



HANDWRITING GUIDE

Date created: Term 1 2021
Revised: Term 1 2021
Review Date: Term 3 2020

[Rationale and SBS Ethos](#)

Even in this technological, computer-literate age, good handwriting remains fundamental to our children's educational achievement. Therefore it is essential we equip our children with the skills they require to develop fast, fluent and legible writing.

It is our aim at Safa British School, to ensure that every child can develop a fluent, legible style of handwriting using a personalised **continuous cursive handwriting** scheme. Our SBS whole-school programme is designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet higher curriculum expectations.

What is a continuous cursive handwriting style? Why is it used?

- Each letter starts on the line
- Pupils keep the pencil on the paper giving a very fluent style
- Pupils eventually develop the ability to produce letters without thinking
- The automatic style releases the brain to concentrate on other ideas, for example, spelling, grammar, style, content and syntax.

The British Dyslexia Association recommend that children learn the continuous cursive style. Its most important feature is that each letter is formed without taking the pencil off the paper – and consequently, each word is formed in one, fluid movement.

The key advantages to this system are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape;
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (like b/d or p/q);
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case;
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed and spelling.

Using in addition to this, for pupils who struggle to attain a neat continuous cursive handwriting style, the Nelson Handwriting software, which embeds resources that include pattern practice and motor skills work as well as fun activities to bring handwriting to life.

Capital and lower case letters should be used appropriately and the letter size should be consistent. We will provide opportunities for children to develop, practice and perfect skills and provide targeted support to any child experiencing difficulty.

Handwriting is a developmental process with its own distinctive stages of sequential growth. It can be counterproductive if we ask the children to form/join letters before they are developmentally ready, therefore it is important we are aware of these developmental stages:

- 1. Readiness for handwriting - hand eye coordination, gross and fine motor skills**
- 2. Pencil grip**
- 3. Development leading to pattern and letter formation**
- 4. Beginning to join**
- 5. Securing the joins**
- 6. Practising speed and fluency**
- 7. Presentational skills**

Why is handwriting important?

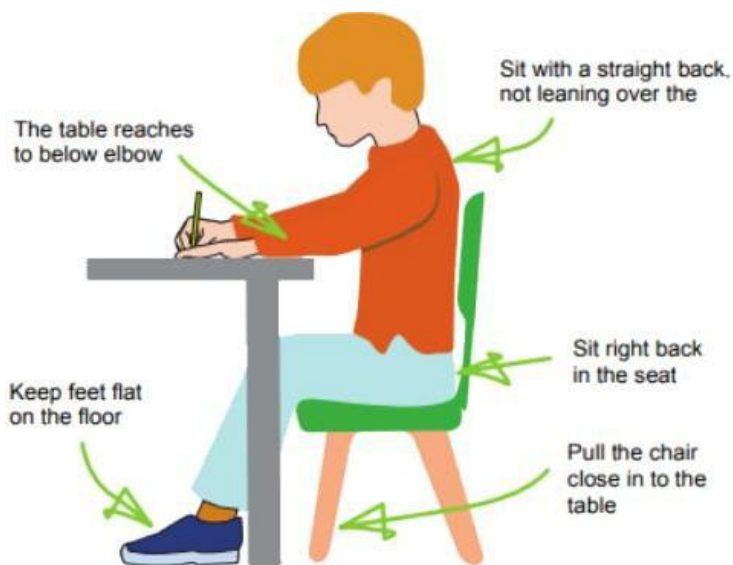
Updates to the National Curriculum in 2014 state that children must be able to produce 'fluent, legible, and, eventually, speedy handwriting'. Handwriting is important for a number of reasons:

- Most of children's future assessments will be hand-written, so pupils whose work isn't legible are likely to suffer.
- Children that can write comfortably at speed can access higher-level aspects of composition and content, meaning their work is likely to be more creative.
- Handwriting is important for note-taking, an essential element of education as children get older.
- It engages more motor and cognitive skills and activates the brain more than using a keyboard.
- Good handwriting helps with communication in other areas of life.

Correct posture and pencil grip

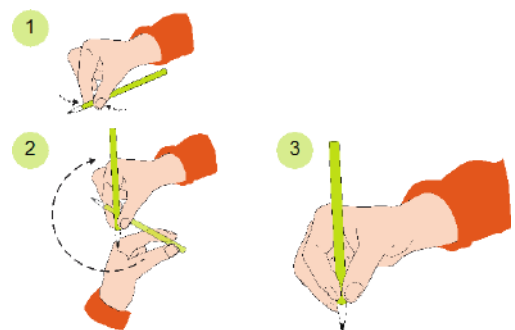
To ensure pupils are writing correctly, teachers are aware of the necessary pencil grip and posture that the children must learn as a skill first, before independently writing. See below for reference.

Correct sitting position:



Correct pencil grip:

- 1) Grip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing away.
- 2) With your free hand, spin the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.



Handwriting in the National Curriculum

Year 1

Writing – handwriting

Statutory requirements

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.

Year 2

Writing – handwriting

Statutory requirements

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 & 4

Writing – handwriting

Statutory requirements

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 & 6

Writing – handwriting and presentation

Statutory requirements

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.

Developing readiness for independent handwriting

Before pupils are ready to engage in independent handwriting, they must have had some of the following opportunities to ensure confidence and having the necessary abilities to take part. These usually occur within the Foundation stage.

Gross motor skills	Fine motor skills	Hand-eye coordination	Pencil grip
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ribbon sticks • Dancing- shoulder/arm movements • Throwing and catching large and small balls • Climbing frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dough gym • Small construction • Toys- pliers, screwdrivers, hammers etc. • Sieving, pouring- sand and water. • Squashy balls • Finger rhymes • Tearing, cutting, folding paper • Screwing on bottle tops • Finger puppets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sand, water and paint play • Using tools such as scissors, rolling pins, tweezers etc. • Threading and lacing • Using tongs • Jigsaws and simple puzzles • Fishing: magnets and paper clips • Peg board patterns • Posting letters • Using a computer mouse and keyboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweezers for picking up small objects • Threading beads • Sprinkling coloured sand, glitter, salt. • Pencil grips and triangular pencils (but their use must be monitored as they can be misapplied) • Handwriting activity practise sheets.

Model Used

If a child is unable to form letters independently and needs foundations embedded, it is at the discretion of the class teacher to provide activities whereby the child can kinaesthetically practice letter formation. I.e. shaving foam, paint on the desk and actively using their finger to draw their letters. This must be supervised to ensure health and safety in the classroom.

When a child begins to write independently they will be taught the Nelson Handwriting **pre-cursive** (un-joined) letter formations:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p
 q r s t u v w x y z

Letter formation:

a b c d e f g h i
 j k l m n o p q r
 s t u v w x y z

Once these letters are embedded and have become autonomous, the children will then go on to join their letters.
 Continuous cursive:

First join;	un um ig id ed eg an or ing ung
Second join;	ch sh th tl ll ill sli slu ck ack st sti ink unk
Third join;	od pg re ve oon oom
Fourth join;	wl vl of ff fl flo
<p>Year 3</p> <p>Further practise of the four handwriting joins</p>	<p>inine utute vevi okoh</p> <p>sh as es (practising two ways of joining the letter s) ri ru ry (practising joining from the letter r) oa ad as (practising joining to and from the letter a) ee ea ed (practising joining from the letter e) ow ov ox (practising joining o)</p> <p>ky hy ly (practising joining to the letter y) ha ta fa (practising joining to the letter a) od oo og (practising joining from o) er ir ur (practising joining to the letter r) aialay</p> <p>oyouoi</p> <p>re oe fe (practising the horizontal join to the letter e) fu wu vu (practising the horizontal join to u) ot ol ok (practising joining to ascenders) ai al ow ol (practising all the joins)</p>

<p>Year 4</p>	<p>ning ping ting ocodoo ake ome are fla flo fle who wha wheieinil inly ky ny aparan ick uck ack practise writing with a slope (italics) he we re fte fir fin wra wri kni (silent letters) iillttrrnmmccooddssffee ew ev ex (spacing) th ht fl (proportions) acagaf Capital letters Decorated capital letters Practising with punctuation ! ? – “ “ , ‘</p>
<p>Year 5 & 6</p>	<p>Practise consistency and size of letters Practising using a diagonal joining line Practising leaving an equal space between letters Practising joining to the letter y Practising using a horizontal joining line Practising the size and height of letter Practising joining from the letter i Practising joining to and from the letter v Practising consistency in forming and joining letters Practise speedwriting Practising crossing double tt on completing the word Practising joining to and from the letter e Practising joining to and from the letter w Practising printing Practising drafting and editing Practising joining to the letter t</p>

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

The quick brown fox jumps
over the lazy dog. Baa baa
black sheep, have you any
wool? Yes sir, yes sir, three
bags full.

Capital letters will be formed in the following way.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Fonts available to teachers:

CCW cursive 5a
CCW cursive dotted 5a
CCW cursive solid lined 5a
CCW cursive outline 5a

XCCW Joined 5a
XCCW Joined 5a dotted
XCCW joined solid lined 5a

Classification and sequencing of teaching letter formation

Knowing that there are letters that use similar motor plans as a starting point, it is recommended to follow an order when teaching lowercase cursive letters:



Long Ladder letters

i l t j u y



One Armed Robot letters

h n m r b p k



Curly Caterpillar letters

c o a d g q e



Zig Zag Monster letters

v w x z f s

Capital letters stand alone and are not joined to the next letter. Children must practice starting sentences and writing names using a capital letter and not joining the subsequent letter. This should be modelled by class teachers during English, SPaG and Phonics sessions.

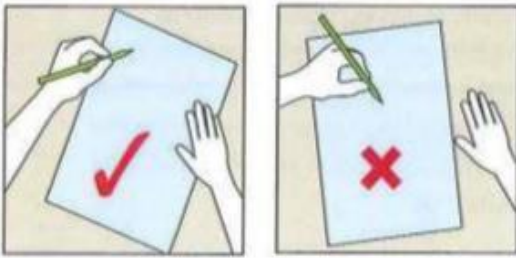
Order of teaching

Provision for left-handed children

All teachers are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned to the left for right handed pupils and to the right for left handed

pupils and slanted to suit the individual in either case;



- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision;
- Pupils should be positioned so that they can place their paper to their left side;
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space;
- Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may well be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

Teachers are aware of the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them. Teachers demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

When, who and how often?

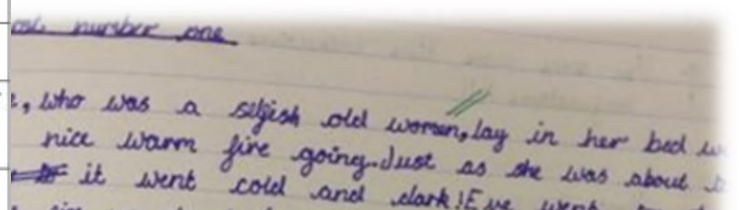
Handwriting practice should be 'little and often' to practise a particular set of letters or joins. Children need to be supervised when they are practising handwriting until letter formation is secure. This will allow for a consistent, whole school approach to ensuring high standards of presentation throughout. Safa British School pupils from Year 1 - 6*, will have daily opportunities between the times of 7.30am and 7.45am to practise their handwriting. They will follow the continuous cursive handwriting scheme, which will actively enable them to form their letters and cursive joins correctly. Handwriting will also be practised during DIRT and Guided Reading sessions. From years 1 – 6, pupils will practise handwriting each morning and through activity carousels within Guided Reading sessions. There will be a minimum of 2 x 15 minute sessions a week in KS1 and 1 x 15 minute session a week in KS2. Some pupils who find cursive handwriting difficult will need further intervention, organisation dependent on year groups.

All teachers to supplement resources using the following website - <https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-teachers.html>

**From Year 4 onwards, if a child's cursive handwriting is consolidated and proficient, it is at the discretion of the teacher to provide said student(s) with additional, alternative activities of which they will complete using their continuous cursive handwriting i.e. SPaG tasks.*

Additionally, within Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). When children write neat, legibly and letters are appropriately sized and spaced across the curriculum, they will obtain a 'pen license' and be able to write in blue ink. Their presentation should reflect that of the following example and include each step of the checklist:

All letters are correctly formed.
All short letters are the same size.
All ascenders and descenders are the right height/length.
All letters are joined correctly.
Capital letters are bigger than lower case letters.
Spaces between letters are the right size (not too squashed or stretched).
Spaces between words are the right size (not too small or big).



Pen licence

Within Key Stage 2, when children write neat, legibly and letters are appropriately sized and spaced across the curriculum, they will obtain a 'pen license certificate' and be able to write in blue or black ink. Pens are not to be used in art or maths lessons or when drawing shapes.

Their presentation should reflect that of the following example:

I fell asleep in class
today
as I was awfully bored
I laid my head upon
my desk
and fell asleep and snored



Pen licences should be presented during year group assemblies to encourage other children to earn them. Once received they will be able to use their pen as they go into the next year group. It is at the discretion of the teacher to support the children in renewing their licence if their handwriting lacks standards.

Monitoring and assessment

Heads of Year in team meetings, combined with class teachers, should monitor children's handwriting and presentation in books regularly (at least termly) and through year group writing moderations. The following should be considered:

- Is the writing generally legible?
- Are the letters correctly shaped and proportioned?
- Are the joins made correctly?
- Are the spaces between the letters, words and lines appropriate?
- Is the size of the writing appropriate?
- Is the writing properly aligned?

- Are the writing standards achieved by the majority of pupils in line with age related expectations?

Additional resources

- Continuous Cursive Handwriting Font
- Oxford Owl - Nelson Handwriting interactive display Letters and Sounds Phonics programme
- Pen licences and certificates on SBS Staff Drive Display lettering in SBS Staff Drive
- Cursive handwriting strips in SBS Staff Drive
-

Links/supporting material

<https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-teachers.html>

<http://mamaot.com/3-tricks-to-help-kids-learn-to-hold-their-pencil-correctly/>

<http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/index.html>

<http://www.nha-handwriting.org.uk/>

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/parent/help-with-handwriting>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hicd6ZHPapk&t=94s&ab_channel=OxfordOwl-LearningatHome

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzZA5CeyMQY&ab_channel=OxfordEducation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjR99X1LJ4o&ab_channel=CoachYusufTV