Handwriting Policy



The best *for* everyone, the best *from* everyone.

2022 – 2023

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**Vision Statement**

The best for everyone, the best from everyone

**Mission Statement**

Our school places young people, families and communities at the heart of everything we do. We are a true community with shared responsibility and common core values which create a culture of collaboration, opportunity, respect and innovation. We inspire excellence and believe in nurturing the abilities of all within our schools and communities. We empower our young people to build purposeful lives and have the courage and confidence to make a positive contribution to society. Through excellence in education all of our young people will have a bright future.

**Our Values (Golden Rules)**

**P**olite and Caring that’s what we are

**R**espect and Kindness takes us far

**O**pen and Honest, we don’t tell lies

**M**anners are important, everyone tries

**I** is united, teamwork’s the prize.

**S**trive to be the best we can be

**E**veryone aims high at Rushbrook Primary

Our Golden Rules encompass all three core values of BFET:

Community, Integrity, Passion

**HANDWRITING POLICY**

1. **Definition**
2. Handwriting is a complex perceptual-motor skill that is dependent upon the maturation and integration of a number of cognitive, perceptual, and motor skills, which is developed through instruction (Hamstra-Bletz and Blote, 1993; Maeland, 1992). It is a complex process of handling language by pencil grip, letter formation, and body posture. Handwriting efficiency requires mastery of multiple skills, including vision, coordinating the eyes, arms, hands, memory, posture, and body control, as well as the task of holding a pencil and forming letters. Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically.
3. **Rationale**

The skill of handwriting is a complex one to learn. It is so much more than holding a pencil and forming letters. This policy seeks to ensure that all adults understand this and take this into account when teaching handwriting.

1. The importance of handwriting in the curriculum:
2. Handwriting is concerned with individual expression and the conveying of meaning through fluent composition. Handwriting should become an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of their writing. In order for this to occur, handwriting is taught in ways that enhance fluency, legibility, purposefulness and the opportunity for creative expression. It is important that all adults model the correct formation at all times, when marking, teaching and for display.

The National Curriculum 2014 states: ‘Writing…depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.’

**Aims of the policy**

At Rushbrook Primary Academy we believe that effective handwriting is:

* Legible
* Presentable
* Comfortable
* Fluent
* Flexible
* Fast
* Automatic
* Sustainable

Our children should progress through this list such that when they leave us at the end of KS2 their writing is of a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in accordance with the cursive font. They should have developed a flow and speed of writing producing the letters automatically in their independent writing.

**Principles of the policy:**

To ensure that we achieve our aims in handwriting we will follow the key principles of Teaching and Learning and the national curriculum expectations (statutory and non statutory).

1. **Teaching and Learning**

Children should:

* experience coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the school.
* develop a recognition and appreciation of pattern and line and be given support in finding a comfortable grip.
* understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
* be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work and therefore study handwriting with a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
* be supported in developing correct spelling quickly through a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.
* be shown how to write with a flow and speed that aids creative and imaginative expression for a range of purposes across the curriculum.
* be encouraged to use their skills with confidence and pride in real life situations.

1. **National Curriculum Expectations**

The whole school (including Nursery) use a cursive script which we refer to as Rushbrook Script.

1. **EYFS Expectations**

From the moment children begin to move and handle objects they are preparing for the act of writing. All children in our EYFS should be given opportunities to experience and practise the following (taken from the *Statutory Framework for EYFS, DfE, 2012)*

*From Physical Development: Moving and Handling*

*8-20 months*

* *Picks up small objects between thumb and fingers.*
* *Enjoys the sensory experience of making marks in damp sand, paste or paint.*
* *Holds pen or crayon using a whole hand (palmar) grasp and makes random marks with different strokes.*

*16-26 months*

* *Beginning to balance blocks to build a small tower*
* *Makes connections between their movement and the marks they make.*

*22-36 months*

* *Shows control in holding and using jugs to pour, hammers, books and mark-making tools.*
* *Beginning to use three fingers (tripod grip) to hold writing tools*
* *Imitates drawing simple shapes such as circles and lines.*
* *May be beginning to show preference for dominant hand.*

*30-50 months*

* *Draws lines and circles using gross motor movements.*
* *Uses one-handed tools and equipment, e.g. makes snips in paper with child scissors.*
* *Holds pencil between thumb and two fingers, no longer using whole-hand grasp.*
* *Holds pencil near point between first two fingers and thumb and uses it with good control.*
* *Can copy some letters, e.g. letters from their name.*

*40-60 months*

* *Shows a preference for a dominant hand.*
* *Begins to use anticlockwise movement and retrace vertical lines.*
* *Begins to form recognisable letters.\*\**
* *Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.\*\**

*From English: Writing*

* *Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint.*
* *Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.*
* *Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.*

**\*\* NB See Year 1 expectations (Page 8) for letter formation (as this is how we**

**teach letter formation in our EYFS)**

1. **Year 1 Expectations**

*STATUTORY REQUIREMENT*

*Pupils should be taught to:*

* *sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly (also EYFS expectation)*
* *begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place (also EYFS expectation)*
* *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.*

*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.*

***\*\*NB Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs (See left handed provision expectations in the Inclusion section page 16).***

1. ***Year 2 Expectations***

*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.*

*NON STATUTORY (BUT EXPECTED AT OUR SCHOOL)*

*Pupils should revise and practise 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.*

1. ***Years 3 and 4 Expectations***

*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 down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].*

*NON STATUTORY (BUT EXPECTED AT OUR SCHOOL)*

*Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.*

1. ***Years 5 and 6 Expectations***

*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.*

*NON STATUTORY (BUT EXPECTED AT OUR SCHOOL)*

*Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an unjoined style, where for example, labelling a diagram or data, writing email addresses, or for algebra and writing capital letters when filling in a form.*

**Teaching Handwriting at Rushbrook Primary Academy**

1. **Overview**

We use the Letter-Join scheme to structure our teaching of handwriting from EYFS through to Year 6. Our focus is initially on legibility and presentation, ensuring that the child feels comfortable when handwriting so that fluency is achieved. At all ages/stages we make sure that children are given the opportunity to exercise the necessary muscles in order to be able to write comfortably.

We teach handwriting in 2 x 20-30 minute slots a week (Year 1-6) as well as during all forms of written work (for example during English, Science and foundation subjects). We use the Letter-Join lesson plans to structure our 20-30-minute handwriting lessons and we always observe children while they write in order to identify anything that needs correcting at the point of learning.

Once children have a legible, joined style of handwriting we will issue Pen Licences from Year 2 with the aim that all children in Key Stage 2 will be able to use pens to complete the majority of written work unless a child deems that the piece of writing would be more suitably completed using a different writing tool (for example a pencil).

1. **Self-Instructional Training**

When teaching handwriting we use ‘self-instructional training’ to support children to become autonomous. The steps that should be followed are:

1. Adult models task whilst talking aloud, *for example “to form a c I am going to lead up, rock back, lead on”.*
2. Child performs task while adult provides instructions out loud, *for example “put your pencil on the line lead up to one o’clock, now to rock back curve round to the left”.*
3. Child performs task while verbalising instructions, *for example “I start with my pencil on the line lead up to one o’clock, now rock back by curving round to the left”.*

Then, when ready developing to:

1. Child performs task while whispering instructions.

Then, when ready developing to:

1. Child performs task using private speech.
2. **Common Language**

We use a common language to teach handwriting, this groups letters into families with a script for each letter:

**The Rockin’ Round Letters**

a “lead up, rock back, move up and down, lead on”

c “lead up, rock back, lead on”

d “lead up, rock back, three quarter up, three quarter back, lead on”

o “lead up, rock back, loop round, lead on”

g “lead up, rock back, move up, drop down, loop round and lead on”

**The Tallees**

b “lead up, three quarter line, drop back down, pop, lead on”

h “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, over the hill, lead on”

k “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, pop, flick, lead on”

l “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, lead on”

t “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, lead on. Cross over”

**The Rollercoasters**

e “lead up, loopdeloop, lead on”

s “lead up, curly-wurly, lead on”

x “lead up, criss-cross, lead on”

z “lead up, zig-zag, lead on”

f “lead up, three quarter line (with a hat), drop down three quarters, loop to lead on”

**The Up-downs**

y “lead up, drop down, smiley, drop down, loop to lead on”

u “lead up, smile, lead on”

i “lead up, drop down, lead on. Dot”

m “lead up, drop down, over the hill, over the hill, lead on”

n “lead up, drop down, over the hill, lead on”

r “lead up, drop down, back up, lead on with a hat”

v “lead up, down, up, lead on”

w “lead up, down, up, down, up, lead on”

**The Drop-downs**

j “lead up, drop down three quarters, loop round, lead on”

p “lead up, drop down three quarters, back up, pop, lead on”

q “lead up, rock back, move up, drop down three quarters, lead on”

1. **Knowledge, Skills and Understanding (Curriculum Content)**
2. ***EYFS***

Children take part in activities to develop their fine and gross motor-skills and recognition of patterns, for example, to form letters using their index finger in sand or using paint. Children should begin to learn how to correctly hold a pencil. Then how to use a pencil, and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters most of which are correctly formed. They should be given the opportunities to develop their handwriting, using the pre cursive style, to their full potential at that age.

From entry to the EYFS we teach:

* good gross and fine motor control
* a recognition of pattern
* a language to talk about the shapes and movements that will lead into the main handwriting movements which create the three basic letter shapes (c,l,m )

The first stage of handwriting teaching involves gross motor skill development activities, which are closely linked to whole-body movements. Children are shown how to make large movements in the air with their arms, hands and shoulders, e.g. with ribbons fixed to the ends of sticks.

Emerging letter shapes are developed in a number of ways, for example:

* Sky writing with both hands
* Making patterns on each other’s backs
* Making letter shapes in a damp sand tray

Children in this stage are provided with a variety of surfaces to make marks on, including different types of paper and card, whiteboards, chalkboards, interactive white boards, ‘magic boards’ etc. and they are given the opportunity to use a wide range of mark making tools, including pencils of varying thicknesses and colours, markers, chalk, wax crayons, pastels, paint, charcoal etc.

They have experience of a wide range of activities to develop hand and finger strength which leads on to developing a good pencil grip. When children are ready, they pick up the writing implement themselves and decide which hand they prefer, although hand dominance is often evident before this stage. They are taught to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible.

Pencil grips and triangular pencils are used to encourage a good grip, and children are monitored so that they do not hold the pencil too tightly which produces tension in the arm and shoulder. Children who are left handed are encouraged to tilt their work clockwise so that they can more easily see what they have written.

Children are provided with a designated ‘writing area’ to give status to their early independent writing and develop a positive attitude to the act of writing, and left-right orientation is encouraged.

By the end of the foundation stage, children are able to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly and begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place.

1. ***KS1***

Children are taught handwriting skills in discrete handwriting sessions for 20-30 minutes twice a week. Children will continue to develop fine and gross motor-skills with a range of multi-sensory activities. Handwriting should be discussed within and linked to phonics sessions. Teachers and support staff continue to guide children on how to write letters correctly, using a comfortable and efficient pencil grip. Children should now be leaving spaces between words accurately. By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be able to write legibly, using upper and lower-case letters appropriately and correct spacing between words using a cursive style. During handwriting sessions, children are taught all of the basic letter shapes, according to the Letter-Join scheme, and they have the opportunity to practise letter formation in a variety of ways, starting with sky-writing to encourage good formation and reinforce previous learning.

There is an expectation that:

* this handwriting style will be applied to all writing that the children do
* the appropriate S factors will be considered and children will become familiar with how to self-assess
* joining will not be taught unless children are forming letters correctly

1. ***KS2***

Throughout key stage 2 handwriting skills are revised and practised in discrete handwriting lessons for 20-30 minutes twice a week. During this stage the children continue to have direct teaching and regular practice of handwriting. We aim for them to develop a clear, fluent style and by the end of Year 6 be able to adapt their handwriting for the for different purposes, such as: a neat, legible hand for finished, presented work, a faster script for note making and the ability to print for labelling diagrams etc. There is an emphasis on applying handwriting skills to all written work. They work at a personal pace, revisiting and refining skills. High standards of presentation are valued in each year group in order to encourage children to take pride in their work.

There is an expectation that:

* children will be able to self-check
* the handwriting style will be applied to all work children do
* Children have a high standard of presentation.
* the S factors will be considered and children from Year 4 upwards will be able to self-assess (see S factors self-assessment sheet in appendices)

By the end of KS2 children should be able to write at speed when necessary, and should be able to adapt their handwriting according to the task. Skills practice in Y6 should take these requirements into account.

**Inclusion**

We endeavour to identify children with learning difficulties with handwriting swiftly – if we are unsure we seek professional advice. We observe young (or new) children carefully in order to identify any issues early on.

Children identified as having a specific learning difficulty with handwriting have a school based plan written in consultation with the SEND coordinator, and special provisions are made to cater for their specific needs.

Provision for left-handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. 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.

**Capital letters**

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 the teacher during Literacy and Phonics sessions.

**The Learning Environment**

In all classes, pencil pots with suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Classrooms are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, word lists and dictionaries/thesauruses Everything written by staff and displayed on the whiteboards is in this font. The handwriting style should be displayed in every classroom (See Rushbrook Font in appendices).

**The Role of Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are made aware of our agreed handwriting style and encouraged to practice this with their children at home. Homework and home learning is available via the Letter-Join scheme and can be accessed using both paper and interactive formats.

**Resources**

The Letter-Join scheme will provide a huge range of resources that can be accessed via the program. This includes planning, worksheets, homework and interactive resources. Other resources such as assessments can be found in the appendix of this policy and on the school shared drive (English > Handwriting > Resources).

**Assessment**

1. **Overview**

Observing children as they handwrite is the primary way that we assess handwriting. In the first instance we are looking for correct letter formation (both lower case and capital letters) by observing how the letters are formed.

When we are confident that the children are forming their letters correctly we assess whether the children’s handwriting is:

* Legible – EYFS/KS1/KS2
* Presentable - EYFS/KS1/KS2
* Fluent – KS1/KS2
* Flexible – KS2
* Fast – KS2

We use our assessments for the following purposes:

1. To identify next steps of learning (this is our priority)
2. To ascertain whether pupils are working at age-related standards for handwriting (as set out in the EYFS Framework and National Curriculum)
3. To provide evidence for end of Key Stage assessments
4. **S Factors**

*In order to assess whether handwriting is legible we look at the S Factors:*

Shape – From Year 1 onwards

Size - From Year 1 onwards

Space – From Year 2 onwards

Sitting on the Line - From Year 2 onwards

Stringing - From Year 3 onwards

Slant – From Year 4 onwards

Speed - From Year 4 onwards

Style – From Year 5 onwards

The children will be expected to self-assess against these S factors from Year 4 onwards (grids in appendices). In addition, we use the National Curriculum end of Key Stage assessment criteria for handwriting.

1. **Formal Assessments**

Upon entry into a new year group an early piece of writing will be assessed from an English T4W ‘Hot write’, Science, History or Geography piece (in line with the golden folders) using the teacher assessment grid.

Each (suitable) S Factor will be assessed and given a score 1-10.

1: S Factor not achieved

5: S Factor being used sometimes but not consistently

10: S Factor embedded within handwriting

A cumulative score will be recorded as a base line with the grid being used to diagnose issues and to tailor interventions. The assessment will be repeated at the end of each term to show progression within handwriting.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Rushbrook Script Poster

Appendix 2: Rushbrook common language poster.

Appendix 3: S Factor Teacher Assessment Grid

Appendix 4: S Factor Self-Assessment Sheet

Appendix 1: Rushbrook Script Poster

Rushbrook Script

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

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

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

! . ? “ ” , : ; £ % ( ) - + = /

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Appendix 2: Rushbrook common language poster.

**The Rockin’ Round Letters**

a “lead up, rock back, move up and down, lead on”

c “lead up, rock back, lead on”

d “lead up, rock back, three quarter up, three quarter back, lead on”

o “lead up, rock back, loop round, lead on”

g “lead up, rock back, move up, drop down, loop round and lead on”

**The Tallees**

b “lead up, three quarter line, drop back down, pop, lead on”

h “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, over the hill, lead on”

k “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, pop, flick, lead on”

l “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, lead on”

t “lead up, three quarter line, drop down, lead on. Cross over”

**The Rollercoasters**

e “lead up, loopdeloop, lead on”

s “lead up, curly-wurly, lead on”

x “lead up, criss-cross, lead on”

z “lead up, zig-zag, lead on”

f “lead up, three quarter line (with a hat), drop down three quarters, loop to lead on”

**The Up-downs**

y “lead up, drop down, smiley, drop down, loop to lead on”

u “lead up, smile, lead on”

i “lead up, drop down, lead on. Dot”

m “lead up, drop down, over the hill, over the hill, lead on”

n “lead up, drop down, over the hill, lead on”

r “lead up, drop down, back up, lead on with a hat”

v “lead up, down, up, lead on”

w “lead up, down, up, down, up, lead on”

**The Drop-downs**

j “lead up, drop down three quarters, loop round, lead on”

p “lead up, drop down three quarters, back up, pop, lead on”

q “lead up, rock back, move up, drop down three quarters, lead on”

Appendix 3: S Factor Teacher Assessment Grid

**S Factors**

Shape – From Year 1 onwards

Size - From Year 1 onwards

Space – From Year 2 onwards

Sitting on the Line - From Year 2 onwards

Stringing - From Year 3 onwards

Slant – From Year 4 onwards

Speed - From Year 4 onwards

Style – From Year 5 onwards

**Teacher Assessment Grids**

Year 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | Score |
| Shape | /10 |
| Size | /10 |
| Total | /20 |

Year 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | Score |
| Shape | /10 |
| Size | /10 |
| Space | /10 |
| Sitting on the line | /10 |
| Total | /40 |

Appendix 3: S Factor Teacher Assessment Grid (continued)

Year 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | Score |
| Shape | /10 |
| Size | /10 |
| Space | /10 |
| Sitting on the line | /10 |
| Stringing | /10 |
| Total | /50 |

Year 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | Score |
| Shape | /10 |
| Size | /10 |
| Space | /10 |
| Sitting on the line | /10 |
| Stringing | /10 |
| Slant | /10 |
| Speed | /10 |
| Total | /70 |

Year 5 & 6

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | Score |
| Shape | /10 |
| Size | /10 |
| Space | /10 |
| Sitting on the line | /10 |
| Stringing | /10 |
| Slant | /10 |
| Speed | /10 |
| Style | /10 |
| Total | /80 |

Appendix 4: S Factor Self-Assessment Grids

A grid can be given to a child when they are reflecting upon a piece of work.

Year 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | \\dc1\desktops$\mforeman\Desktop\download.png. |
| Shape |  |
| Size |  |
| Space |  |
| Sitting on the line |  |
| Stringing |  |
| Slant |  |
| Speed |  |

Year 5 & 6

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S Factor | \\dc1\desktops$\mforeman\Desktop\download.png. |
| Shape |  |
| Size |  |
| Space |  |
| Sitting on the line |  |
| Stringing |  |
| Slant |  |
| Speed |  |
| Style |  |