Eden Park Primary & Nursery School

Handwriting Policy

June 2026

Handwriting Policy

At Eden Park Primary & Nursery School, we are very proud of our pupils' handwriting and take particular care in our handwriting style. We have a handwriting progression that moves from printing letters to joining, ensuring children are confident in letter formation before joining.

Objective

Handwriting is a basic skill that influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By 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 the different forms of handwriting used for different purposes.

Our intention is to make handwriting an automatic process that does not interfere with creative and mental thinking.

Rationale

The process of forming letters, joining them, controlling size, spacing and speed, all support neural development, building pathways that support an array of different types of learning. Fluent, joined writing also reduces working memory load, freeing cognitive resources for other processes.

Aims:

- To develop a neat, legible, speedy handwriting style using joined letters, which leads to producing letters and words automatically in independent writing.
- To establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.
- For pupils to understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and different letterforms (joined, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning.

Expectations

All teaching staff are encouraged to model the printed or joined style of handwriting chosen for each year group in our school in all their handwriting, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the learning and teaching of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. Our objective is to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting with a sense of achievement and pride.

Handwriting frequency

Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Modelling and formal teaching of handwriting is taught in short and often bursts, such as through explicit handwriting sessions, but also through dictation.

Pens and pencils

Children will start handwriting using a soft pencil. When fine motor skills have been established a handwriting pen can be used.

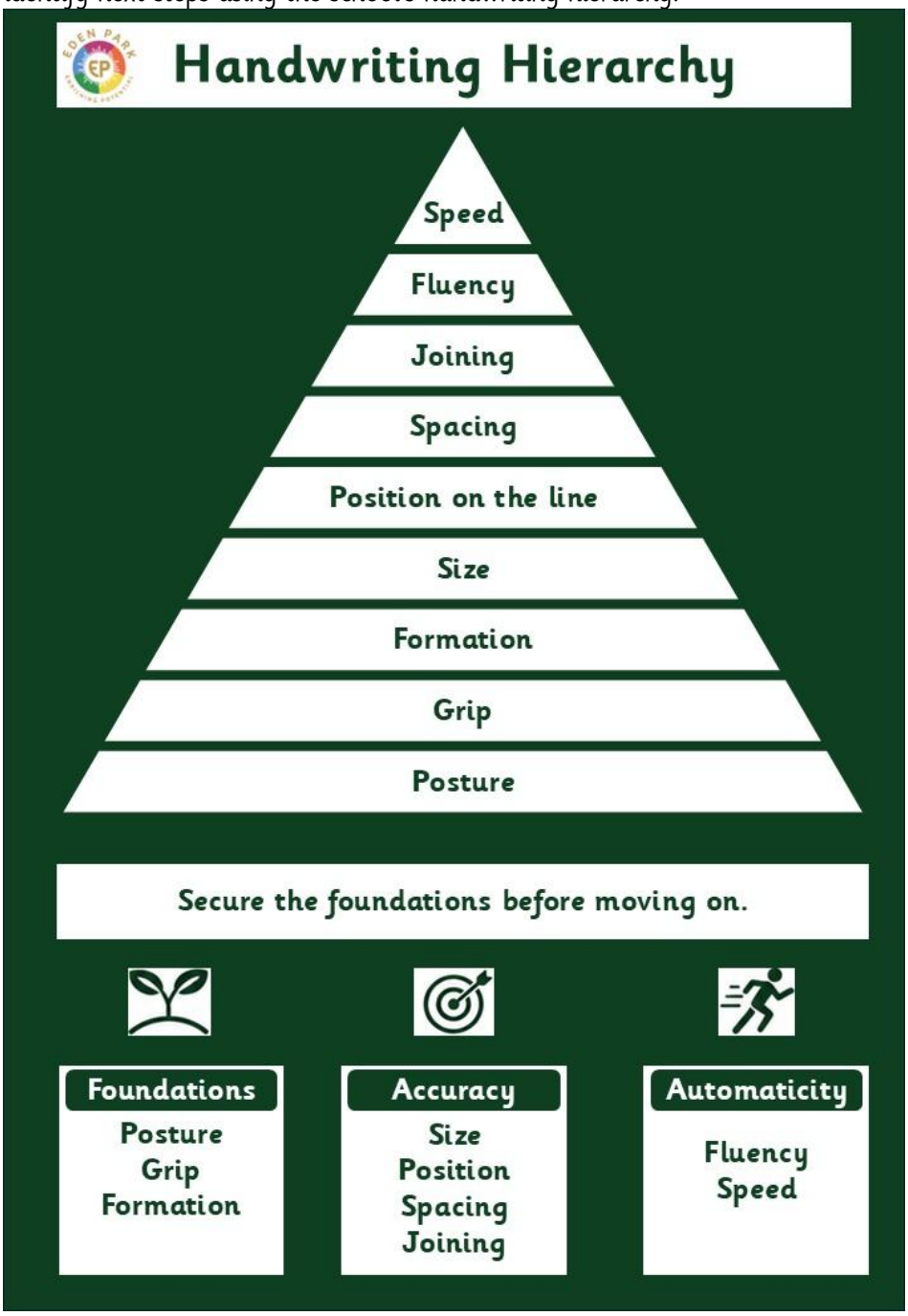
Inclusion

For children who experience handwriting difficulties due to fine motor development, including those who are left-handed and those with special educational needs, the appropriate additional support will be put into place.

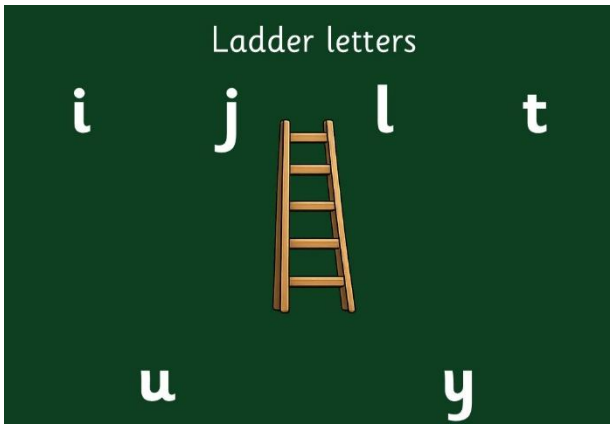
Teaching rationale

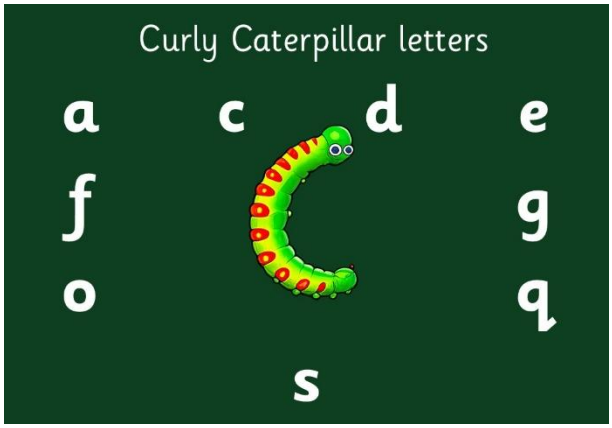
Handwriting is a mastery curriculum. Pupils move forward when previously taught skills are secure and consistently applied in independent writing.

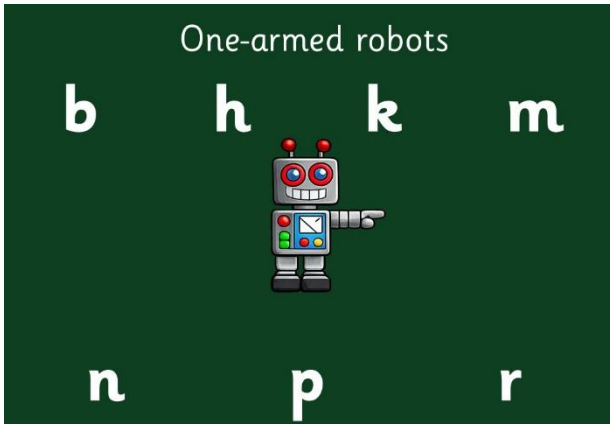
Assessment is ongoing and formative and is based on pupils' work across the curriculum rather than isolated handwriting tasks.
Teachers identify next steps using the school's handwriting hierarchy:



When introducing letters, they are taught in families:









Key Stage Teaching

Early Years

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons on a daily basis, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes, their sounds, formation and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

We teach handwriting using the printed method. It starts with fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip.
It is divided into three sections covering:
• pre-writing patterns
• easy letters and words
• harder letters and words
At the end of this year, children should be able to recognise and form all the printed, lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Gross and Fine Motor Development

Children are supported to develop the strength, coordination and control required for writing through continuous provision and adult-led activities.

Gross motor skills

Developing core strength, balance and posture (e.g. climbing, balancing, large-scale movements)
Shoulder and arm control through activities such as throwing, sweeping, painting on large surfaces
Crossing the midline and developing bilateral coordination

Fine motor skills

Developing hand strength and dexterity (e.g. playdough, tweezers, threading, peg boards)
Refining grip through manipulation of small tools and objects
Developing controlled movements of fingers and wrists
These skills are revisited regularly to ensure children are physically ready to write.

Mark Making and Early Writing

Children are encouraged to explore mark making in meaningful contexts before formal letter formation is introduced: Making marks with a range of tools and media
Developing control and intention in marks
Understanding that marks can represent meaning
Beginning to distinguish between drawing, writing and numerals
Using the appropriate tool for mark making.

Letter Formation and Early Handwriting

As children become physically ready, direct teaching of letter formation is introduced and practised:

- Developing a comfortable and effective pencil grip
- Learning to sit with appropriate posture and paper position
- Forming recognisable letters, generally lower-case, using correct formation
- Beginning to write their name with correct letter formation
- Writing simple words and labels that can be read by themselves and others
- Letter formation is taught alongside phonics, with children encouraged to apply this learning in purposeful writing opportunities.

Numerals, Capitals and Printed Letters

Children are introduced to numerals and capital letters in context:

- Forming numerals correctly and using them in meaningful mathematical contexts
- Beginning to recognise and form some capital letters, particularly for names
- Developing an awareness that capital letters are used for specific purposes (e.g. names)
- Understanding that letters and numerals are distinct and used differently

There is no expectation to join handwriting in EYFS.

Strengthening and Consolidation

Throughout the year, children are supported to strengthen and refine their handwriting skills:

- Increasing control, accuracy and consistency in letter and numeral formation
- Writing with growing confidence during independent activities
- Applying taught skills in short writing tasks and adult-guided dictation
- Building stamina gradually for writing over longer periods

Children are not rushed onto new expectations until they are secure in earlier skills.

End of EYFS Expectations

By the end of the Foundation Year, children should:

- Hold a pencil effectively and write with control
- Form lower-case letters correctly, mostly starting and finishing in the right place
- Write recognisable letters and words
- Write their name correctly
- Show readiness for the more formal handwriting expectations of Year 1

This ensures a smooth transition into Year 1, where handwriting is further refined through work on size, position, spacing and, later, preparation for joining.

Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2

Year 1

Autumn — Letter Formation

Children secure correct letter formation within letter families. The focus is on starting points, exit strokes and correct orientation. No joining is introduced at this stage.

Spring — Size, Position and Spacing

Building on Autumn, children are taught to form letters at a consistent size, positioned correctly on the line, with appropriate spacing between letters and words. Towards the end of this term, children who are ready are introduced to the 'lead out' stroke — the exit flick that will form the basis of a join.

Summer — Join 1: Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders

Children who are secure in their formation begin Join 1. The diagonal join is the most natural extension of the exit stroke and the starting point for all joining. Common pairs taught include: *ai, an, in, un, en, am, im, um, it, at, ut, ip, ap.* These are applied within high-frequency words children already know. Children who are not yet secure in formation continue to consolidate printing.

Year 2

Autumn — Join 2: Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders

Children embed their joining in narrower-lined books and consolidate Join 1. Join 2 is introduced: diagonal joins to letters with ascenders. Example pairs: *th, ch, sh, wh, ll, lt, lk, ck, bl, cl, fl, gl, pl.* These joins are high-frequency in English and directly support phonic application.

Spring — Joins 3, 4 and 5: Horizontal joins and joins to anticlockwise letters

Three join types are introduced across the Spring term:

- **Join 3 — Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders:** *ou, oa, oe, or, on, ow, oi, oo.* These exit from the top of letters such as o, r, v and w
- **Join 4 — Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders:** *oh, ol, wh, ob, of*
- **Join 5 — Joins to round anticlockwise letters** (a, c, d, g, o, q, e, s): *ad, ac, ag, od, ca, da, ga.* These are the most challenging, as the entry to an anticlockwise letter requires a precise directional flick.

Summer — Consolidation and Application

No new join types are introduced. Children revisit all five joins, applying them within words and then within sentences. The focus shifts to spacing, consistency and legibility. Dictation sentences are used to practise joins in context:

- The cat in the hat.
- The dog has fleas.
- School is cool.
- He wanted to play.
- Go away and sit down!
- What shall we do today?

Key Stage 2

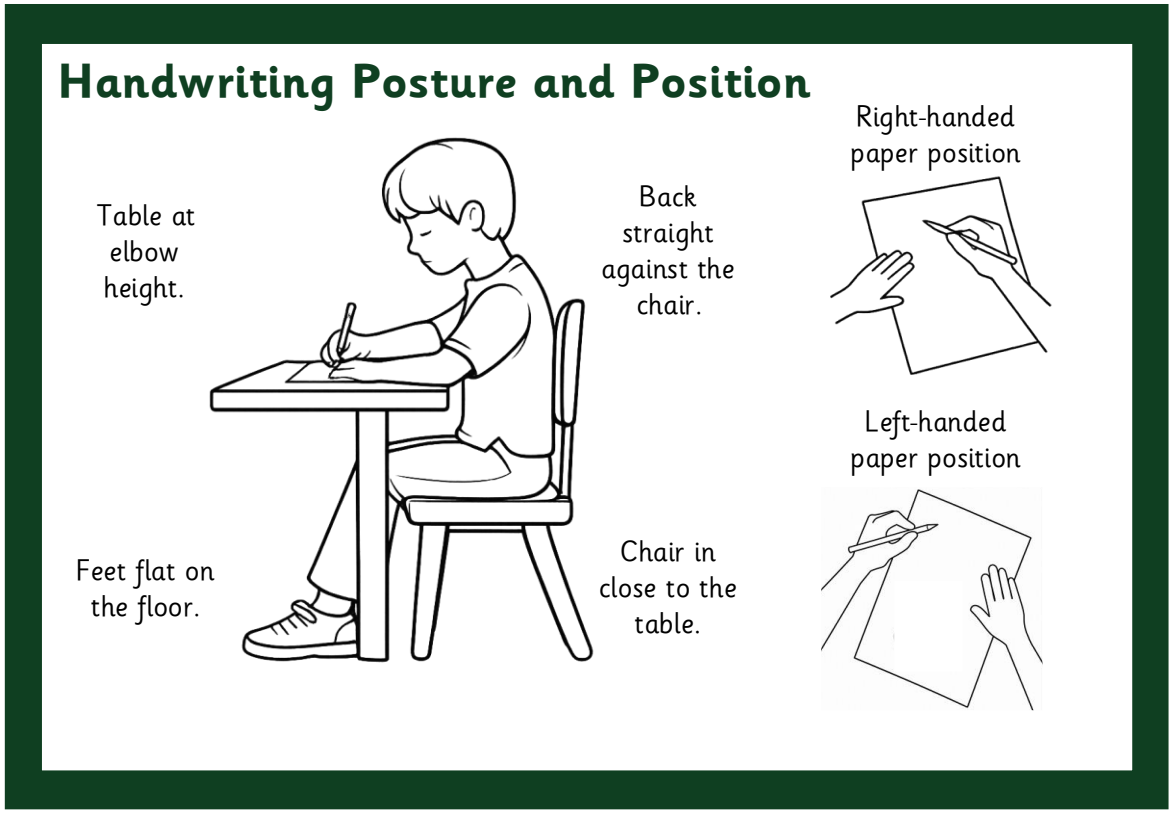
In Key Stage 2, Handwriting is primarily delivered through intervention, quality first teaching and dictation.

We use the handwriting hierarchy to ensure all children are meeting expectations and making progress in handwriting.

In Year 3 and 4, children may revisit prior learning from Year 2. Children are taught how to position ascenders and descenders so that they do not touch.

Children are taught how to maintain a high level of handwriting over a sustained piece of work. In Year 5 and 6, children are expected to sustain a high level of handwriting throughout in all subjects.
Children are taught when to use different forms of handwriting, such as printing for filling in forms, or a quicker style for note taking.

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting



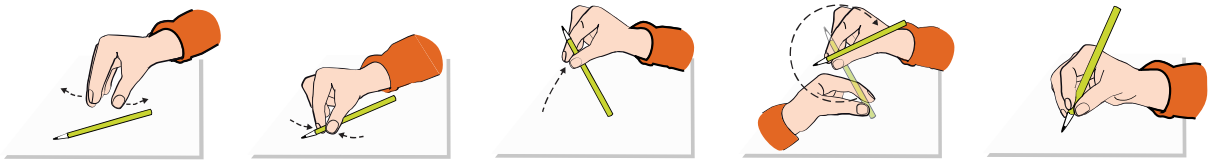
The Tripod Pencil Grip

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.

We recognise this is a process, requiring modelling and direct instruction.

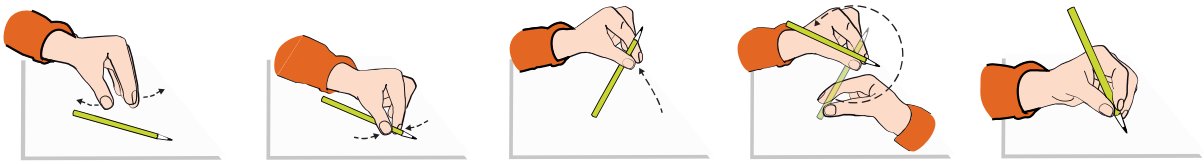


Right-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift it off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

Left-handed pencil grip



Point away the pencil, Pinch it near the tip, Lift it off the table, Spin it round... and grip.

a  Around the apple and down the leaf.	b  Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.	c  Curl around the caterpillar.	d  Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck & down to his toes.	e  Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.	f  Down the stem and draw the leaves.
g  Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.	h  Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.	i  Down the body and dot for the head.	j  Down his body, curl, dot for his head.	k  Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.	l  Down the long leg.
m  Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.	n  Down Nobby and over his net.	o  All around the orange.	p  Down the pirates plait and around his face.	qu  Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair,and flick.	r  Down the robots back and curl over his arm.
s  Slither down the snake.	t  Down the tower, across the tower.	u  Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.	v  Down a wing, up a wing.	w  Down, up, down, up.	x  Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.
y  Down a horn, up a horn and under head.	z  Zig-zag-zig.				

Number rhymes

