

# Buttercup Primary School Handwriting Policy

Our aim is for children to develop legible, fluent, efficient handwriting.

In handwriting, as in other skills, children will develop at different rates; for that reason, it is important that there is a consistent style of handwriting throughout the school, and that all staff consider themselves to be teachers of handwriting, with a clear understanding of the progression of skills, and of how to remedy errors. It is not sufficient to exhort children to improve their handwriting; the different elements need to be taught and practised. Early intervention is essential at every stage, to prevent the acquisition of bad habits which are difficult to correct.

The school handwriting style is based the **TEACH HANDWRITING** website.

## Learning How to Handwrite the Letters of the Alphabet, Numbers and Symbols

On this web site they have used coloured strips to provide visual clues for the child, helping to develop their understanding of letter placement and size. For ks1 children the animations and handwriting practice worksheets have picture clues to help learn where on the line to place the letters, for ks1 and ks2 children just colour clues are included.

## The Stages of Teaching Letter Formation

Children are ready to learn how to handwrite letters once they can form, without difficulty, all of the pre-handwriting letter patterns.

Initially learning to form letters is a less formal affair, using a range of media and game type activities e.g. drawing letters with paints or in sand. The important thing is to model and explain how to make the letter shapes with the correct start point, directional flow of the tool, or hand, and finish point.

Once the child is ready to start sitting at a desk to handwrite it is important to ensure that their sitting position and table height are correct for them. At this stage they also need to be taught body and paper position. It is also a good idea to check their pencil grip in relation to their developmental stage and age.

Usually at this stage the child will have a definite hand preference, being left or right handed (hand dominance). At the beginning of foundation stage (age 4 years) not showing a preferred hand dominance is not an issue, however as they come to the end of foundation stage (age 5 years) it can make life a little more difficult for them. Again, by this stage if the child is swapping hands through a task they may need a little help in developing their hand dominance.

Letters are created through joining lines and curve shapes in a particular way. They have a designated start point and set directional pushes and pulls of the pencil to reach the designated finish point. This is why we teach letter formation in groups/families rather than in alphabetical order. Certain groups use the same, or similar, shape and directional push and pulls of the pencil to form the letter, for instance the letter c has the same start point and anti-clockwise directional movement shape that is needed to create the letters a, d, g, o and, though a little more complicated, the letters s and e. Teaching letters in groups and families can also help to limit letter reversals such as b and d.

It is important to learn how to form letters correctly to begin with as this makes the transition from single letter formation to joined letter handwriting much easier.

Once your child has mastered and is able to form lower case letters of a consistent size, and have them correctly positioned in relation to one another, they are ready to learn how to join their writing.

## How to join letters of the alphabet

Once a child has learnt how to form and position letters they are ready for join their handwriting.

They learn how to join both bottom and top joining letters for cursive and continuous cursive handwriting styles.

## How to Join Cursive Letters

### How to Join Continuous Cursive Letters



#### The Joining Process

The process of joining letters depends on the handwriting style being taught.

There are 4 groups of letter joins; bottom joins, bottom to “c” shape joins, “e” joins (top and bottom join strokes) and top joins.

#### Cursive Joins

Children are taught to add a finishing kick/stroke to the individual letters and extend them into the following letter start point.

Two types of **Bottom joins** need to be taught:

**Bottom to “c” shape joins** not only have to be extended but curved up and over to what would be the normal start point of the letter if it was not to be joined

Two types of **“e” joins** need to be taught:

- A more diagonal angled exit stroke is needed when joining a bottom exit kick letter to “e”
- A downward diagonally curved exit stroke is needed to join a top exit letter to “e”

Two types of **Top joins** need to be taught:

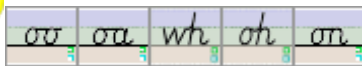


Handwriting styles which allow the letters to join are best for children as they make their handwriting fluent and quick, by reducing the strain on their hand, wrist and fingers.

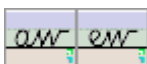
There are four type of handwriting joining stroke - bottom joins, bottom to “c” shaped joins, “e” joins and top joins, to be mastered.

Capital letters and print letters do not join when handwriting.

**Click on the handwriting style below to see the letter join animations and handwriting practice worksheets.**



- The exit line is extended to join with the following letter which is then formed from this point
- A longer extension is required when the join occurs at the start point of a letter



- The exit kick is extended slightly into the next letter
- The exit line is extended across to the normal start point of “curves to start” letters such as “d”

#### Continuous Cursive Joins

All continuous cursive letters are taught with a lead-in and exit stroke. All the child needs to do is write the letters closer together without taking their pencil off the paper until the word is finished. So the only additional letter joins that need to be taught are:

**Top joins to “e”** as a more downward curved stroke is required

Two types of **Top joins**:



- The exit line is extended to join with the following letter which is then formed from this point



It has to be remembered that handwriting is a complex skill which is not naturally instinctive; we have to be taught how to form the letters while developing the physical, coordination and memory skills needed.

**Posture:** children should be taught the importance of sitting upright and correctly on their chair, with their feet on the floor.

**Pencil grip:** Children should use a tripod grip, and be given constant reminders until this is established.

**Position of paper:** left handed children should be encouraged to tilt their paper slightly to the right to improve their view of what they are writing, and to reduce smudging later on when they write in ink. Right handed children may find it helpful to tilt paper slightly to the left. Paper should be steadied with the free hand.

**Correcting mistakes:** use of rubbers is to be discouraged except in the case of work in pencil for display. Otherwise, mistakes in pencil or ink should be crossed out using a single horizontal line, and the whole word rewritten. Using double line spacing for work in draft allows the children space to improve their own work.

**Writing implements, linked to assessment:** when children have achieved legible joined handwriting in pencil, they will progress to a ball point pen “school handwriting pen”, which will then be used for all written work in school.

**Ink:** black ink will be used throughout the school.

