and not slouch
- the height of the chair should be such that the thighs are horizontal and feet flat on the floor
- tables should be free of clutter
- rooms should be well lit
- left handed pupils should sit on the left of their partners

- children should write with a pencil (or pen when children are ready) with a rounded nib although pencils should be reasonably sharp
- a tripod grip is the most efficient way of holding a pencil – children should work towards this by the end of year 3, by which time, bone and muscle development should have been completed (see appendix 7 for stages of children's readiness to write)

For right handers

- hold lightly between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm away from the point
- the paper should be placed to the right tilted slightly to the left
- use the left hand to steady the paper

For left handers

- hold lightly between thumb and forefinger resting on the first knuckle of the middle finger
- hold about 3cm from the tip
- the hand should be kept below the writing line
- the paper should be tilted slightly to the right at about 20 - 30°
- use the right hand to steady the paper

NB It is very important that a right-handed child is not seated on the left-hand side of a left-handed child as their elbows will collide!

Please refer to 'Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book' P.19 for further information.

Assessment

Teachers and leaders should monitor children's writing and presentation in books regularly (at least termly). The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?

- Is the writing properly aligned?

Individual assessment

Children should be observed as they write during handwriting lessons – the teacher must circulate, monitor and intervene. The following should be considered:

- Is the child's posture correct?
- Does the child hold the pencil correctly?
- Does the child use the correct movement when forming and or joining letters?
- Are any letters reversed or inverted?
- Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?
- Is the writing easily legible?

Links to spelling

Linking handwriting and spelling is one of the most powerful ways of developing visual memory. Handwriting should be practised using letters, blends, strings or digraphs so that patterns are internalised.

Appendix 1 – Model used

Lower-case letters

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

*a letter slope of 8° from the vertical to the right is introduced in 'Developing Skills Book 1'.

Capitals

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The joining sets:

Set 1

a c d e h k l m n s t u

Set 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y

Set 3

b f h k l t

Set 4

f o r v w

Please refer to 'Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book' P.9

The break letters (letters that aren't joined from)

b g j p q x y z

Joins are not made to or from the letter z

*See Appendix 2 for examples of the break letters

The four joins

1. Set 1 → Set 2 (letters without ascenders)
2. Set 1 → Set 3 (letters with ascenders)
3. Set 4 → Set 2 (horizontal joins)
4. Set 4 → Set 3 (horizontal joins to letters with ascenders)

Please refer to 'Nelson Handwriting Teacher's Book' P.8

Appendix 2 – Examples of the joins and break letters

A quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

The five boxing lizards jumped quickly into
the water.

Appendix 3 - Nelson Handwriting Overview

Handwriting Skills										
*Reception	*Year 1			*Y1/2	*Y2	*Y3	*Y4	*Y5	*Y6	
Handwriting Hand-eye co-ordination Patterns Presentation Pencil control										
	Letter formation Overwriting (lower case)									
		Numerals								
		Capitals Full stops Underwriting Sentences Word spacing Letter spacing								
			Copywriting from a model							
			The four joins and the break letters Fluency							
							Printing			
								Writing with a slope Decorated capitals Punctuation		
								Speedwriting		
									Presentation Paragraphs Individual style Difficult joins	
										Handwriting for different purposes

Appendix 4 - Progression through letters/ joins

EYFS

Autumn Term 2	Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2	Summer Term – with any reinforcement needed
Pre-letter patterns for forming c,a,d,g,q,o (curly caterpillar)	Pre-letter patterns for forming i,l,t (long ladder)	Pre-letter patterns for forming h,b,p (one-armed robot)	Letters c,a,d,g,o
Letters c,a,d,g,q,o	Letters i,l,t	Letters h,b,p	Letters e,s,f
Pre-letter patterns for forming e,s,f (curly caterpillar)	Pre-letter patterns for forming u,y,j,k (long ladder)	Pre-letter pattern for forming v,w,x,z (zigzag letters)	Letters i,l,t,
Letters e,s,f	Letters u,y,j,k	Letters v,w,x,z	Letters u,y,j,k
	Pre-letter patterns for r,n,m (one-armed robot)	Pre-numeral patterns	Letters r,n,m
	Letters r,n,m	Numerals 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	Letters h,b,p
		Question mark formation	Letters v,w,x,z

Year 1

Developing Skills (Teacher's Book P.32-53)

First Join	Second Join	Third Join	Fourth Join	Break Letters	Capital Letters
un, um	ch, sh	od, og	wl, vl	b,p,g,q,y,j,z	
ig, id	th, tl	re, ve	of, ff		
ed, eg	ll, ill	oon, oom	fl, flo		
an, ar	sli, slu				
ing, ung	ck, ack				
	st, sti				
	ink, unk				

Year 2

Further Developing Skills (Teacher's Book P.56-77)

Revising 1 st join	Joining from 'r'	Joining to 'a'	Joining to 'e'
Revising 2 nd join	Joining to/from 'a'	Joining from 'o'	Joining to 'u'
Revising 3 rd join	Joining from 'e'	Joining to 'r'	Practising print
Revising 4 th join	Joining from 'o'	Revising 1 st /2 nd join	Joining to ascenders
Joining letter 's'	Joining from 'y'	Joining from 'o'	Practising all joins

Perfecting Skills Year 3 and 4

Presentation Skills Year 5 and 6

In focused handwriting lessons, perfection in letter formation, sizing and spacing must be the aim. Children need to persevere until they achieve this. Handwriting sessions need to be well-planned. Differentiation may well be by outcome with those needing more support producing less but of top quality. Once the handwriting style has been mastered, handwriting time can be spent on different forms of presentation so that children learn how to showcase their best efforts. This includes maths especially where children are problem solving, finding all possibilities and reasoning. At the start of each year, children will need to rehearse layout of basic arithmetic in squared books.

Handwriting must be an integral part of all work and good presentation should be insisted upon at all times. Any child found to be falling behind, will need intervention, backtracking through the system above as necessary. Any piece of work can be used to assess a child's handwriting. The children need to take greater ownership of presentation as they pass through the school embellishing their work as befits the purpose of the writing.

Teachers will need to model good practice at all times, including when marking work, writing on the board and on working walls. Teachers will need to use the Nelson Developing Skills books but not expect that a child copying from the page will be doing so correctly. The handwriting must be modelled by the adult leading the session.

Appendix 5 – Pen Readiness Checklist








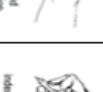

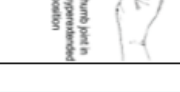

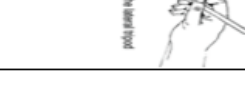
To show pen readiness, all handwriting (not just in handwriting books) must show the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All letters are correctly formed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 'x-height' letters are consistent in size	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All ascenders and descenders are the correct height/length	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All letters are joined correctly	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital letters are larger than lower case letters	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spaces between letters are the right size (not too squashed or stretched)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spaces between words are the right size and consistent (not too small or big)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date and LO/Learning Question/Title underlined with a ruler	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work looks neat	

Alliterative Phrases and Letter Writing Cues

GPC	Phonics Phrase	Letter Formation Cue
/s/	'The snake slides and slithers.'	'Left around, right around, from head to tail.'
/a/	'Alphie asks for apples.'	'Around the apple and down the leaf.'
/t/	'Tap the tall tower.'	'Down the tower, lift and cross.'
/p/	'Peek at the proud parrot.'	'From head to tail then right around the parrot.'
/i/	'Imagine itchy insects.'	'Down the insect, lift and dot.'
/n/	'Ned is near the net.'	'From head to toe and over the net.'
/m/	'The man marches on mountains.'	'From the man go down, climb one mountain then the other.'
/d/	'Don't disturb the dinosaur.'	'Around his back then head to toe.'
/g/	'The girl is glad.'	'Left around the girl, down her plait and curl.'
/o/	'The octopus observes olives.'	'From the top of the head and all the way round the octopus.'
/c/	'The curly caterpillar crawls.'	'Curl around the caterpillar.'
/k/	'The kangaroo keeps kicking.'	'From head to toe, arm up, kick out.'
/ck/	'The chick pecks.'	'Curl around the caterpillar.' 'From head to toe, arm up, kick out.'
/e/	'Every elephant enters.'	'Under his ear and around his trunk.'
/u/	'The upside-down umbrella is unusual.'	'Under the umbrella, up and down.'
/r/	'The rapid rabbit races.'	'From head to tail then up and over along his ears.'
/h/	'The happy horse hops.'	'From head to toe and over his back.'
/b/	'Bat before the ball.'	'Down the bat and around the ball.'
/f/	'The floppy flower falls.'	'Down the flower and across the leaves.'
/ff/	'Huff and puff.'	'Down the flower and across the leaves.'
/l/	'The long leg leaps.'	'Down the long, long leg.'
/ll/	'Bill is ill.'	'Down the long, long leg.'
/ss/	'Less mess, Jess.'	'Left around, right around, from head to tail.'
/j/	'Jane jumps for joy.'	'Down Jane's back, up to her toes. Jump to the ball.'
/v/	'The vulture veers over valleys.'	'Down one wing and up the other.'
/w/	'Watch the worm wiggle.'	'Wiggle down, wiggle up, down and up.'
/x/	'The excited fox exercises.'	'Hand to toe this way, hand to toe that way.'
/y/	'Yank the yellow yo-yo.'	'Down one string and way down the other.'
/z/	'Zip the zig-zag zip.'	'Zig, zag, zig.'
/zz/	'The fuzzy bee buzzes'	'Zig, zag, zig.'
/qu/	'The queen is quite quiet.'	'Right around the queen and way down her staff.' 'Under the umbrella, up and down.'

Appendix 7 – Stages of children’s readiness to write

<p>FISTED GRIP</p>	<p>DIGITAL PRONATE GRIP</p>	<p>HIGH INDEX 4 FINGER GRIP</p>	<p>4-6 YEARS</p> <p>HOOKED WRIST OR EXTENDED WRIST</p> <p>CROSS THUMB</p> <p>THUMB TUCK</p> <p>JOINT OF INDEX FINGER AND THUMB IN A FLEXED POSITION</p> <p>INDEX FINGER JOINT IN HYPER EXTENDED POSITION</p> <p>THUMB JOINT IN HYPER EXTENDED POSITION</p> <p>ALL FINGERS MOVE AS ONE 3 FINGER GRIP STATIC TRIPOD</p> <p>LATERAL TRIPOD</p>								<p>6-7 YEARS</p> <p>DYNAMIC TRIPOD GRIP</p>
<p>1-2 YEARS</p>  <p>FISTED GRIP The child holds the pencil with the fist. The pencil is held in the palm. All fingers and thumb are used. Movement is from the shoulder, the arm and the hand move as a unit. Light scribbles are produced with this pencil grip.</p>	<p>2-3 YEARS</p>  <p>DIGITAL PRONATE GRIP The child holds the pencil with the palm facing down. The pencil is held in the palm. All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page. Movement comes mostly from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized. Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.</p>	<p>3-4 YEARS</p>  <p>4 FINGER GRIP A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit. Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp. A static quadrupod grip has a fourth finger involved. Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.</p>							 <p>STATIC TRIPOD GRIP The child holds the pencil with the thumb, index and middle finger. The pencil is held in a tripod position. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.</p>		 <p>DYNAMIC TRIPOD GRIP By 6 or 7 years old, the child holds the pencil with the thumb, index and middle finger. The ring and little fingers are bent and rest comfortably on the table. The index finger and thumb form an open space. Movement comes from the fingertips. This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.</p>



Being ready to write



This is what we mean in Early Years when we talk about children being ready/not ready to write. In order to hold a pencil effectively and comfortably and be able to form letters correctly, children need the bone and muscle development that you can see in the right hand x-ray. This is particularly pertinent to boys – the hand on the left is every boy in Foundation Stage and the majority of boys for the greater part of Year 1