Arnold Mill Primary School

Handwriting Policy

September 2025

Approved by:	S&P Committee
Last Review Date:	September 2025
Next Review Date	Autumn 2026

Rationale

At Arnold Mill Primary School, we use a cursive handwriting scheme which has been customised for our school and matched to the National Curriculum (2014). All children and staff are expected to use the font as much as possible across the school to further promote high standards of handwriting, presentation and pride in work.

Aims

We aim for children to be able to:

- Communicate meaning in a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive joined handwriting.
- Develop flow, speed and confidence, allowing them to focus on the content of their writing across all subjects
- Not only understand the importance of neat presentation in communicating effectively but develop a sense of pride in their work and ownership of their learning.

Handwriting:

Overview of progression

EYFS	Through the Early Years Curriculum children encounter a range of activities to promote gross and fine motor skills and the shapes and directional pushes and pulls required to form letters. Fine motor skills are developed through 'Dough Disco.' Gross motor skills are developed through a programme called 'Squiggle while you wiggle.' ● When ready, they are taught to form letters following the guidance in the RWi Phonics Programme. ● Children have access to a range of writing tools, and a tripod grip is encouraged. ● Children develop skills which include: 1. Good fine and gross motor control (See Appendix 1). 2. Recognition of pattern. 3. Language to talk about shapes and movements. **Aim:** to develop a secure foundation of skills to support handwriting.
Foundation 2 - print (unjoined)	In F2, when developmentally ready, children will develop skills which include: 1. Pencil grip/seating 2. Letter formation following the guidance in the RWi Phonics Programme 3. Numbers

	4. Capital letters (emphasise that you can take the pencil off of the paper). ● Children have access to a range of writing tools, and a tripod grip is encouraged. ● Teachers/TAs model the RWi patter when writing. ● A fine motor area is available in the foundation continuous provision. (See Appendix 1). Gross motor activities are available in the outside provision. ● During the Autumn term, children will learn the correct formation for each letter using the RWi patter. ● Starting in the Spring term, a handwriting practice activity is led by a TA or teacher using letter families. ● Groups of targeted children, led by a teacher or TA, focus on the development of fine motor skills. ● During the Summer term, the size and orientation of letters are developed, and children work in smaller groups to support this. Children are targeted in the summer term to be ready for KS1. **Aim**: focus on fine/gross motor skills, leading to letter formation in print.
KS1 - pre-cursive (unjoined).	In KS1, when developmentally ready, children will continue to develop skills which include: 1. Pencil grip/seating 2. Letter formation following the guidance in the RWi Phonics Programme 3. Numbers 4. Capital letters (emphasise that you can take the pencil off of the paper). ● Children have access to a range of writing tools, and a tripod grip is encouraged. ● Teachers/TAs model the RWi and pre-cursive patter when writing. ● In KS1 children are taught pre cursive lead ins and lead outs, starting with lead outs. ● The pre-cursive lead out is taught following the RWi patter but incorporating either 'flick', 'washing line join', or 'loop ready to join the next letter.' ● The pre-cursive lead in is taught using the patter 'start on the line, diagonal join to half height….' and then following the RWi patter. ● Handwriting books are used for all work in KS1 to secure letter formation and then learn the pre cursive lead ins and lead outs.

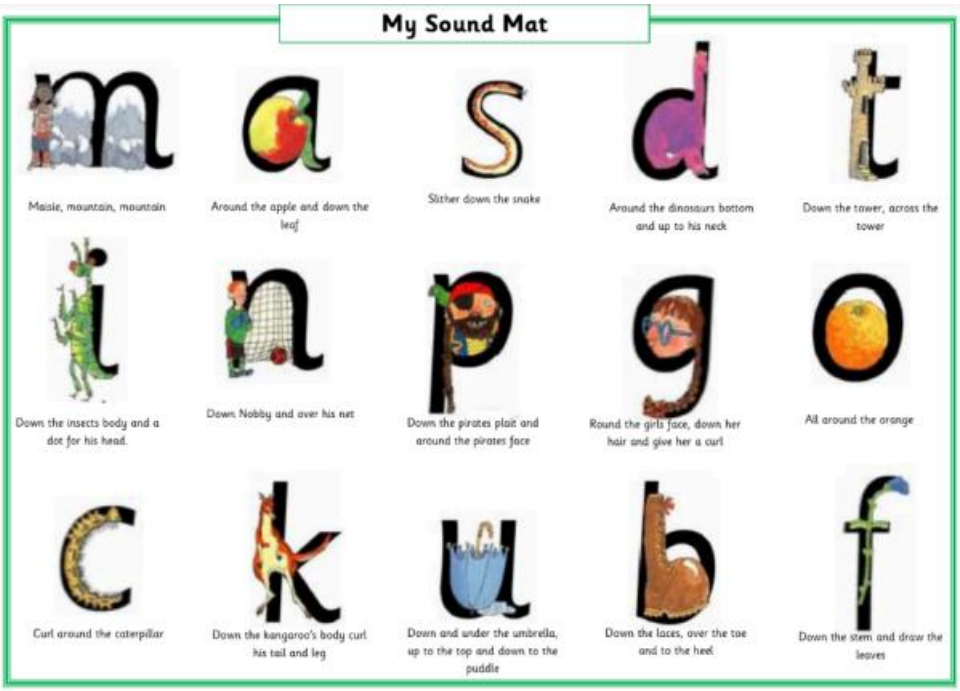
	● All RWi tutors use acetate overlays to model use of handwriting lines and pre-cursive script. ● KS1 enhanced provision includes increased focus on fine and gross motor skills. ● Targeted TA/Teacher led groups provide additional support for those children who find the automaticity of writing a challenge. **Aim**: to secure letter formation in print and then learn the lead ins/out for precursive.
KS1 - cursive joined	When children are ready in KS1 they start to join. The focus of handwriting sessions is therefore to begin joining cursively. This is achieved through the following: ● Daily 10-minute handwriting lessons using the RWi patter incorporated with 'flick', 'washing line join', or 'loop ready to join the next letter' for the lead out, or 'start on the line, diagonal join to half height….' for lead in. ● All RWi tutors model the use of handwriting and pre-cursive script. ● Teachers model handwriting during lessons, saying the patter out loud. Pupils work their way through the different handwriting families (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways and their joining strokes). ● Teachers in KS1 model in pre-cursive script, leading to cursive as the year develops. ● Children that find the automaticity of writing a challenge are identified and additional provision is put into place through TA/teacher led groups. **Aim:** to be joining cursively by the end of the year.
Year 3 - cursive joined	In Year 3, pupils build on their learning from KS1. They have already began to join cursively in their handwriting and therefore work on securing the joins while also improving speed and fluency of handwriting over the year. This is achieved through the following: ● Handwriting lesson which are recorded in handwriting books Lessons use the patter, 'flick', 'washing line join', or 'loop ready to join the next letter' for the lead out, and 'start on the line, diagonal join to half height….' for lead in, as learnt by the children last year. ● A minority of children may still require the RWi patter to be modelled to support them

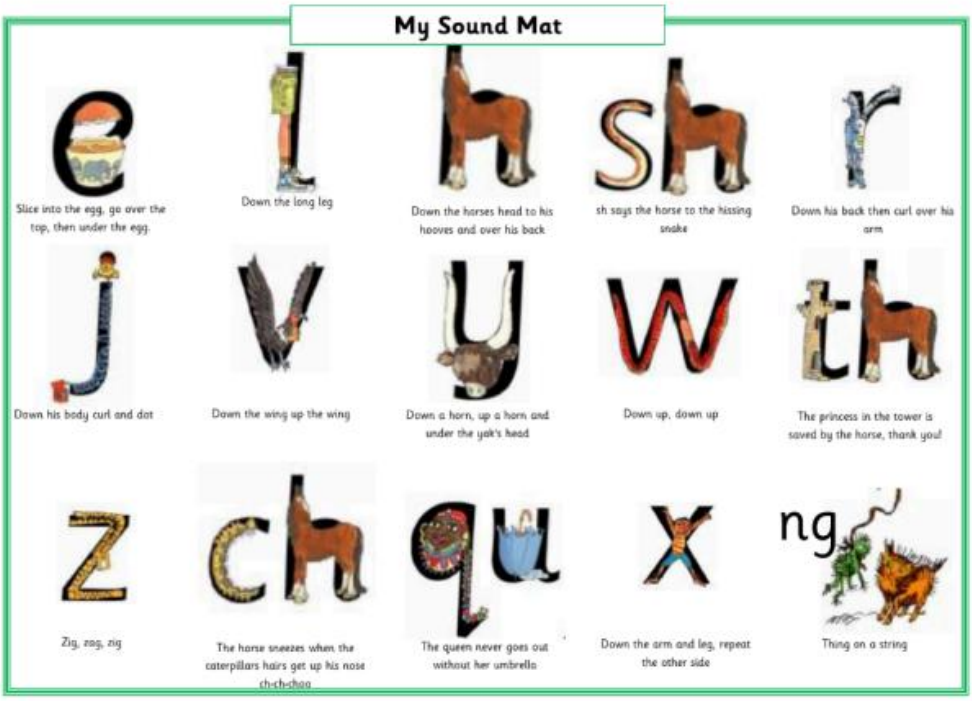
	with letter formation. This is done through targeted TA/teacher led groups. ● Teachers model handwriting during lessons saying the patter out loud. Pupils continue to work their way through the different handwriting families (ie letters that are formed in similar ways and their joining strokes). ● Teachers in Year 3 model cursive script whenever they are writing. **Aim:** to secure the joins, leading to increased speed and fluency
Year 4 - cursive joined	In Year 4, pupils continue to consolidate the joins while also increasing the speed and fluency of their joined cursive handwriting. This is achieved through: ● Handwriting lessons take place at the beginning of the writing lesson. ● Teachers model handwriting during lessons, saying the patter out loud. ● TA/teacher led groups provide targeted support for those children needing it. A minority of children who are struggling to form letters may use the Debbie Hepplewhite patter adapted specifically for this reason. ● When writing, teachers and TAs model using cursive handwriting. . **Aim:** to secure the joins, leading to increased speed and fluency
Years 5 and 6 - cursive joined	In Years 5 and 6, pupils work on increasing the speed and fluency of their joined cursive handwriting. This is achieved through: ● Children in Years 5 and 6 should already have formed a legible, neat, cursive handwriting style. Handwriting in these year groups is therefore taught to those children identified as needing extra support. ● Teachers and TAs model cursive handwriting during lessons. ● Pupils begin to learn to print as appropriate, for example for emails and algebra. **Aim**: to develop speed and fluency using cursive handwriting

Patter

To support the formation of letters, the RWi patter is used throughout EYFS, Reception and Year 1 when teaching handwriting. Year 2 will use the RWi patter accompanied by 'start on the line, diagonal join to half height….' for the cursive lead in, and 'flick', 'washing line join', or 'loop ready to join the next letter' for lead cursive lead out.

Read Write Inc Patter:





When teaching cursive handwriting from Year 3 upwards, children have already learnt to form their letters. We therefore use the Debbie Hepplewhite cursive patter as below. Debbie Hepplewhite Patter A minority of children who are struggling to form letters will use the Debbie Hepplewhite patter adapted specifically for this reason. This is shown below:

Letters	Patter
c	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round
a	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, (straighten up), straight down, flick...
d	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, straight up, straight down, flick...
s	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and curl around (like a snake), flick...
g	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, (straighten up), straight down through the line, thin loop ready to join the next letter...
o	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, washing line join...
qu	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, hook over, back and round, catch the hook, (straighten up), straight down through the line, loop at the bottom, up with a parallel line, stop at the writing line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl for the 'u', down and flick...
f	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up then hook over, back and straight down through the line, thin loop ready to join the next letter...
l	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, flick...
t	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, flick... then cross the 't' from left to right above the join (after the whole word is written)
u	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl for the 'u', down and flick...
y	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down to form the bowl, straight down through the line, thin loop ready to join the next letter, flick...
v	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form a single zigzag, washing line join...
w	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form a double zigzag, washing line join...
x	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down diagonally to form the first line of 'x', pencil-point off and start back down on the writing line again to form another diagonal line up to half height for the second line of 'x', washing line join...
z	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight line across from left to right, diagonal line back down to the line, form a curved line across from left to right with a flick... (which provides *flair*)
e	Start on the line and the diagonal line sweeps round to form the 'e'...

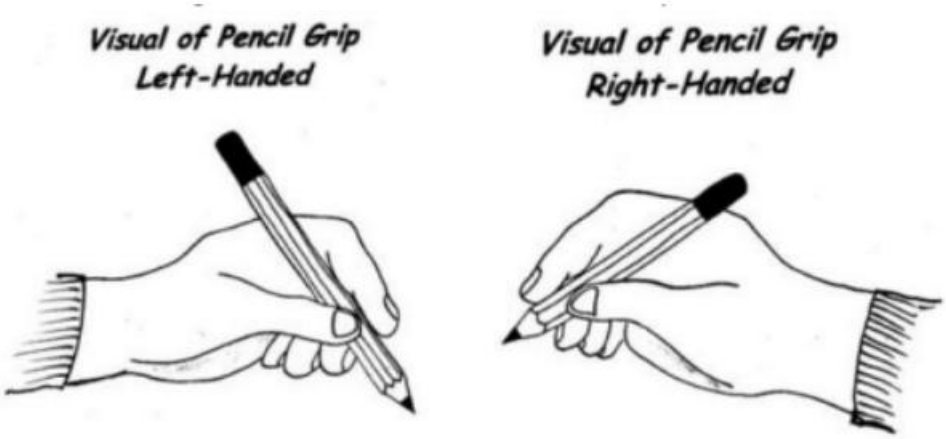
h	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form a full bridge, flick...
b	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form half a bridge and curve to complete the 'b', flick...
k	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight up, straight down, up to form a bow-shape, flick...
r	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form half a bridge, washing line join...
n	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a full bridge, flick...
m	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, down, back up to form a full bridge, then another full bridge, flick...
p	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down through the line, back up to complete the curve of the 'p', flick...
i	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down to the line, flick... then dot the 'i' (after the whole word is written)
j	Start on the line, diagonal join to half height, straight down through the line, thin loop ready to join the next letter... then dot the 'j' (after the whole word is written)

Resourcing

Suitable tools are available to children appropriate to age e.g. hand huggers, triangular pencils, grips to encourage tripod grip. Handwriting practise books and paper are available for use in Phase 1 and for those children needing this to support their writing. A selection of blue pens are available for children in Year 2 upwards. After exposure to different pens, they select the pen which they can write with at most ease to produce neat, fluent and joined handwriting.

Tripod grip

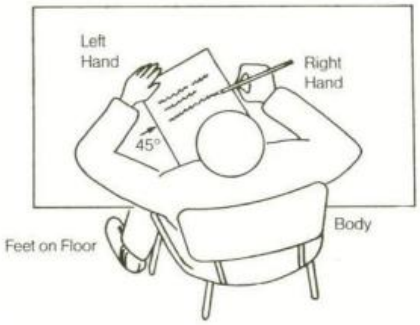
Both right- and left-handed children are encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pencil nib. Writers are encouraged to use the “tripod” grasp about 1-1.5 inches above the pencil tip, however, this is not enforced if the pupil is successful using an alternative grip.



Posture

All writers, with support from the class teacher at first, place themselves in the most suitable position for handwriting e.g. right handers sit on the right-hand side of a pair where one person is right-handed and the other is left.

- Feet flat on the floor or on a wide based raised surface.
- Sit on the chair so hips are positioned at approximately 90° with the back supported.



Left Handers

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; writers are encouraged to use their right hand to stabilize the paper.

Handwriting around the school

Correct modelling of the agreed cursive style by the teacher is important. Therefore, when marking and writing on the board, teachers model good handwriting in line with school policy. Teachers display handwritten signs around the classroom where possible.

Appendix 1

Some ideas for developing fine motor control:

- Let the children make patterns using pegboards.
- Provide sewing and weaving activities.
- Involve the children in chopping and peeling in cooking activities.
- Provide woodworking tools – pliers, screwdrivers, hammers.
- Use finger rhymes, counting fingers, playing with words and sounds, etc.
- Provide small construction toys.
- Structure sand and water play to include sieving, pouring, picking up toys using tools, etc. Develop the pincer movement: show the children how to use tweezers to pick up and sort sequins, small beads, etc., sprinkle coloured sand, glitter, salt, etc. on pictures.
- Provide the children with paints, finger paints, etc. for making big patterns on differently shaped paper, for example fish, balloons, kites.
- Talk about the patterns they make.
- Encourage the children to strengthen their fingers by using clay, play dough, Plasticine, etc., for modelling. They can make letter shapes and patterns using the modelling media.
- Encourage dexterity by asking the children to cut out large letter shapes or patterns. They can use different coloured marker pens for tracing along inside the shapes.
- Emphasise that circles and curly caterpillars need to be traced from the top and anticlockwise. Give the children thick paintbrushes and water to paint patterns on walls, fences, etc.

Appendix 2

- Common problems
- Joining a capital letter to a lower-case letter in the same word.
- Not keeping the letters on the line (this should be helped by using a lead-in from y1)
- Not keeping to the same line of the letter when coming back along it
- Joining to the bottom of the letter from a washing line (horizontal) join
- Going round the bottom of some of the ‘c group’ letters
- Not going all the way round on some of the ‘c group’ letters
- Too large ‘i’ and ‘s’
- Descenders standing on the line (especially j and p).