



Handwriting Policy

Current revision: 09.03.2026
Further revision: 09.03.2029
Delegated to: SLT

Mission Statement

Botwell House Catholic Primary School is distinguished by the care, courtesy and concern extended to all its members, regardless of cultural differences and strives to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ to:

“Love one another as I have loved you”

Through an effective partnership between home, school and parish and through a broad and balanced curriculum, each valued individual is encouraged to grow in their journey of faith and strive towards excellence.

Botwell House Catholic Primary School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her potential.

Contents

1. Rationale:	2
2. Objective:	2
3. National Curriculum Requirements:	3
4. Consistency	5
5. Handwriting Frequency	5
6. Pencil Vs Pens	5
7. Readiness to write	5
8. Inclusion	6
9. Handwriting at home	6

1. Rationale:

In line with the Writing Framework 2025, handwriting is taught explicitly and regularly across the school beginning in Early Years, in addition to writing in phonics lessons.

This handwriting policy is informed by educational research demonstrating the importance of explicit instruction, modelling and sustained practice in developing pupils' transcription skills. The Education Endowment Foundation highlights that secure handwriting reduces cognitive load, enabling pupils to focus more effectively on composition and the communication of ideas.

It is often suggested that writing is a redundant skill due to emerging technology however we now know that the process of writing is not just merely a tool for expressing thought, it is fundamental for brain development in several ways enhancing both language skills and comprehension abilities:

- **Cognitive Engagement:** Writing requires deeper cognitive processing compared to reading, it involves articulating and structuring ideas. This enhances understanding and retention of information.
- **Language Mastery:** It helps children develop control over language, moving beyond everyday conversational speech to more complex written structures. This mastery is crucial for effective communication.
- **Critical Thinking:** Writing encourages critical thinking and reflection, allowing children to clarify their thoughts and make connections between ideas.
- **Long-Term Memory:** Engaging in writing helps cement learning, making it easier for students to recall information later.

Overall, writing is a vital tool for cognitive development, enhancing both language skills and comprehension abilities.

Rosenshine emphasises the value of clear modelling, guided practice and frequent review in securing foundational skills such as letter formation and fluency. Similarly, Willingham explains that automaticity in basic skills frees working memory, allowing pupils to engage more successfully in complex learning tasks. This policy reflects these principles to ensure all pupils develop fluent, legible handwriting as a foundation for successful written communication.

2. Objective:

Handwriting is a core skill which influences the quality of work throughout the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and speedy joined handwriting, and to understand that different styles of handwriting are used for different purposes.

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

Aims

- Develop neat, legible and speedy handwriting where letters and words are automatically produced in independent writing.
- Establish and maintain high expectations for the presentation of written work.

- Understand, by the end of Year 6, the importance of neat presentation and the need for different handwriting styles (joined, printed or capital letters) to help communicate meaning clearly.

3. National Curriculum Requirements:

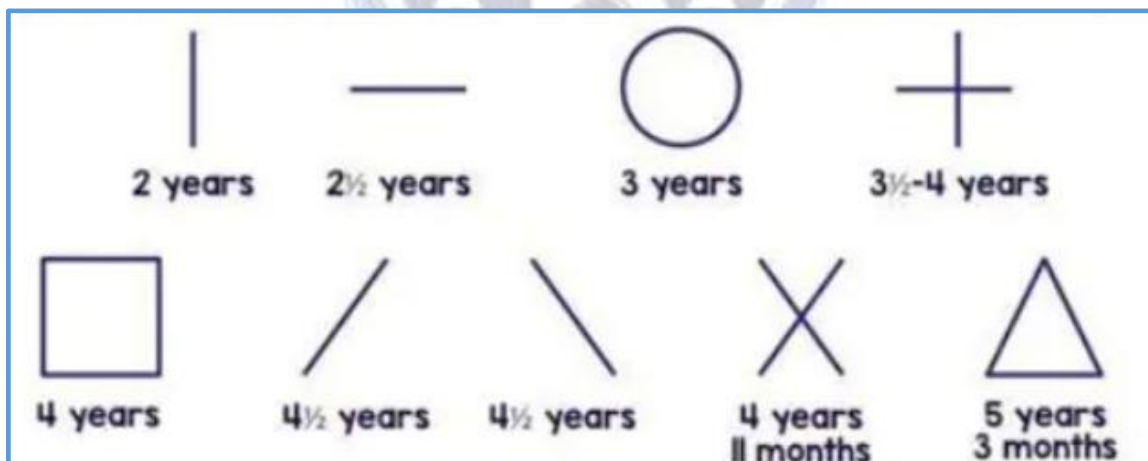
3.1 EYFS

There are several different aspects to consider to fully prepare children for teaching them to write.

Children need to develop the physical skills needed in order to write. Children need to engage in a range of gross and fine motor physical activities to develop muscles and core strength in shoulders, back, arms, wrist, hands and fingers. Co-ordination skills in large spaces and hand eye co-ordination skills also need to be developed to support the preparation for learning to write.

In the Foundation Stage, the initial writing emphasis is on mark-making where children are given opportunities to independently practise their mark-making skills utilising a range of tools and different materials in large scale and smaller scale formats. Children are given opportunities to develop the fine motor skills they need for mark-making and writing through continuous provision in the EYFS setting such as repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small-world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools.

Pre-writing letter shapes are taught within EYFS with imitation and copying the following marks (stages of development also noted)



Pupils are also taught to:

- hold a pencil in a tripod grip and how to sit on a chair safely to write.
- Form the three basic letter shapes in conjunction with the letter formations that are taught with the use of RWI mnemonics – memory pictures and handwriting patterns.
- Children are taught how to form the letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.

- Children practise handwriting under the guidance of a teacher so they do not develop habits that will be difficult to undo later. In Reception, handwriting practice stands outside the phonics lesson in order for children to practise in small groups when beginning to form letters. As the children become more accomplished with their phonics skills, handwriting and spellings also taught within phonics lessons.

3.2 Year 1

Pupils are also taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly in a tripod grip.
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.
- The size of the letters is also taught within Year 1.
- Form capital letters.
- Form digits 0-9.
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' during handwriting lessons (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

3.3 Year 2

Pupils are also taught to:

- Begin to form letter families with entry strokes.
- In Year 2 children begin to make links to their phonics skills to join "special friends" using horizontal and diagonal joins.

3.4 Lower KS2 (Years 3-4)

Pupils are 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 un-joined.
- 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].

3.4 Upper KS2 (Years 5-6)

Pupils are 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.

4. Consistency

Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in the teaching and learning of handwriting across all school years and be encouraged to take pride in their work. We want to help pupils enjoy learning and developing their handwriting, so they feel a sense of achievement and pride. We use the Read, Write Inc letter formations in EYFS and Year 1 as the pupils learn to transcribe accurately. In Year 2, they can use pre-cursive handwriting formations. From KS2 use the 'Letter-join' whole school handwriting scheme as the basis of our handwriting policy, which enables us to meet National Curriculum requirements through a structured teaching programme.

To enable this approach to be consistent it is imperative that All teaching staff model handwriting using the prescribed handwriting for the year group as defined within this policy, whether on whiteboards, displays or in pupils' books.

5. Handwriting Frequency

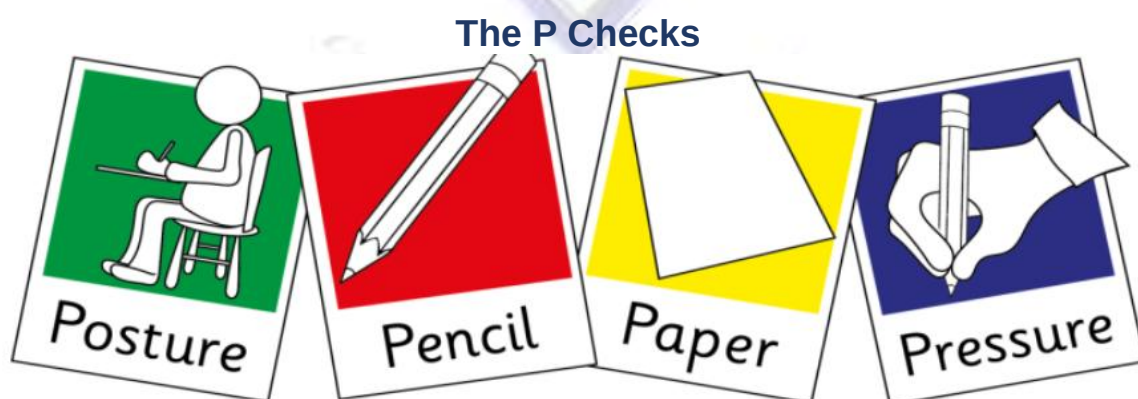
Handwriting is a cross-curricular task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting will be carried out regularly and systematically to ensure key stage targets are met throughout learning, as emphasised in the 2025 Writing Framework.

6. Pencil Vs Pens

Pupils will first learn to mark make with implements such as chunky crayons, chalk, felt tips or soft pencils in EYFS while developing a proper grip whilst exploring large scale drawing and writing to build fine motor skills, then moving to smaller, more precise writing tools.

When children's fine motor skills are established and expected joins are modelled consistently, from Year 4 onwards, pupils may progress to using a pen. This will be celebrated in the form of the child receiving a Pen Licence in Celebration Assembly. It is expected that all pupils are given a Pen Licence by the start of Year 6.

7. Readiness to write



Posture Check

- Sitting bottom on a chair
- Back should be supported by the chair
- Hips, knees and ankles at 90°

Pencil/ Pen

- Pencil grip needs to be functional and comfortable
- Check for wrist stability

• Feet flat on the floor (or supported on a step) • Arms resting comfortably on the table • Tummy - a fist's distance from the table • Non-dominant hand used to stabilise paper	• Model how to pick up and hold a pencil comfortably • Explain and model the logic of dynamic grips
Paper Left handers: • Position paper slightly to the left of body midline • Angle paper clockwise Right handers: • Position paper slightly to the right of body midline • Angle paper anti-clockwise	Pressure • Needs to be sufficient to leave a clear trace on the paper – and eases the writing across the page • Can vary on the demands of the task and tools used • Most children will learn the just right pressure through experimentation • Too heavy pressure can be due to tension/anxiety or poor postural control

8. Inclusion

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

9. Handwriting at home

We recognise the need to provide workshops for our families to enable them to thrive. These will be organised to present resources and strategies to support this at home. Pupils are encouraged to practise their handwriting at home using the Letter-join Pupil login.

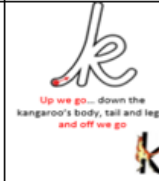
Teachers may set Home Learning Tasks, but children can also explore Letter-join's handwriting resources, including watching and practising letter and word animations (with parents) and playing online interactive games.

Appendix 1 RWI handwriting pattern EYFS and KS1

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



Appendix 2 Letter families

 long ladder							
 Curly caterpillar							
							
 one armed robot							
 zig zag monster							

Appendix 3- KS2 formations

Our handwriting

Ll Ii Uu Tt Yy

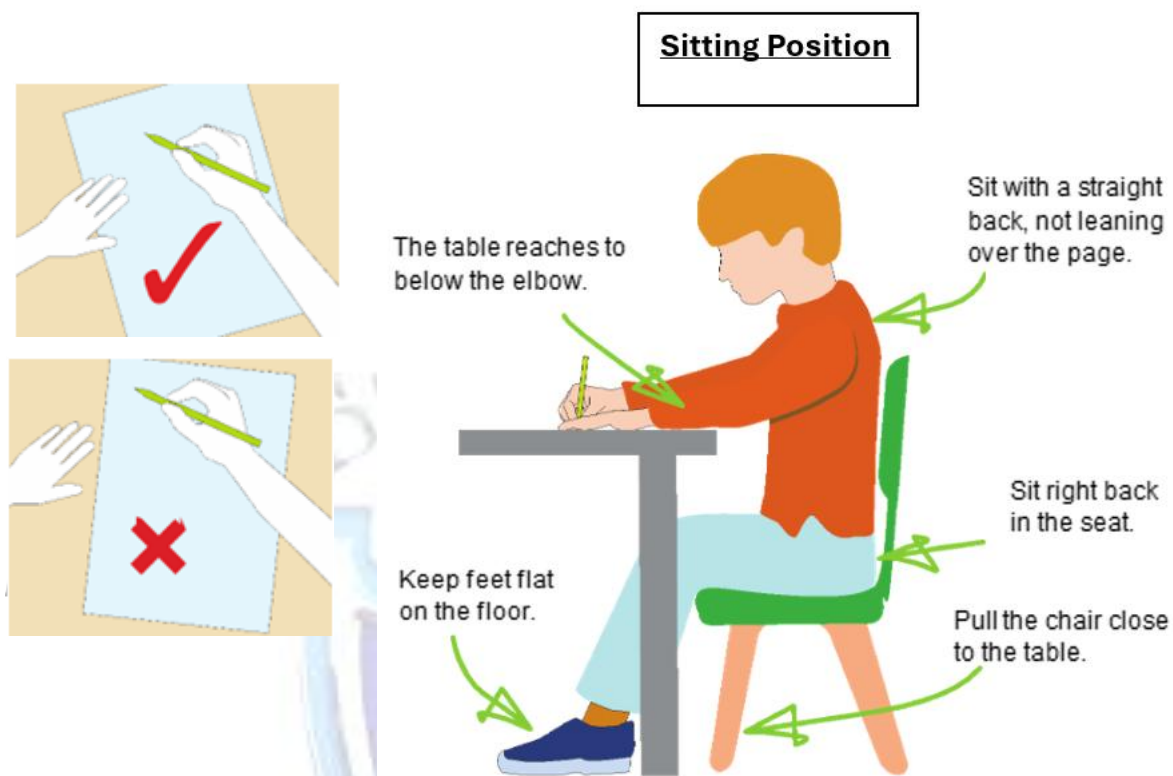
Aa Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Oo Qq Ss

Rr Nn Mm Hh Bb Kk Pp

Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Appendix 3: Correct posture, pencil grip and paper position for handwriting

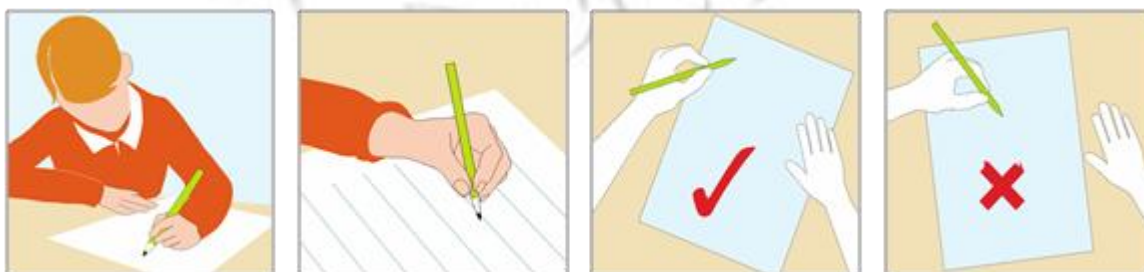
Pupils are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold a pencil comfortably and correctly.



Left-handed writer

Left-handed children may find it difficult to follow the movements of right-handed teachers as they model letter formation (and vice versa). Teachers will demonstrate to left-handers on an individual or group basis.

- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- Pupils should position the paper/book to their left side and slanted, as shown.
- Pencils should not be held too close to the point as this can interrupt pupils' line of vision.



Left-handed paper position.

Extra practice with left-to-right exercises may be necessary before pupils write left-to-right automatically.

The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left-handed children should use the tripod grip which enables the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

We use the Tripod Grip rhyme:

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.