



Parkside
Primary School

Handwriting Policy

Reviewed September 2026

Handwriting Policy

Aim and Introduction

This handwriting policy is for staff, parents, carers, students and visitors. It intends to provide a clear and coherent framework for a shared understanding of teaching handwriting and to ensure continuity across the school. Handwriting is a skill which is best taught and learnt through demonstration, explanation and practise. Our handwriting lessons follow the guidance of the National Curriculum and is supported by the use of the Cambridge PenPal scheme. It is our overall aim that:

All children develop a fluent and legible style of handwriting.

Formal handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically through the use of the PenPals handwriting scheme. To effectively deliver handwriting lessons in line with the PenPals scheme all teacher must refer to the teaching book specific to their year group to ensure they are planning appropriate and progressive sessions. The scheme consists of 5 developmental stages all working towards the overall aim that all children develop a fluent and legible style of handwriting.

- Stage 1: **Readiness for writing**: gross and fine motor skills leading to letter formation. (EYFS- nursery, reception and year 1)
- Stage 2: **Beginning to join** (year 2)
- Stage 3: **Securing joins** (upper KS1 & lower KS2)
- Stage 4: **Practising speed and fluency** (lower KS2)
- Stage 5: **Presentation skills** (upper KS2)

Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for linking handwriting with early phonics and spelling work whilst using the PenPals scheme.

Handwriting and Pencil grip

Pencil grip becomes a habit at an early age. It is therefore important that within EYFS and Year 1 children are encouraged to use an appropriate grip. The most efficient pencil grip is the dynamic tripod grasp where the pencil is positioned between the thumb and index finger with the pencil resting on the middle finger. The tripod grip is traditionally recommended as this hold allows children to sustain handwriting for long periods without tiring their hands. Where necessary, children will be supplied with triangular pencils to support and develop an appropriate pencil grip.

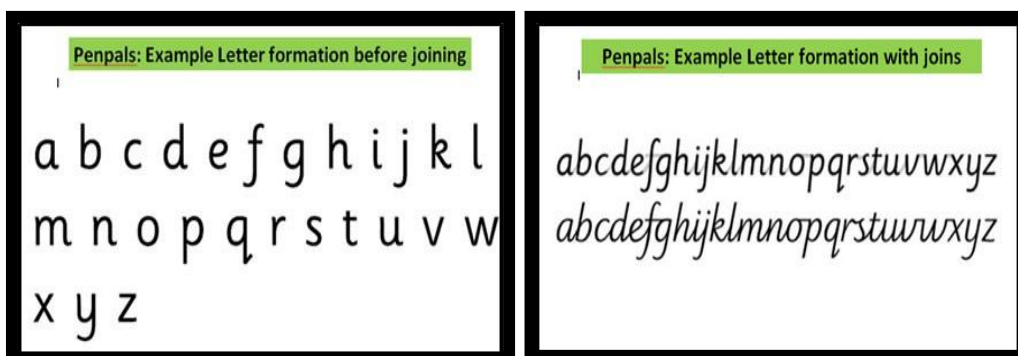
Handwriting and Posture

All children should be taught to develop the correct posture as it is imperative for successful handwriting. The children will find it easier to sustain good handwriting if they are sitting comfortably. The key indicators for appropriate posture demonstrating readiness for handwriting include:

- Sitting up straight and leaning slightly forward.
- Feet are flat on the floor.
- Elbows are off of the desk.
- All chair legs are touching the ground.

Handwriting and Font across the school

The PenPals scheme uses the Sassoon font, before and after joining. All classroom computers will have the appropriate font downloaded and will use and display this where possible in and around their classrooms. We also believe it is important for the children to be exposed to a variety of different fonts and words containing capitals.



Inclusion and equal opportunities

The scheme we use is inclusive of all children. However, teachers should be aware of the measures that should be in place to cater for the needs of left-handed children to ensure their handwriting is successful as possible.

Left-handed children should sit to the left of right-handed children to avoid their arms bumping each other. Left-handed children should sit with their body and paper at a slant to the right. This enables them to see their pencil tip as well as preventing them from smudging their work with their writing hand as well as allowing the pencil to move more freely. Some children may also need to use different tools to support their handwriting development, for example: pencil grips, a sloping surface or a thick triangular pencil which will be supplied by their class teacher. At Parkside we ensure teachers and support staff have 'handwriting awareness' to support the individual needs of all the children. Any concerns will be reported to our SENDco.

The use of writing implements

At Parkside, we believe exposure to a range of writing implements and, rather than restriction, will help to encourage and develop children's handwriting skills. Well-formed, joined and legible handwriting is an essential life skill; it is fast, efficient and communicates effectively. In our school, we value the importance of good quality presentation and we advocate the development of the fine motor skills that lead to legible handwriting. The wider curriculum has a crucial role to play in this, as fine motor skills are often best honed through the manipulation of drawing and modelling materials.

From early on in the EYFS/KS1, we provide opportunities for the children to start and explore their writing journey with a variety of different tools (for example with pencil, chalk, paint brushes and crayons). As the children progress through the school, they will be able to experiment by using a handwriting pen. By the end of the summer term in year 2, the children will be encouraged to use a handwriting pen as their default writing tool. This would be alongside using a pencil for drawing. This will then continue in KS2 as the children begin to develop their own cursive style (as per the Pen Pals scheme). Class teachers will continually assess the progress of the children in their class and support individual needs as necessary.

The progression of handwriting at Parkside

Early Years Foundation Stage:

In the Foundation Stage children need to develop skills which will later enable them to acquire a legible, fluent and fast handwriting style. In nursery and reception children will develop:

- Gross and fine motor skills through sensory activities.
- Recognition of pattern and language to talk about shapes and movement e.g. forming shapes and letters in sand/ shaving foam.
- A comfortable tripod pencil grip (between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger) that allows for efficient control of the pencil.
- The correct formation of all lower case letters (taught within Read Write Inc. Phonics sessions alongside the PenPals scheme and in English lessons).

Key Stage One:

In Key Stage 1, all children will take part in dedicated handwriting sessions each week. Building on the foundation stage, children should begin to form a legible style of handwriting. In Key Stage One:

- Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor skills with a range of multi-sensory activities.
- Teachers and support staff will continue to guide children on correct letter formation.
- Teachers and support staff will continue to monitor and correct pencil grip ensuring the children are using a comfortable tripod grip allowing for efficient control.
- Children will start to make links between spelling and phonics.
- Through the PenPals scheme children in Year 2 will begin to join letters and develop this skill throughout the year.

- Children should have a secure understanding of which letters belong to which letter family.

Lower Key Stage Two:

In year 3 and 4 children will continue to have regularly handwriting practise opportunities in their timetables. In lower key stage two, children should:

- Consolidate their use of the basic handwriting joins.
- Ensure consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters.
- Build up their speed, fluency and legibility through practise.
- Work towards receiving their pen licence.

Upper Key Stage Two (years 5 & 6):

In years 5 and 6 the children should consolidate and continue to practise and develop a fast, fluent and legible joint script. Children should also begin to practise:

- Writing for a range of different purposes including: note taking, neat writing for presentation and print letters for personal details.
- Developing a consistent and personal style of script.

Vocabulary Extension and Handwriting

Throughout primary school, children are expected to grow their vocabulary, justify their answers, give well-structured descriptions and participate actively in conversations. At Parkside, we believe a strong vocabulary basis can bring success to the understanding of the whole curriculum. In all year groups we follow the vocabulary 'tier' approach.

Vocabulary can be divided into 3 tiers:

- Tier 1: common words used in spoken language
- Tier 2: high frequency language that appears across a variety of domains and can have different meanings
- Tier 3: subject specific, academic language

At Parkside, we specifically focus on the application of 'tier 2' vocabulary. Opportunities are provided throughout the school day for the children to acquire, experiment with and understand the meaning of new vocabulary (See our Spelling Policy for further information).

Partnerships with parents/carers

In EYFS and year 1, when the children are beginning to increase their practise of letter formation parents/carers will receive a copy of the letter patterns sheet explaining the correct formation of each lower and upper case letter. This ensures a greater connection between the learning taking place in school and the home.

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Policy reviewed: September 2026