

# Airedale Infant School

## 'Ambition, Bravery, Respect'

### Handwriting Policy

Time taken to teach and model to children how to write fluently and quickly is well spent since it is a skill needed in almost every part of the curriculum.

#### Principles

As IT becomes a predominant method to present written ideas, handwriting is still an important skill when communicating ideas for specific purposes. This is acknowledged in the National Curriculum with a focus on joined handwriting for higher achievement and making the connection between a child's handwriting and their composition and spelling ability.

Teaching of handwriting includes the development of:

- A positive attitude to handwriting
- A neat, legible style
- A fluent, joined style
- An effective and efficient way of holding writing instruments
- Understanding that different styles of handwriting are appropriate for different purposes
- A balance between speed and neatness is appropriate to a task

#### Implementation

At Airedale Infants we follow the National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of fluent and legible handwriting (see Appendix 1). This is taught through specific handwriting sessions where children learn to form letters and develop a fluent style through modelling of technique and independent practise.

Children are taught that different handwriting styles are appropriate dependent on the purpose of a task such as note taking or for presentation. Children are given opportunities to present written work for display and they are encouraged to see the need for developing a neat, legible style.

Staff model these styles in their own handwriting such as teaching notes on the whiteboard, Interactive whiteboard and in marking. Children experiencing particular difficulties with their handwriting may be given additional support to refine and develop their handwriting style through specific teaching or be provided with access to a range of writing tools such as pencil grips or writing slopes.

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Children may record their written work electronically when their physical capabilities make handwriting particularly difficult. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the SENCo and class teacher will also make reference to those outside agencies involved with the child.

### **PROGRESSION OF HANDWRITING SKILLS**

Research suggests that children make most progress when they have short, focused handwriting sessions.

- In Nursery, staff focus closely on the development of large muscle coordination to develop gross motor skills through carefully planned activities such as using large brushes with paint or water or dragging streamers through puddles. Children can then start to develop their fine motor skills using a range of resources such as chalk, smaller brushes, pencils and felt pens before focusing upon the formation of correct habits, observing and supporting children accordingly.
- In Reception, staff continue to develop fine motor skills through planned activities and have letter formation practise time within their daily Read Write Inc sessions and tasks are incorporated within provision area challenges.
- In Years 1 and 2, handwriting sessions take place three times each week.

### **Foundation Stage**

In Foundation Stage, children are taught to make marks and engage in writing of many different types using a range of mark making materials such as with finger paints, writing in sand or with pencils and crayons. This is emergent writing.

Opportunities are provided during play, role play and within the provision areas to promote and engage children in writing, as well as in a more formal focused writing group. Children are able to access a range of pencil, crayon and paint brush body thickness, building hand strength and dexterity, to develop fine and gross motor skills. Pre requisite skills needed for writing agility and fluency are developed through activities such as writing patterns and forming letters in play dough as this teaches a child the shapes and directional pushes and pulls of the writing tool required to form letters.

To help children to remember how to form letters, numbers and grip a pencil, 'Read Write Inc' handwriting phrases and rhymes and songs are used during the teaching of handwriting.

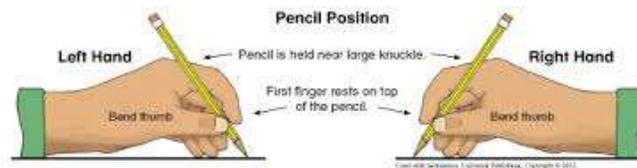
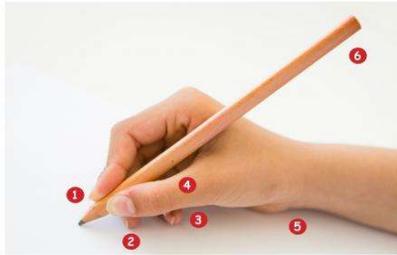
(See Appendix 2)

In Upper Foundation Stage, children are taught to form letters using the Read Write Inc formations to ensure all children can form letters of the correct size and orientation. They are encouraged to:-

- Write from left to right and from the top to the bottom of the page
- Use a tripod grip when holding any writing tool
- Write letters with the correct formation
- Practise correct letter formation in related families
- Write capital letters to start their first and last name
- Write their own name

When working with individual children and small groups, staff monitor children's writing to ensure that they develop appropriate letter formation and that a correct tripod grip is developing.

During small focused writing groups children are observed to ensure that they develop appropriate letter formation and that the correct tripod grip is being developed.



At the initial meeting for the parents of Foundation Stage children or specific curriculum information meetings, parents are given a copy of the letter style taught in Foundation Stage (See Appendix 2) and introduced to ideas to support their child in mark making.

Children are taught handwriting in the following stages:

- Letter formation is practised
- Where to place the letters on a writing line

Letter formation is introduced at the same time as the Read Write Inc letter sounds, so that children can begin to write and use the sounds they are learning. Sounds are taught in the order:

m a s d t

i n p g o

c k u b

f e l h

r j v y w

z q x

- Once introduced, these are then practised in groups of letters with similar formations  
'Around' letters a,c,o,d,g,q  
'Down' letters l,t,b,p,k,h,I,j,m,n,r,u,y  
'Curly' letters e,f,s

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'Zig-zag' letters v,w,z,x

- The same 'Read Write Inc' picture mnemonics are used to help teach letter formation (See Appendix 2). Rhymes are also used to help with number formation.
- Vocabulary used: Capital letters (**A**), tall letters (**h**), small letters (**i**), letters with tails that go under the line (**g**).

### **Key Stage 1**

In Key Stage 1, children build on their early writing experiences with reinforcing and consolidation of the correct letter formation in line with the National Curriculum. They are encouraged to:

- Hold a pencil with an efficient grip, preferably tripod grip however other grips chosen by the child can be successful
- Sit with the correct posture when writing (See Appendix 3)
- Form consistently sized and shaped letters with uniform ascenders and descenders
- Use regular spacing between letters and words
- Take pride in their handwriting and be aware of the need for clear and neat presentation and appropriate layout
- Begin to join letters together in Year 2

### **Joined handwriting**

- Letter joins are taught within words the children are using in their daily phonic sessions so that the children can write those sounds and words they are learning
- Individual letter joins are also practised in groups of letters with similar joins e.g. **a, c, o, e** particularly where a child may find a certain join difficult
- Vocabulary used: Capital letters (**A**), tall letters (**h**) ascenders (**h**), small letters (**i**), descenders (**j**)

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **HANDWRITING IN THE PRIMARY NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

#### **FOUNDATION STAGE (4-5 years old)**

##### **Early Learning Goal - Writing**

Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Typical behaviours that relate to handwriting for this learning goal:

- Spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.

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- Write short sentences with words with known letter-sound correspondences using a capital letter and full stop.
- Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.

Core learning skills for handwriting:

- Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.

*'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage' March 2021, effective Sept 2021; DfE.*

### **KEY STAGE 1 (5-7 years old)**

#### **Statutory Requirements - Handwriting**

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.

#### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil's hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided. Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.

### **Year 2**

#### **Statutory Requirements - Handwriting**

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.

### Notes and guidance (non-statutory)

Pupils should revise and practice correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.

## APPENDIX 2

### INTRODUCING LETTER FORMATION: READ WRITE INC RHYMES

<b>a</b>	Round the apple, down the leaf (Apple)	<b>n</b>	Down Nobby and over his net (Football net)
<b>b</b>	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe (Boot)	<b>o</b>	All around the orange (Orange)
<b>c</b>	Curl around the caterpillar (Caterpillar)	<b>p</b>	Down the plait and over the pirate's face (Pirate)
<b>d</b>	Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet (Dinosaur)	<b>q</b>	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair (Queen)
<b>e</b>	Lift off the top and scoop out the egg (Egg)	<b>r</b>	Down his back, then curl over his arm (Robot)
<b>f</b>	Down the stem and draw the leaves (Flower)	<b>s</b>	Slither down the snake (Snake)
<b>g</b>	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl (Girl)	<b>t</b>	Down the tower, across the tower (Tower)
<b>h</b>	Down the head to the hooves and over his back (Horse)	<b>u</b>	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle (Umbrella)
<b>i</b>	Down the body, dot for the head (Insect)	<b>v</b>	Down a wing, up a wing (Vulture)
<b>j</b>	Down his body, curl and dot (Jack in a box)	<b>w</b>	Down, up, down, up (Worm)

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<b>k</b>	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg (Kangaroo)	<b>x</b>	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side (Exercise)
<b>l</b>	Down the long leg (Leg)	<b>y</b>	Down a horn up a horn and under his head (Yak)
<b>m</b>	Maisie, mountain, mountain (Maisie with mountains)	<b>z</b>	Zig-zag-zig (Zip)

## Handwriting phrases for helping your child to form letters

This works best if your child practises for a short time every day.

1. Show the picture side and air-write as you say the phrase.
2. Ask your child to practise in the air with you.
3. Using a sharp pencil and sat at a table, encourage your child to have a go.
4. Praise your child for their efforts.

- m Maisie, mountain, mountain  
a round the apple, down the leaf  
s slither down the snake  
d round his bottom, up his tall neck and down to his feet  
t down the tower, across the tower  
i down the body, dot for the head  
n down Nobby, over his net  
p down the plait and over the pirate's face  
g round her face, down her hair and give her a curl  
o all around the orange  
c curl around the caterpillar  
k down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg  
u down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle  
b down the laces to the heel, round the toe  
f down the stem and draw the leaves  
e lift off the top and scoop out the egg  
l down the long leg  
h down the head to the hooves and over his back  
r down his back and then curl over his arm  
j down his body, curl and dot  
v down a wing, up a wing  
y down a horn, up a horn and under his head  
w down, up, down, up  
z zig-zag-zig  
q round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair  
x down the arm and leg and repeat the other side



APPENDIX 2

PENCIL GRIP SONG

**THE PENCIL GRIP SONG**

**(Sung to tune of Frere Jacques)**

Mr Pencil, Mr Pencil

Time to write,

Time to write,

Hold him near the bottom,

Hold him near the bottom,

Time to write,

Time to write.

Mr Pencil, Mr Pencil

Time to write,

Time to write,

Thumb and finger, finger,

Thumb and finger, finger,

Time to write,

Time to write.

**APPENDIX 2**

**INTRODUCING NUMBER FORMATION: RHYMES**

All numbers start at the top and should be formed in one fluent movement	
<b>0</b>	Around and round and round we go, when we get home we have zer/
<b>1</b>	Start at the top and down we run, that's the way you make a one
<b>2</b>	Around and back on a railroad track, two, two two
<b>3</b>	Around the tree and around the tree, that's the way you make a three
<b>4</b>	Down and across and down some more, that's the way you make a four
<b>5</b>	Short neck, belly fat, number five wears a hat
<b>6</b>	Down we go and make a loop; number six makes a hoop
<b>7</b>	Across the sky and down from heaven, that's the way you make a seven
<b>8</b>	Make an 's' and do not wait. When it's joined up you have an eight
<b>9</b>	Make a loop and then a line. That's the way we make a nine
<b>10</b>	A one and an egg laid by a hen, that's the way you make a ten

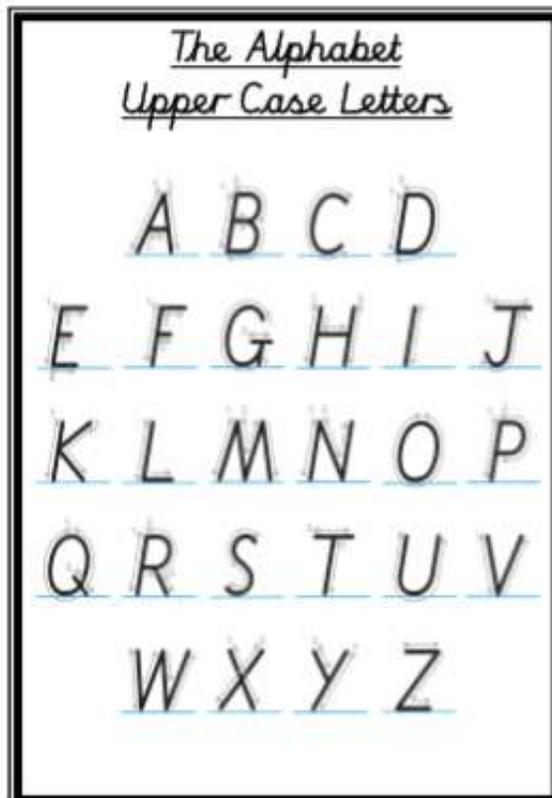
APPENDIX 2

LETTER FORMATION PROGRESSION

Read Write Inc letter formations

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Pre-Cursive style



Joined Style

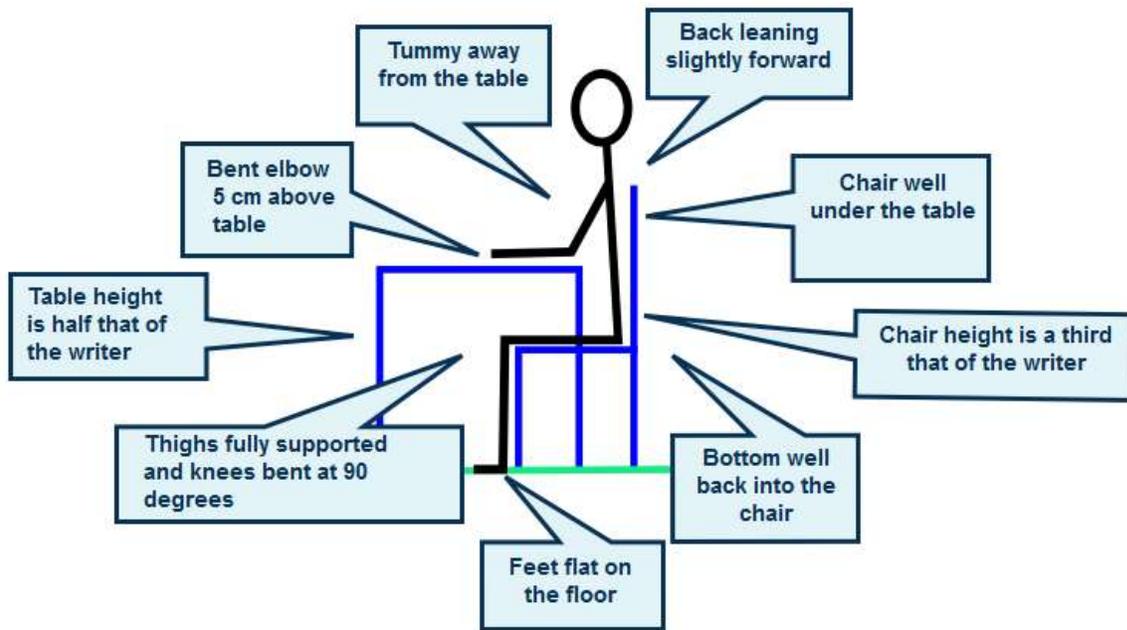
I want to improve my handwriting

**APPENDIX 3**

**POSTURE AND POSITION FOR WRITING**

**Posture**

It is acknowledged that it is vital to develop good posture for writing as well as a good pencil grip. During any writing task children should be seated in a comfortable upright position.



In order to sit comfortably at a desk for a duration children need good [posture muscle strength](#). This can be developed through various activities to develop a core strength (see below).



**Crab Walk**  
**You need**  
An area of floor or grass and a bean bag or soft toy.  
**How to do it**  
Get your child to sit on the ground with their hands and feet on the floor, fingers pointing behind them, raise their bottom off the floor to make a table shape. In this position get them to walk backwards, like a crab, to a destination and back again. Put a beanbag or soft toy on their tummy - make sure they keep their bottom up otherwise the toy will fall off!  
As this activity is quite demanding only ask your child to go 2 to 3 metres at their first attempt, as your child's endurance increases you can increase the distance.  
To add variety you can add an obstacle course or follow-my-leader to the game.

**Tummy Skittles**  
**You need**  
A large/medium sized ball, skittles or empty 1 litre or 2 litre plastic drinks bottles and space enough for your child to lay flat on their tummy and the skittles to be about 2 metres away.  
**How to do it**  
Get your child to lie on their stomach, lift their head up and then lift their arms above their head. Throw the ball at the skittles, then lower the body gently back to the floor, ready to throw again.

**Bridge Games**  
**You need**  
An area of floor or grass and some small toys to pass under the bridge such as vehicles or animals. For older children a stopwatch or clock with a seconds hand.  
**How to do it**  
Laying on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor get your child to raise their bottom off the floor to form the bridge. Pass the toys under the bridge. For younger children get them to make the noise of the toys, for older children set them time challenges.  
As this activity can be quite demanding start by just playing for between 30 seconds and one minute. As your child gets stronger and can play for longer why not turn it into a family competition?

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**Position**

Children should have a clear view of the whiteboard being used to model and teach. They should be encouraged to use their non-writing hand to support the paper/book they are working on and this should be angled with a slight tilt for ease of writing.

Reviewed July 2022

To review July 2023