



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Handwriting policy 2025 – 2026

This policy should be read in light of our Mission Statement as follows:

At St. Joseph's, we live love and learn by the example of Jesus

Our Curriculum Intent

Through a rich and engaging reading curriculum, children will subsequently develop a natural flair in their writing and write with creativity. Children will gain a love of writing and be able to write in a variety of styles and for different audiences. Children will be able to reflect on their writing, and that of others, and offer constructive criticism to improve.

Aims

We aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own style of fast, fluent, legible and sustainable handwriting, as well as other styles of writing for specific purposes. In addition to teaching handwriting during our regular handwriting lessons, we have high expectations that what is taught and practised in handwriting lessons will be used in all writing activities. We believe that handwriting is integral to a child's personal development and know that children's engagement and self-esteem can be improved by their satisfaction and pride in good quality presentation.

Handwriting is a taught skill that develops at different rates for different children. All of the teachers in the school put a priority on teaching handwriting and have high expectations for handwriting across the curriculum. Our school uses Letterjoin to ensure that:

- The importance of handwriting is recognised and given appropriate time
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across the school
- Handwriting is acknowledged to be a whole body activity and emphasis is placed on correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting
- Expectations of left-handed children are equal to those of right-handed children, and appropriate advice and resources are available to ensure that they learn to write with a comfortable, straight wrist
- Handwriting is linked into grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to practise and contextualise all of the transcriptional and stylistic skills for writing
- Children learn to self-assess their own writing and develop understanding and responsibility for improving it
- Children learn to write in different styles for different purposes such as print for labelling a diagram, illustrated capitals letters for creating a poster, swift jottings for writing notes, making a 'best copy' for presentation and fast, fluent and legible writing across the curriculum



National Curriculum:

Year 1

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 correctly
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

Year 2:

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

Year 3 and 4:

Pupils 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 (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch)

Year 5 and 6:

Pupils should be taught to:

Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:

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

Progression of skills

Letter formation

When learning to form letters, the children in Reception and Year 1 use the sounds and letter names, which is incorporated within our phonics scheme. Children are taught step-by-step to:

1. Associate a sound with the shapes of the alphabet letters and, later, pairs of letters using the same picture mnemonics that have been used to teach them to read.
2. Sit in a comfortable handwriting position and hold a pencil in a tripod grip.
3. Form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place. (Mnemonic phrases are used to mirror lower case printing).



4. Form lower-case letters of the correct size - relative to one another and to the size of the spaces between the words.

From Year 1 onwards, we use the Letterjoin scheme to deliver our handwriting lessons and to practise skills.

Joining letters

- Joining is introduced only after correct letter formation is used automatically (Y2/Y3)
- Joins are introduced systematically and cumulatively (Y1–Y6)
- As children practise joining, they pay attention to the size, proportion and spacing of their letters and words (Y3–Y6)
- Once the joins are secure, a slope is introduced in order to support increased speed and fluency (Y5)
- Children are introduced to different ways of joining in order that they can develop their own preferred personal style (Y6)

By using the Letterjoin scheme, we ensure that our children follow the requirements and recommendations of the National Curriculum. We share the aspiration that children's handwriting should be 'sufficiently fluent and effortless for them to manage the general demands of the curriculum' and that 'problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say'.

Handwriting tools

Throughout their time in school, children use a range of tools for different purposes and styles of handwriting including:

- A wide range of tools and media for mark-making in the EYFS
- Whiteboard pens throughout the school
- Fingers when writing on the interactive whiteboard
- Art supplies including coloured pens and pencils for posters, displays and artwork
- Sharp pencils for most writing in Years 1 and 2 and pen in Years 3 – 6

Handwriting is introduced and practised using the St Joseph's Phonics and reading schemes before moving on to Letterjoin. Pupils are given opportunities to practise on lined paper so that they quickly learn about letter orientation including ascenders and descenders. As children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases.

Equality of opportunity

All our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for development of skills. Children who need specific fine motor or handwriting interventions are identified early and the impact of interventions is carefully monitored. Children with a physical disability are catered for, and progress is monitored, according to their individual action plans.

Date of Policy: September 2025

Review of Policy: September 2026