

# THE WILLOWS PRIMARY SCHOOL



## HANDWRITING POLICY

### Safeguarding Statement

The school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Author:	Headteacher
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## **Handwriting**

Handwriting is a means of recording language on paper. It is an important life skill as a functional tool for expressing language and as part of self-image and expression of personality. Despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

As a school, we recognise that children's ability to write well for the rest of their lives, depends on firm foundations of taught skills in their primary years.

We want all children to learn and practise appropriate and effective handwriting skills at each stage of development, continually working towards handwriting which is:

- legible
- Presentable
- Comfortable
- Fluent
- Flexible
- Automatic
- Sustainable

Our whole school handwriting style is cursive letter formation which can then be easily joined when the children are able to master this skill. We do not teach/use lead in strokes but do ensure that lead out strokes on appropriate letters are taught and secured at an early age once letter formation is consistent and correct.

Our Handwriting progression is as follows

Stage 1 - Individual letter formation (using Little Wandle letter formation phrases)

- Capital letter formation is taught alongside

Stage 2 - Individual letter formation – sky, grass and ground letters

- Capital letter formation is taught alongside

Stage 3 - Cursive letter formation – pre-joining with lead out strokes

Stage 4 – Joined handwriting

4a) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins with grass letters

4b) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from sky letters to grass letters

4c) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from grass letters to ground letters

4d) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from grass letters to sky letters

4e) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins with sky letters

4f) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins with grass letters

4g) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins from grass letters to ground letters

4h) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins from grass letters to sky letters

4i) Break letters without joins – ground letters (and z)

Stage 5 – joining break letters and developing an individual style of handwriting

## Stage 1

When teaching individual letter formation, the children are taught using the Little Wandle formation phrases (See Appendix 1)

Letter formation is taught in phonics lessons from the first week of the Little Wandle programme in Reception as children learn the Phase 2 graphemes. It is important to teach children correct letter formation from the outset as it is hard to undo incorrect letter formation if this becomes established.

Letter formation is also taught as part of handwriting lessons.

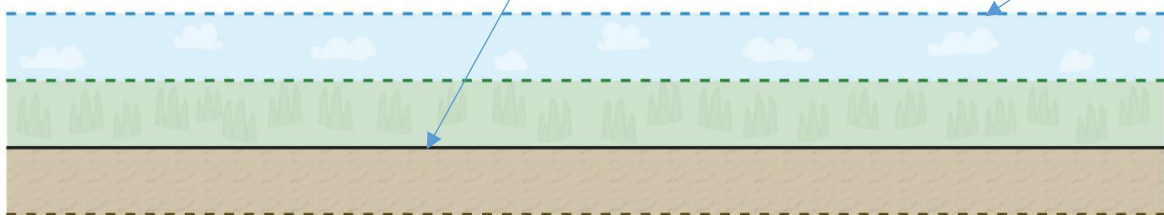
## Stage 2

At Stage 2, the children are introduced to the idea of sky, grass and ground letters to help them understand the concept of ascenders, descenders and correct placement of letters on the line – both lower case and upper case (capital letters)

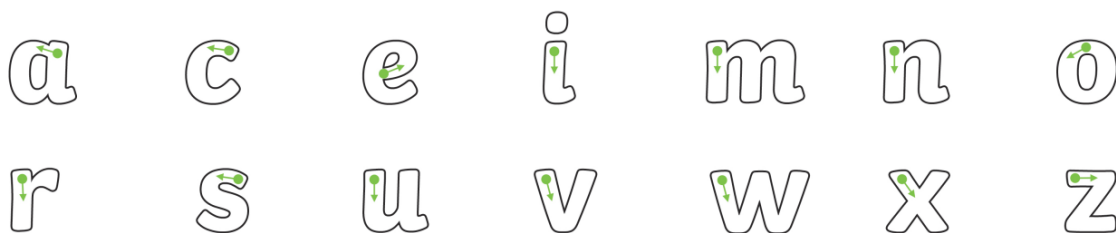
### Sky Letters



Sky letters sit on the line but reach up to the sky



### Grass Letters



Grass letters sit and stay on the line in the grass



## Ground Letters



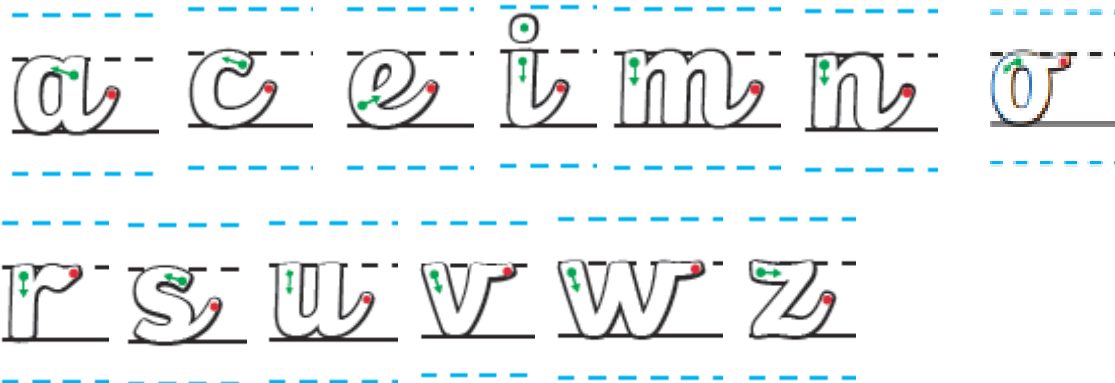
Ground letters sit on the line in the grass  
but their roots grow into the ground



### Stage 3

Letter formation and placement is developed by introducing a cursive style which teaches lead out strokes (ready for joining)

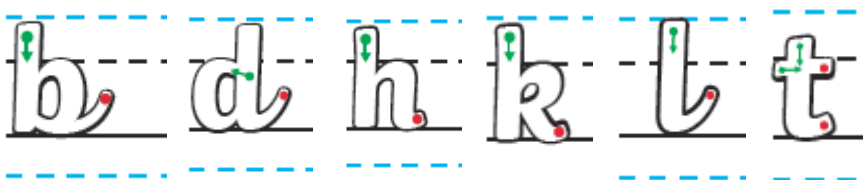
Grass letters with lead out strokes – no ascenders or descenders, all sit on the line



Grass letters with no lead out strokes – no ascenders or descenders, all sit on the line



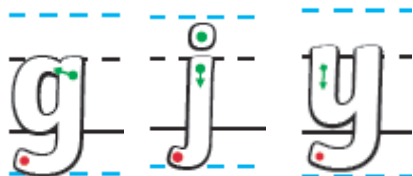
Sky letters with lead out strokes – with ascenders, all sit on the line



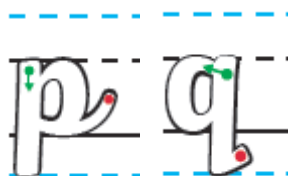
Sky letters with no lead out strokes – with an ascender



Ground letters with no lead out strokes – with descenders that hang below the line



Ground letters with lead out strokes – with descenders that hang below the line



#### **Stage 4**

4a) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins with grass letters

- For example - ai, ar, un, am, ear, aw,

4b) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from sky letters to grass letters

- For example - hu, hi, ha, ho, ti, tu, to, lu, li, lo, du, di

4c) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from grass letters to ground letters

- For example – ag, ap, ay, ig, ip,

4d) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins from grass letters to sky letters

- For example – ab, ul, it, ib, if, ub, ck, ch, it

4e) Joined handwriting – diagonal joins with sky letters

- For example - th

4f) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins with grass letters

- For example – ou, vi, wi, ow, ov, ri, ru, ve, we, re

4g) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins from grass letters to ground letters

- For example – op, oy, og

4h) Joined handwriting – horizontal joins from grass letters to sky letters

- For example – ob, ol, wh, rt, rk

4i) Break letters without joins – ground letters (and z)

For example – b, p, g, q, y, j, z

## **Stage 5**

Teachers work with children to help them develop their own individual style of handwriting which will include joining previously taught break letters if they wish to

### **Handwriting Progression Expectations**

It is expected that the majority of children will

- Secure Stage 1 of progression by the end of Reception year
- Secure Stage 2 of progression by the end of Year 1
- Secure Stage 3 of progression by the end of Year 2, and introduce the first stage of joining letters within the summer term
- Secure Stage 4 - all diagonal and horizontal joins by the end of Year 4 (LKS2)
- Embed Stage 4 and secure Stage 5 by the end of Year 6 (UKS2)







**Models of writing throughout the school will use cursive letter formation or a joined cursive writing style.**


There are many benefits to teaching cursive handwriting.

- Help letter mix-ups: There are many letters that can be tricky to understand when your students are first learning letter formation. These include 'p', 'q' 'b' and 'd' that can each be written incorrectly backwards or upside down. By encouraging children to use cursive formation, these mistakes can be reduced. This is especially useful for dyslexic students, who may be prone to making these errors in letter formation.
- Increase concentration in writing: By reducing the amount of times the pen is lifted from the page, you might find that your students are able to write more fluidly, expressing their creative ideas continuously.
- Faster writing: It is actually much faster than writing in print by printing each letter individually. Cursive writing letters are connected and so children lift their pen less frequently, which cuts down on time spent forming the letters.

## Appendix 1 – Little Wandle formation phrases

Grapheme and mnemonic	Formation phrase	Grapheme and mnemonic	Formation phrase
 s	Down the snake from head to tail.	 d	Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.
 a	Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.	 g	Round the goat's face and curl under its chin.
 t	Down the tiger and across its neck.	 o	All around the octopus.
 p	Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.	 c	Curl around the cat.
 i	Down the iguana and dot the leaf.	 k	Down the kite, up to the top corner and down to the bottom corner.
 n	Down, up and over the net.	 c	c Curl around the heel of the sock.
 m	Down, up and over the mouse's ears.	 k	k Down the sock, up and back down to the toe. <b>Catchphrase:</b> Rock that sock!
		 e	Around the elephant's eye and curl down its trunk.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Formation phrase	Grapheme and mnemonic	Formation phrase
 u	Down and around the umbrella, and back to the ground.	 j	Down the jellyfish and dot its head.
 r	From the cloud to the ground and over the rainbow.	 v	Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.
 h	Down, up and over the helicopter.	 w	Down and up and down and up the waves.
 b	Down the bear's back, up and round its tummy.	 x	From the top, across the box to the bottom. From the top again across the box to the bottom.
 f	Down the flamingo to its foot and across its wings.	 y	Down, around the yo-yo and curl round the string.
 l	Down the lollipop stick.	 z	Across the top of the zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.

Grapheme and mnemonic	Formation phrase / Catchphrase
 qu qu	<p>q Round the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end.</p> <p>qu Quick, it's the queen!</p>



## Appendix 2 – National Curriculum requirements for handwriting

### 3 and 4 year olds will be learning to write some letters accurately

Help children to learn to form their letters accurately. First, they need a wide-ranging programme of physical skills development, inside and outdoors.

Include large-muscle co-ordination: whole body, leg, arm and foot. Plan for small muscle co-ordination: hands and fingers. Children also need to know the language of direction ('up', 'down', 'round', 'back', etc)

### Children in reception will be learning to form lower-case and capital letters correctly

Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase, encouraging an effective pencil grip. When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line. **Correct pencil grip is crucial at this stage as learned habits become ingrained and it is very difficult to establish new ones over time.**

### Handwriting – 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
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (ie letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

### Notes and guidance (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. **Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.**

### Handwriting – 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

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

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.

### **Handwriting – Years 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, and that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]

### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

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.

### **Handwriting and presentation – Years 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

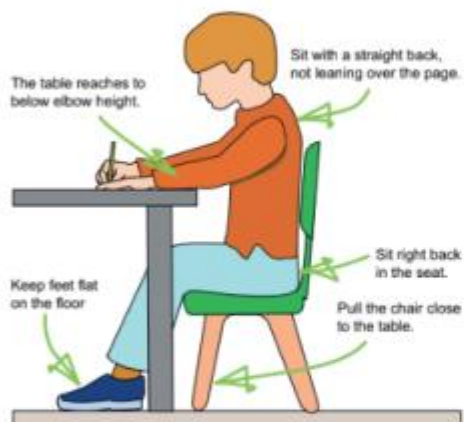
### **Notes and guidance (non-statutory)**

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, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra, and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.

## Appendix 3 – Handwriting seating positions

### Right handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

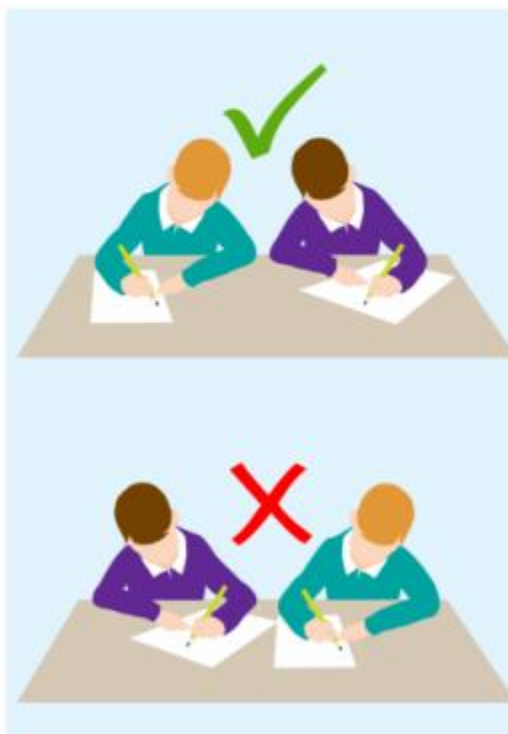


How to hold and position the paper.



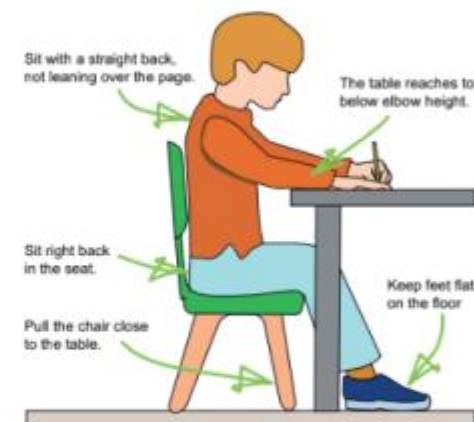
### Sitting position

Sit left-handed children to the left of their partner so they have plenty of room to write.



### Left handed children

How to sit correctly to be comfortable for handwriting.

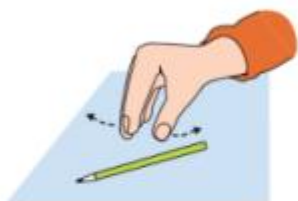


How to hold and position the paper.



## Appendix 4 – Tripod Pencil Grip

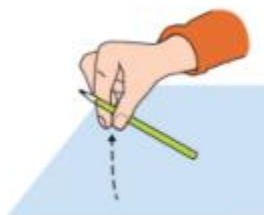
### Right handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.

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### Left handed grip



1. Point away the pencil,



2. Pinch it near the tip,



3. Lift it off the table,



4. Spin it round...



5. ...and grip.