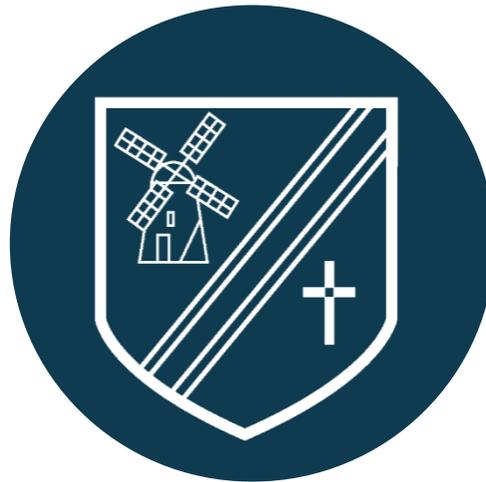




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STAINING

CE VC Primary School

STAINING CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

March 2026

Our School Vision: Learn to Wonder, Grow in Wisdom, Shine Like Stars

At Staining CE Primary School, we have five key values that permeate all aspects of school life. They are:

- Work Hard
- Aim High
- Show Respect
- Be Kind
- Teamwork

Aim for Handwriting

At our school, we believe that confident, fluent handwriting is essential to children's success and enjoyment of writing. When children are taught to handwrite well, they are more motivated, take pride in their work, and feel secure in expressing their ideas. Our approach is explicit and consistent, helping children visualise to memorise so they can write letters and joins with accuracy. We aim for all pupils to develop a fast, fluent, legible, and sustainable handwriting style. Through high-quality teaching, regular practice, and high expectations across the curriculum, we build the strong early foundations children need so that handwriting becomes effortless - freeing them to think creatively, communicate confidently, and enjoy putting pencil to paper.

- Develop neat, legible handwriting in both print and joined styles.
- Build fluency, confidence, and speed in writing.
- Use a consistent whole-school approach to handwriting.
- Ensure all staff model the agreed handwriting style.
- Provide regular opportunities to practise handwriting across the curriculum.
- Teach correct posture, pencil grip, and writing habits.
- Support left-handed children with equal expectations and appropriate guidance.
- Help children assess and improve their own handwriting.
- Encourage pride and good presentation in all written work.
- Develop early fine-motor and mark-making skills.
- Make handwriting enjoyable and help children see themselves as writers.

Teaching and learning

Handwriting is taught discretely and reinforced across all areas of the curriculum to ensure pupils develop a legible, fluent and consistent style as they progress through school. The school follows a clear, progressive approach to both the frequency of teaching and the development of handwriting style, ensuring continuity between year groups. All handwriting lessons are 10 minutes in length. Pupils in Reception to Year 2 use pencil to support control and accurate letter formation. From Year 3, pupils begin using school-provided biro pens once they demonstrate secure, fluent handwriting. Pens are carefully selected to be smudge-resistant and appropriately sized to support correct grip and comfort when writing.

Consistent mnemonics for letter formation are introduced in Reception and used throughout the school to support continuity and secure recall. In Reception and Year 1, letter formation is taught through letter families to support motor pattern development and reduce cognitive load. Letters are grouped according to their formation patterns:

- Ladder letters: l, i, t, j, u, y
- Robot letters: m, n, r, b, p, h, k
- Curly letters: c, a, d, o, q, g, e, f, s
- Zig-zag letters: v, w, x, z

Teaching letters in families supports pupils in recognising common movement patterns, helping them to develop fluency, confidence and accuracy in their handwriting. When pupils begin joining in Year 2, the terminology of hill and bridge joins is introduced to support understanding and ensure consistency across year groups.

- Reception to Year 2: handwriting is taught daily, focusing on developing pencil control and accurate printed letter formation to establish secure foundations. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 begin writing on wider lines to support correct sizing and positioning of letters. As accuracy and control improve, pupils gradually transition to narrower lines in preparation for Year 2, where thinner lines are expected.
- Year 2: pupils are introduced to a joined handwriting style, building on secure letter formation and developing fluency (focus on the bridge and hill join).
- Year 3 and 4: handwriting is taught three times per week, with pupils expected to apply a consistent, joined style across their written work.
- Year 5 and 6: handwriting is taught twice per week. Pupils are expected to demonstrate a fluent, joined handwriting style across the curriculum.
- If additional teaching is required based on teacher assessment, extra handwriting lessons will be provided to support pupils in achieving age-related expectations.

Explicit teaching of capital letters and numerals ensures clarity, consistency and accuracy across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are taught when capital letters are required, such as at the beginning of sentences and for names and places, and how to form them correctly so they are proportionate in size in relation to lowercase letters. Teachers address common misconceptions, including that capital letters do not join to lowercase letters, and ensure pupils understand that joins occur only between appropriate lowercase letters once secure formation has been achieved. Pupils are also taught the correct formation of numerals to support clarity in mathematics and other written work, ensuring numbers are easily recognisable and consistently presented.

Teaching approach across school

Reception

Autumn

- Squiggly me into a writer- gross motor movements to prepare for early writing.
- Dough disco.
- During phonics, children write for 5 minutes to practice their daily sound following phonics scheme

Spring and Summer

- Warm up stretches (every child daily)
 - Teacher air-writes saying the mnemonic
 - Teacher models formation
 - Children practice (half the class - every other day children practice letter formation)
 - Assess- choose your best letter underline.
-

Year 1 - Stage 2

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher air-writes saying the mnemonic
- Teacher models formation
- Children practice
- Assess - choose your best letter underline, two best bits ticked and one to fix circled.
- Children practice, pick up the pace.
- Repeat assess.
- Apply learning to three words including the letter formation of the day.

Year 2- Stage 3

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher models joining formation (2 per session)
- Children practice the join
- Assess - checking the join (bridge or hill).
- Apply the join to 3 different words (wherever possible link to HFW for year 1 and 2)
- Repeat for each new letter join that day.

Year 3 and 4 - Stage 3 and 4

Move through stage 3 handwriting once before moving on to stage 4.

Stage 3

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher models joining formation (2 per session)
- Children practice the join
- Assess - checking the join (bridge or hill).
- Apply the join to 3 different words (wherever possible link to HFW for year 1 and 2)
- Repeat for each new letter join that day.

Stage 4

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher models the join
- Children practice the join
- Assess - choose your best letter underline, two best bits ticked and one to fix circled.
- Children practice the join, pick up the pace.
- Model applying the join to a word.
- Children to practice
- Model writing the word into a sentence. Repeat the sentence MTYT.
- Children write the sentence (write it again if you finish).
- Assess - choose your best letter underline, two best bits ticked and one to fix circled.

Year 5 - Stage 4 and spelling rules

Stage 4

- Warm up stretches
 - Teacher models the join
 - Children practice the join
-

- Assess - choose your best join underline, two best bits tick and one to fix circle.
- Children practice the join, pick up the pace.
- Model applying the join to a word.
- Children to practice
- Model writing the word into a sentence. Repeat the sentence MTYT.
- Children write the sentence (write it again if you finish).
- Assess - choose your two best bits tick and one to fix circle.

Spelling rules

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher models the spelling
- Children practice the spelling
- Assess - choose your best letter underline, two best bits ticked and one to fix circled.
- Repeat with 3 words.
- Model writing a word from above into a sentence. Repeat the sentence MTYT.
- Children write the sentence (write it again if you finish).
- Assess - choose your two best bits tick and one to fix circle.

Year 6 -Spelling rules

- Warm up stretches
- Teacher models the spelling
- Children practice the spelling
- Assess - choose your best letter underline, two best bits ticked and one to fix circled.
- Repeat with 3 words.
- Model writing a word from above into a sentence. Repeat the sentence MTYT.
- Children write the sentence (write it again if you finish).
- Assess - choose your two best bits tick and one to fix circle.

Inclusion

The vast majority of children learn to write legibly and fluently; however, we recognise that some pupils require additional support to develop the necessary fine motor control and confidence. Children who are not yet ready to write take part in pre-writing activities to build the foundational motor skills required for handwriting. Pupils needing further support are identified early and provided with targeted handwriting interventions to help them make sustained progress. Where appropriate, additional provision is planned in collaboration with the SENCo, and where pupils have specific learning targets, external specialists such as Occupational Therapists may also be involved. The SENCo may recommend and provide supportive resources such as writing slopes, adapted pencils, pencil grips, wider-lined books or highlighted lines to support letter size, orientation and formation. Some pupils benefit from small-group motor-skill or handwriting sessions alongside their regular handwriting lessons to further support development. All staff use consistent language and modelling to ensure pupils receive clear guidance across the school, and the progress of pupils receiving additional support is monitored regularly to ensure strategies remain effective and are adapted where necessary. Support strategies are carefully matched to individual need and gradually reduced where appropriate to promote independence, while maintaining high expectations for presentation and legibility.

In addition, pupils who demonstrate readiness to progress beyond age-related expectations are provided with appropriate challenge and opportunities to move forward in their handwriting development. Assessment is used to identify pupils who are secure in prerequisite skills and ready for the next stage of learning. Where appropriate, targeted support or adaptations are implemented to enable accelerated progression. For example, some children in

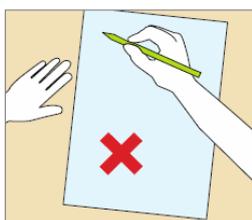
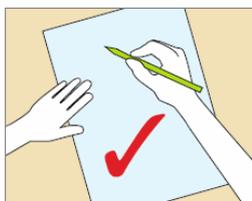
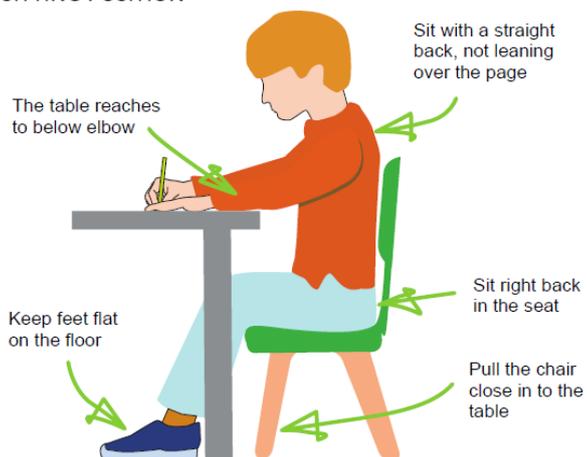
Reception may be ready to take part in structured handwriting sessions at a table during the Autumn term, while some pupils in Year 1 may be ready to begin learning joins prior to Year 2. Provision is carefully planned to ensure that progression is developmentally appropriate and does not compromise correct letter formation, posture or pencil grip. High expectations are maintained for all pupils, ensuring that both support and challenge enable every child to develop fluent, legible handwriting.

Correct posture

We explicitly teach and reinforce correct posture for writing to support comfort, control and stamina. At the beginning of writing sessions, children are reminded of the "perfect handwriting position" so that expectations are consistent across the school. Consistent reinforcement of correct posture supports effective letter formation, reduces fatigue and promotes good handwriting habits. When we say "perfect handwriting position", they quickly:

- put two feet on the floor
- push their bottom to the back of their chair
- tuck their chair under the table
- hold their pencil in a tripod grip
- place their other hand on their book or paper, so it doesn't move around.

SITTING POSITION



Paper position for right-handed children.

Pencil grip

At our school, children use a standard HB pencil for handwriting tasks. In the early stages of writing, some pupils may benefit from using a softer 2B pencil, as this allows marks to be formed clearly with less pressure and supports confidence and control. Pupils are explicitly taught how to hold a pencil using an effective tripod grip, and teachers check pencil grip at the start of handwriting lessons as well as during writing across the curriculum. Where required, pupils may use supportive resources such as triangular pencils or pencil grips to promote correct finger placement and improve control. Staff ensure pencils are sharpened before handwriting sessions so pupils are able to write clearly and confidently.



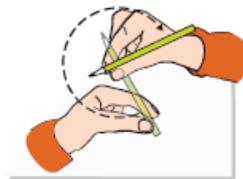
Point away the pencil,



Pinch it near the tip,



Lift it off the table,



Spin it round...



and grip.

Left-handed children

We provide targeted support to ensure left-handed pupils are able to write comfortably and develop fluency. As left-handed pupils may find it more difficult to follow right-handed demonstrations, teachers provide additional modelling individually or in small groups where necessary. Left-handed pupils are seated to the left of right-handed peers to avoid competing for space and to allow free arm movement. They are encouraged to position their paper slightly to the left and at an appropriate angle to support natural writing motion and reduce smudging. Teachers also remind pupils not to hold the pencil too close to the tip so they can clearly see their writing. These adaptations ensure left-handed pupils are supported effectively while maintaining consistent expectations for handwriting development.

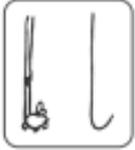
Assessment and monitoring

Handwriting is assessed as part of everyday teaching rather than through formal testing. Teaching staff observe letter formation, joins, size, spacing and consistency, providing immediate feedback and addressing errors in the moment to support improvement. Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their presentation using red pen where appropriate. Teachers review books across all subjects to ensure handwriting expectations are applied consistently across the curriculum. Pupils requiring additional support are identified promptly, allowing for responsive teaching, targeted support and interventions to develop handwriting fluency and fine motor control where needed. The English Lead and senior leaders monitor standards through book scrutiny and professional dialogue with staff to ensure the policy is implemented consistently and has a positive impact on outcomes. The policy is reviewed annually to ensure expectations remain appropriate and that any necessary adaptations or improvements are made.

Appendix 1

Letter formation mnemonics

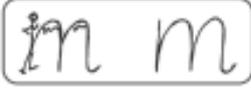
t k l j

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the tower, across the tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the tower ✓ go straight down the tower ✓ add a curve ✓ make a straight line across the tower
	Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the kangaroo's head ✓ go down its body ✓ draw a tail to the body ✓ draw a straight back leg
	Down the long leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of his leg ✓ go down his long leg ✓ add a curl for the shoe
	Down its body, curl and dot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the jack-in-a-box's neck ✓ go down the long straight body ✓ draw a smooth curl for the legs ✓ add a dot for the head

u y

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the handle ✓ go down the straight handle ✓ go underneath the umbrella and back up the other side ✓ go down the umbrella ✓ add a little curl for the puddle
	Down a horn, up a horn and under its head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the first horn ✓ go down the straight line for the first horn ✓ go underneath the horns ✓ draw a straight line up for the second horn ✓ go down and curl under its head

h n m r

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the head to the hooves and over its back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the horse's head ✓ go down its straight neck ✓ go down to its feet ✓ go round its back ✓ draw a back leg ✓ add a little curl of dust as the horse runs away
	Down Nobby, over his net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of Nobby's head ✓ go straight down Nobby ✓ go over the net ✓ add a curve for the grass
	Maisie, mountain, mountain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at Maisie's head ✓ go straight down Maisie ✓ go over the mountains ✓ check the mountains are the same height as Maisie ✓ add a small curl for the grass
	Down its back, then curl over its arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the robot's head ✓ go straight down its body ✓ go over the robot's arm

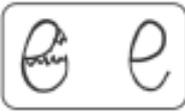
b p

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down the laces to the heel, round the toe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the boot ✓ go straight down the boot ✓ go up over the toe ✓ back to the heel
	Down the plait and over the pirate's face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the plait ✓ go down the plait ✓ go over the face ✓ finish under the chin

a d g o c q

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Round the apple, down the leaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go round the apple ✓ go back up to the stalk, then down ✓ curl the leaf at the bottom
	Round the dinosaur's bottom, up its tall neck, down to the feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ go round his bottom ✓ up the tall neck ✓ down the straight line to the feet ✓ make a curl for the feet
	Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at her bobble ✓ go round her face ✓ go back to her bobble ✓ go down her straight hair ✓ draw a curl
	All around the orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the stalk ✓ go around the orange back to the stalk
	Curl round the caterpillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the caterpillar's head ✓ curl round the body
	Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the back of her crown ✓ go round her face ✓ go back up to her crown ✓ go down her hair ✓ give it a sharp flick

e s f i

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	<p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ go up around the shell that needs to be cut off the egg ✓ draw underneath the egg
	<p>Slither down the snake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the snake's head ✓ curl one way ✓ curl the other
	<p>Down the stem and draw the leaves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the flower ✓ go round and down the flower stem – then lift the pencil off the page ✓ draw a straight line across the leaves
	<p>Down the body, dot the head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top of the insect's neck ✓ go down the body ✓ draw a tail ✓ add a dot for the head

v w x z

Letter	Handwriting Phrase	Checklist
	Down a wing, up a wing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ draw two straight lines for the wings – down, up
	Down, up, down, up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ draw four lines, all the same length – down, up, down, up
	Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ start at the top left ✓ go to the feet ✓ start at the bottom left ✓ go up to the arms
	Zig-zag-zig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ draw three straight lines – across, down, across

Appendix 2

Stage 3 - joining with the hill and bridge join

Letter	to jam	to top	to 'sister'	to e	to s
a	ar	ab	aa	ae	as
b	br	bb	ba	be	bs
c	cr	cb	ca	ce	cs
d	dr	db	da	de	ds
e	er	eb	ea	ee	es
f	fr	fb	fa	fe	fs
h	hr	hb	ha	he	hs
i	ir	ib	ia	ie	is
k	kr	kb	ka	ke	ks
l	lr	lb	la	le	ls

Letter	to jam	to top	to 'sister'	to e	to s
m	mr	mb	ma	me	ms
n	nr	nb	na	ne	ns
o	or	ob	oa	oe	os
p	pr	pb	pa	pe	ps
r	rr	rb	ra	re	rs
s	sr	sb	sa	se	ss
t	tr	tb	ta	te	ts
u	ur	ub	ua	ue	us
v	vr	vb	va	ve	vs
w	wr	wb	wa	we	ws
x	xr	xb	xa	xe	xs

Letters that do not join

g	j	q	y	z
---	---	---	---	---