



## Handwriting and Presentation Policy

### Mission Statement

We are inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ who is at the heart of all that we do.

Working in unity with our families, parish and community, we encourage and support the children to grow in faith and reach their full potential in a happy, caring and loving environment.

### Curriculum Intent Statement

At Our Lady and Saint Edward's we aim to support children to develop their handwriting progressively to meet the aims of the National Curriculum for writing transcription and the related Early Learning Goals. We intend to provide children with the necessary knowledge, skills and practice to become fluent and speedy writers, using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing (in all areas of the curriculum). This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

### Our Commitment to Handwriting and Presentation

At Our Lady and Saint Edward's Catholic Primary School, we believe that clear, fluent handwriting and pride in presentation are essential foundations for confident communication across the curriculum. Through consistent, progressive teaching and a focus on fine motor development, we ensure every child is equipped with the skills to write legibly and express their ideas effectively. Our approach combines high expectations, inclusive support, and structured practice to promote excellence and independence in all areas of learning.

### Curriculum

In line with our Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) Programme, Twinkl Phonics, children are taught letter formation alongside learning the corresponding phoneme and grapheme. In correlation with this, children are taught Letter Formation Rhymes and the handwriting 'families' each letter belongs.

#### Handwriting Families:

- Curly Caterpillar Letters – c, a, o, q, g, d, e, s, f,
- One Armed Robot Letters – r, b, n, h, m, k, p
- Ladder Letters – l, i, t, u, j, y
- Zigzag Monster Letters – v, w, x, z

## **Handwriting**

### **Planning and Organisation**

#### **EYFS**

Throughout the EYFS provision at Our Lady and St Edward's, our children are supported to develop their gross and fine motor skills. In addition to the continuous provision, children develop their gross and fine motor skills through:

- Funky Fingers each morning
- Changing for PE lessons (including folding clothes and turning them the right way round)
- Explicit teaching of Fundamental Movement Skills through PE lessons
- Explicit teaching of scissor skills (following a progression throughout the year)
- Pen discos
- Go Noodle dance sessions
- Explicit teaching of Makaton signs
- Small group work linked to curriculum (including baking, using chopsticks, learning cultural dance and various tasks linked to Expressive Arts and Design)

Children are taught letter formation and pencil control as part of their daily phonics lessons. As each new phoneme and grapheme is introduced to the children, they are also taught the letter name and the capital equivalent. Letter Formation Rhymes are introduced for each new letter, supporting children to adopt the correct formation. Children are encouraged to trace the letter using big and small movements, before they have a go at writing the letter on their whiteboard. Each new letter that is introduced, is added to the writing area so that children can practice their letter formation during continuous provision.

Children are supported in developing a comfortable Tripod Grip when mark making and writing using a 'nip, flip, grip' approach (see Appendix 1).

As part of our Basics First Approach<sup>1</sup> to Writing (Appendix 2), teachers and teaching assistants emphasise the importance of correct letter formation and knowledge of capital letters alongside the lowercase equivalents.

#### **Year 1**

Letter formation and pencil control continues to be taught through daily phonics lessons. As children are introduced to new graphemes, they revisit the relevant Letter Formation Rhymes. Children practice writing graphemes on whiteboards with lines and continue to practice their handwriting in their phonics workbooks.

Children continue to be supported to develop a comfortable Tripod Grip using a 'nip, flip, grip' approach. Where a Tripod Grip is not yet secure, children are given a choice of pencil grip supports to use when writing.

As part of our Basics First Approach to Writing (Appendix 2), teachers and teaching assistants emphasise the importance of sitting letters on the line and using finger spaces between words.

## Year 2

Children continue to practice correct letter formation during their daily phonics lessons. Alongside this, children have regular handwriting practice sessions.

Once children are forming all letters correctly, and have developed appropriate consistency in sizing and spacing, they are introduced to diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters.

Where a Tripod Grip is not yet secure, children are given a choice of pencil grip supports to use when writing.

As part of our Basics First Approach to Writing, teachers and teaching assistants emphasise the importance of ascenders and descenders ("Tall letters are tall and short letters are short.").

## Key Stage 2

Children use neatly joined handwriting using appropriately sized diagonal and horizontal strokes.

Children are expected to write consistently across all subjects.

Handwriting practice takes place regularly.

Bubble Writing resources are used to support regular handwriting practice.

### <sup>1</sup>The Basics First Approach

The Basics First Approach is a school-wide framework developed by staff to ensure core writing skills – such as letter formation, spacing, punctuation, and sentence structure – are constantly reinforced across all year groups. This approach helps build fluency, accuracy, and confidence in writing by embedding the foundations early and revisiting them often.

## Pen Licences

In Year 5, children are encouraged to work towards achieving a pen licence. A 'Pen Licence Criteria' (Appendix 3) is shared with children at the beginning of the year. When children feel as though they have developed the appropriate standard and consistency in their handwriting, they can submit their work for consideration. If children do not meet the expected criteria, they are given feedback to inform their progress. Children who are awarded a pen licence, are given a selection of pens to try. When they have chosen the pen that they feel most comfortable with, they are able to keep that pen for use in their exercise books.

If children have not achieved a pen licence by Year 6, they are given a selection of pens to try at the start of the year and encouraged to write with a pen while continuing to achieve consistent, joined handwriting. Children who are struggling with letter size and formation will engage in targeted handwriting intervention before starting to use a pen for their classwork.

## Assessment and Intervention

Teachers carry out regular and ongoing assessment of handwriting to identify when and where additional support and intervention is needed. See Handwriting Grip Progression (Appendix 4).

Intervention as required using the following resources:

- South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust Fine Motor and Handwriting Intervention
- Bubble Writing Resources

# Our Lady & St Edward's Catholic Primary School

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## Presentation

At Our Lady and St Edward's, we encourage children to take pride in their work and to complete every task to a high standard. High-quality presentation supports and reflects the handwriting skills taught throughout the school. We adopt the following expectations for all written work:

### General Expectations (apply across all subject areas):

- Write on the line (KS1)
- One digit per square (Maths)
- Carefully copy from the board
- Use pencil or pen as appropriate, in line with pen licence status

### Progressive Expectations:

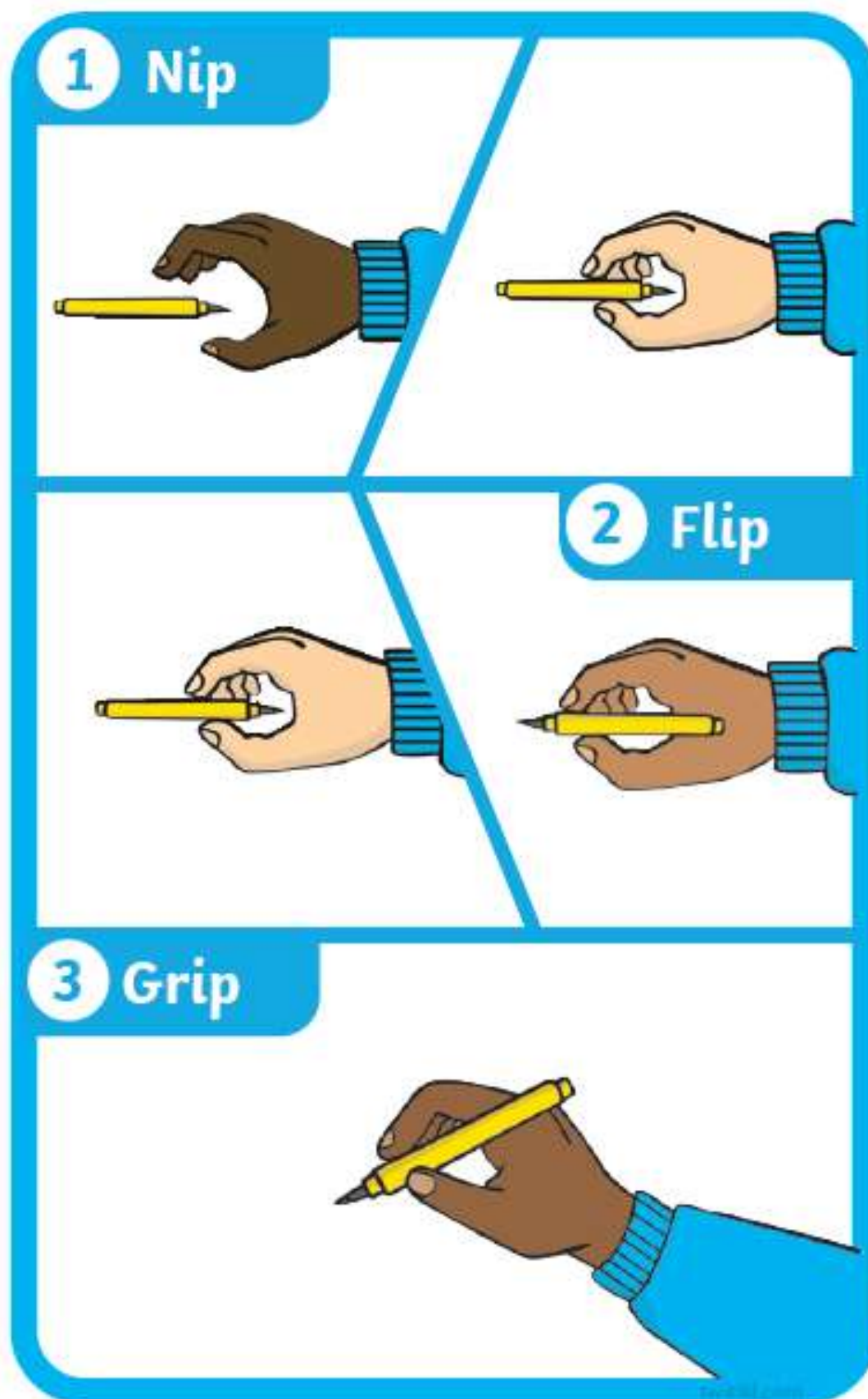
<u>Year Group</u>	<u>Expectations</u>
Year 1	- Teachers provide printed date and title to be stuck into books
Year 2	- Write date and title - In Summer Term, underline both in preparation for KS2
KS2	- Write and underline date and title - Use long date format for written work - Start from margin

### Monitoring

- SLT are responsible for monitoring the consistency and quality of handwriting and presentation.
- Ongoing CPD supports staff in delivering effective and high quality practices.

<b>Written by:</b>	K. O'Donnell (English Lead)	<b>Date:</b> July 2025
<b>Approved by:</b>	Karen Woods (Headteacher)	<b>Date:</b> Sept 2025
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<b>Next review due by:</b>	July 2028	

Appendix 1 – Nip, Flip, Grip Pencil Control

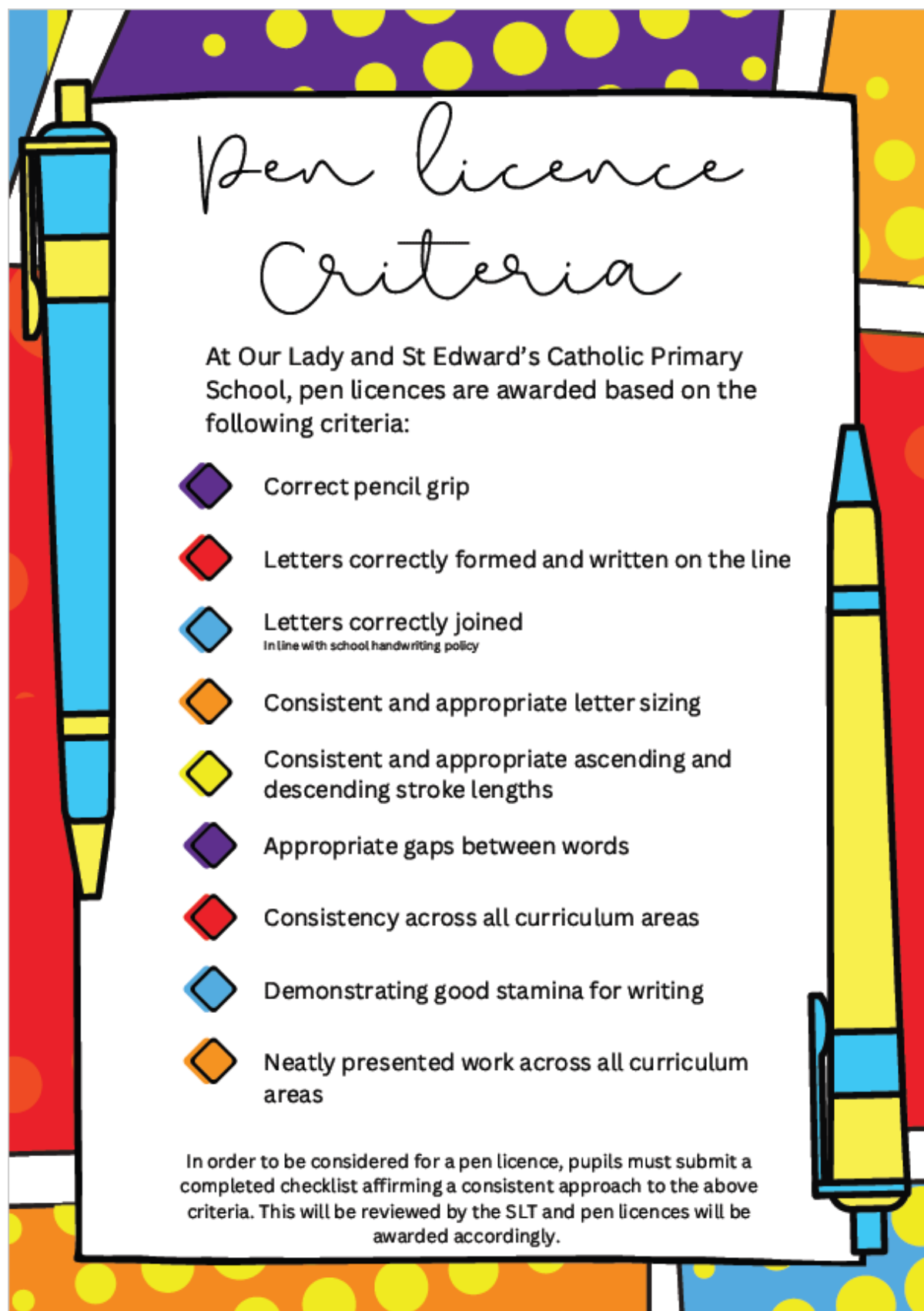


Appendix 2 – Basics First Approach to Writing

**Our Lady and St Edward's – Basics First Approach to Writing**

Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct letter formation</li> <li>• Knowledge of lowercase and capital letters</li> </ul>
Year 1	<p>All of the above plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters sit on the line</li> <li>• Finger spaces between words</li> <li>• Capital letters and full stops to punctuate independent clauses</li> </ul> <p><i>Emphasis on subject and verb in writing across all subjects. When modelling writing, identify the subject and verb and explain thought behind punctuating work. "I need a full stop and capital letter because it's a fully independent clause with a subject and a verb."</i></p>
Year 2	<p>All of the above plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascenders and descenders</li> <li>• Independent clauses - subject, verb and leftovers</li> <li>• Capital letters for familiar proper nouns (names of people and places)</li> </ul> <p><i>When modelling writing, identify the subject, verb and leftovers. "Tall letters are tall and ..."</i></p>
Year 3 & Year 4	<p>All of the above plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handwriting joined and legible</li> <li>• Writing in full sentences</li> <li>• Question marks and Exclamation marks used consistently and appropriately</li> <li>• Consistent use of past and present tense</li> <li>• Capital letters for proper nouns (the one and only)</li> </ul> <p><i>Across all subjects, children should write in full sentences (i.e. not starting sentences with 'and', 'but', or 'because' unless for a justified reason e.g. fronted subordinating conjunction) When modelling writing, identify the subject, verb and leftovers, saying which clause the leftovers belong. Identify the independent clauses within compound and complex sentences, explain the purpose of the conjunction.</i></p>
Year 5 & Year 6	<p>All of the above plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in size, proportion and spacing of handwriting</li> <li>• Consistent use of tenses</li> <li>• Commas used accurately for lists and fronted adverbials</li> </ul> <p><i>When modelling writing, identify the subject, verb and label the leftovers.</i></p>

Appendix 3 – Pen Licence Criteria



Appendix 4 – Handwriting Grip Progression

## Stages of Pencil Grip in Chronological Age

### 1 to 2 Years Old: Fisted grasp or Palmar Supinate Grasp



- Pencil is held in the palm.
- All fingers and thumb are used.
- Movement is from the shoulder; the arm and the hand move as a unit.
- Light scribbles are produced with this pencil grip.

### 2 to 3 Years Old: Digital Pronate Grasp



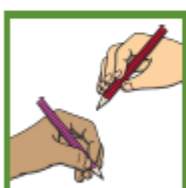
- All fingers are holding the pencil but the wrist is turned so that the palm is facing down towards the page.
- Movement comes mostly from the elbow and the shoulder is now stabilized.
- Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied.

### 3 to 4 Years Old: Four-Finger Grasp



- Fingers are held on the pencil shaft opposite the thumb, beginning to form the arc between the thumb and index finger.
- Movement occurs from the wrist; the hand and fingers move as a whole unit.
- Zigzag lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip.

### 4 to 6 Years Old: Static Tripod Grasp or Static Quadropod Grasp



- A three-finger grasp, where the thumb, index finger and middle finger work as one unit.
- Movement is usually from the wrist with this static grasp.
- A static quadropod grip has a fourth finger involved.
- Triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.

### 6 to 7 Years Old: Dynamic Tripod Grasp



- Pencil is held in a stable position between the thumb, index and middle finger.
- The ring and little fingers are bent and rest comfortably on the table.
- The index finger and thumb form an open space.
- Movement comes from the fingertips.
- This is the ideal grip to move the pencil efficiently, accurately and for letter formation practice.