

# St Agnes Academy

## Handwriting Policy



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## St Agnes Academy Handwriting Policy

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## St Agnes Academy Handwriting Policy

At St Agnes Academy, we believe every child should be able to express themselves through writing, by having fluent and joined handwriting and feel proud of their presentation. Our children are taught to form all letters correctly using print format in EYFS and Y1, pre-cursive at the beginning of Year 2 and finally continuous cursive in the Summer Term of Year 2. By the end of Year 2, we aim to ensure that all of our children can write using continuous cursive so that they are fluent in their handwriting and can then focus on composition skills.

### **Rationale**

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. Handwriting is one of the most demanding movement skills which a child is expected to master. Therefore, it must be systematically and directly taught through demonstration, explanation and practice. The main aim being that handwriting becomes an automatic process, which frees pupils to focus on the content of the writing. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and, therefore needs to be practiced often and with focus.

### **Aims of the Policy**

At St Agnes Academy, our aims in teaching handwriting are that:

- All pupils develop a fluent, neat and legible style of handwriting.
- All pupils understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- All pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.
- All pupils are able to write quickly to aid expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.
- Staff establish and maintain a high profile of handwriting and presentation skills by displaying and rewarding work that meets the standard.
- There is coherence and continuity in learning and teaching across the school.

### **Key Goals**

All children should be given the opportunity to develop an effective, cursive style of writing. In order to do this they should be taught:

- how to hold a pencil/pen using the correct and comfortable grip
- how to sit at a table and orientate a page correctly
- to form letters properly, that is, where to start and where to finish
- to form letters of consistent size and shape
- to form upper and lower case letters
- to write from left to right and top to bottom of the page
- to put regular spaces between letters and words
- how to join letters
- to be fully aware of the importance of neat and clear presentation in order to communicate meaning effectively
- to write legibly with increasing fluency and speed

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- use different forms of handwriting for different purposes and developing a range of presentational skills, e.g. print script for captions, sub-headings and labels; capital letters for posters, title pages and headings.

### **Key Advantages of Continuous Cursive Handwriting**

At St Agnes, we use the continuous cursive handwriting from Y2 to Y6. Continuous cursive handwriting is handwriting that is joined-up and where each letter is formed without taking the pencil or pen off the paper so that each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

There is an overwhelming amount of research suggesting that teaching cursive handwriting helps children in learning to both read and spell.

There has been research into the link between cursive writing and retaining spelling patterns which seems to prove that children will retain patterns of letters better than if they try to learn spellings as individual printed letters. Children tend to see the words as wholes rather than separate letters that need to be put together. This helps their spelling, particularly of non-phonetic (tricky) words.

Cursive writing helps left-handed children. In print, the left-handed child proceeds to write printing from left to right but will cover what he/she has written with his/her arms. In cursive writing, the left-handed child learns to write from bottom up and turns the paper clockwise causing great comfort and legibility.

The key benefits and features of our continuous cursive style are:

- By making each letter in one movement, children's hands develop a 'physical memory' of it, making it easier to produce the correct shape.
- Because letters and words flow from left to right, children are less likely to reverse letters which are typically difficult (b/d or p/q). In cursive, writing these letters require a huge difference in directionality.
- There is a clearer distinction between capital letters and lower case letters.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed, spelling and fluency.
- The majority of letters start on the line with an 'approach stroke'.
- The majority of letters end on the line with a 'flick'.
- The pencil does not leave the paper until the word is complete.
- 'ts' and 'xs' are crossed and 'is' are dotted when the whole word is complete.
- There are four basic joins that children are taught.
- Alphabet is organised into stroke-related groups for easy teaching.
- Number and capital letter formation is also taught
- Handwriting is recorded on lined paper not handwriting books so that children get used to sizing their letters in relation to the line width.

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### Teaching and Learning

Handwriting needs to be modelled and practised discretely but encouraged and monitored across the whole curriculum.

Opportunities for additional small group teaching must be provided if a child is struggling to meet age expectations as their handwriting speed and fluency will have an impact on both their enjoyment and achievement in writing overall.

### Shared/Modelled writing and marking

When modelling writing or marking, teachers use the agreed style as set out below:

EYFS-Y1-In print format using the RWI formation and 'patter'

Y2-pre-cursive is used in the Autumn term followed by continuous cursive from the Spring term.

Y3-Y6 Continuous cursive is used when modelling writing and when giving written feedback

All teachers use handwriting lined flip chart paper to model writing.

### The Role of the Teacher

- To become familiar with the expected handwriting style and ensure support staff are as well.
- To follow the school policy on timings, taught styles and teaching 'patters' to help each child develop legible and fluent handwriting.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling;
- To provide resources and an environment which promotes good handwriting;
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development.
- To model appropriate handwriting to the children when using white boards, flip charts or marking books.
- To display children's work and high quality handwriting to act as reward, motivation and as a statement of the quality expected.

### Considerations when teaching handwriting:

- Pencil grip and tension - Use a good quality handwriting pencil and ensure it is always sharp and is not too short. The tripod grip of the writing tool is recommended. Pens can be introduced as the handwriting improves at any age as a motivation to earn the privilege.
- Writing pressure-ensure that children are not gripping the pencil or pen too tightly or too loosely and therefore pressing too hard or not hard enough on the paper.
- Clarity of the stroke - Modelling of both right and left handed movements is necessary. When teaching handwriting, vocalise the size, shape and movement of the pencil as movements are made to help children understand how to form each letter and then join up the letters correctly.
- Orientation of the paper - Children should use their non-writing hand to steady the paper and bear some body-weight. The paper should be tilted slightly.

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- Body posture - Developing a good posture is as important as developing a good pencil grip. Children will be able to sustain writing for longer if they become used to sitting comfortably. Ensure feet and chair is flat on the floor.
- Lighting and view - The lighting should be good, so that the children can see what they have written. Children should have a direct view of the teacher/board.

### Basic structure of a handwriting lesson

1. Relaxation
2. Posture check, feet flat on the floor, back touching the chair
3. Teacher modelling
4. Patterns
5. Children practising independently with teacher model, then from memory
6. Teacher constantly re-enforcing teaching points and good practice.
7. Self and peer assessment
8. Teacher assessment to inform next teaching steps

### Assessment

Handwriting will be assessed as part of writing assessments each term.

Handwriting will be marked in line with school policy

Handwriting will be marked against the focus of the lesson e.g. letter formation of 'climb and slide letters'

### The Learning Environment

In all classes, writing boxes with suitable materials are available for pupils to work at their own tables. Writing areas/boxes are equipped with a range of writing implements, line guides, word lists and dictionaries. A model of the agreed handwriting style should be displayed in all classrooms.

Example/s of good age-related handwriting are displayed and referred to in each class as a model of good practice.

### Timings and Taught Styles

EYFS - The development of gross and fine motor writing skills is continuous and daily. Letter formation will be taught as they are introduced in phonics sessions.

EYFS-Introduction to each letter through RWI Handwriting Stage 1A and 1B (modified letters f, t, k,) + 5 minutes a day of consolidation (focus on formation)

Year 1 – Daily 15-minute sessions consolidating letter formation (follow letter groupings from RWI), sizing and orientation.

Day 1 Teach	Day 2 Teach	Day 3 Apply	Day 4 Apply	Day 5 Assess
Letter formation	Letter formation	Apply in words	Apply in words	Hold a Sentence

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Year 2 – Daily 15-minute sessions. Pre-cursive from September, continuous cursive from beginning of Spring term.

Day 1 Teach Letter formation	Day 2 Teach Letter formation	Day 3 Apply Apply in words	Day 4 Apply Apply in words	Day 5 Assess Hold a Sentence
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Year 3-3 x 15-minute sessions per week revising and practising continuous cursive

Year 4-1 x 15-minute session per week practising continuous cursive. Intervention where necessary

Y 5/6 –Handwriting will be focused on as part of writing sequence, especially at publishing stage of writing process. Intervention where necessary.

### **Continuity and Progression**

#### Foundation Stage

Children in Foundation Stage are taught the formation of each letter using the RWI 'patter'. Correct pencil grip, posture, paper position is given particular emphasis.

Correct directionality is taught and encouraged at all times when mark-making and writing their names by all Foundation Stage staff.

Once basic letter formation is mastered, children are provided with large pieces of paper with a single line at first and then lined paper or line guides. Lines should be widely spaced initially. It may also help children to leave a blank line between each line of writing initially to avoid ascenders and descenders overlapping. Children are taught the use of capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.

Pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a range of writing materials and implements; a multi-sensory approach is used to help pupils feel the movement in the hand. Gross motor skills are developed through sky writing letters, making patterns in the air and making different body shapes and actions. Fine motor skills are developed through bead threading, playdough modelling, finger painting etc. Pencil control is developed through tracing, pattern copying etc.

In RWI handwriting is modelled on handwriting flip chart paper or screen.

#### Key Stage 1

Building on the Foundation Stage, pupils at Key Stage 1 continue to develop a legible style. This is achieved in Year 1 by practising handwriting in conjunction with spelling and independent writing.

Year 1 continue to revise and practice print format using RWI 'patter'.

In Year 2 children are taught pre-cursive handwriting ready to be taught joining in a continuous cursive style at the beginning of the Spring term. Some children may be ready to join before this and this is to be encouraged as long as the joining exit and entrance points are correct. It is important to not rush children into joining until they are ready as this causes problems later.

Ensuring correct pencil grip and sitting position is essential.

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In RWI handwriting is modelled on handwriting flip chart paper or screen.

In Y1 and Y2 handwriting lined exercise books are used for Talk for Writing and RWI.

### Years 3 and 4

In Year 3 the children consolidate their use of the four basic handwriting joins, ensuring consistency in size, proportion and spacing of letters. By the end of Year 3 joined handwriting should be used at all times unless other specific forms are required, e.g. printing on a map, a fast script for notes.

In Year 4 handwriting speed, fluency and legibility are built up through practice. It is anticipated that all children will be awarded a 'pen licence' and will be writing in pen by the end of Year 4. Whilst there is continued emphasis on using the movements of handwriting to support spelling through the revision of common letter patterns, they will also be given opportunities to develop speed and accuracy.

Children not yet using a continuous cursive style in Y3 will be given intervention to help them catch-up.

Handwriting lined exercise books are used in Y3 for Talk for Writing and in RWI if the child is still on this program.

In Year 4, children who still need support in sizing handwriting will use handwriting lined exercise books for Talk for Writing and Fresh Start.

### Years 5 and 6

By Years 5 and 6, it is expected that most children will be writing fluently and are joining their writing across the curriculum. In these year groups the emphasis is on increasing speed, developing presentation skills and learning how to use different styles for different purposes.

The time in Years 5 and 6 are also used to consolidate learning for those children who have not yet achieved a fluent and legible joined script. Those who have, will develop an individual style based on the principles of good handwriting taught in previous years.

Handwriting lined exercise books will be used in talk for Writing and Fresh Start for children who require support with sizing.

### **Writing in pen**

All children can write in pen from Year 3 onwards but may prefer to use a pencil. Pens must be school supplied blue ink pens. Children should be encouraged to use only pen by the end of Year 4, if still choosing to write in pencil.

Children should be taught to sharpen their pencil always before writing and during if necessary.

### **Inclusion**

The vast majority of children are able to write legibly and fluently. However, some pupils need more support and provision will be made for this in Individual Education Plans. Teachers of children whose



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handwriting is limited by problems with fine motor skills should liaise with the SENCO to develop a programme designed for the individual child. This may involve extra handwriting sessions and access to extra resources such as slant boards, pencil grips and alternative pens/pencils. In addition, it may be more appropriate for children with special educational needs to record their work using technology.

### **Left-handed Pupils**

Teachers are alert to the fact that it is very difficult for left-handed pupils to follow handwriting movements when a right-handed teacher models them or vice versa. Teachers demonstrate letter formation to left-handers on an individual or group basis, even if the resulting writing is not neat.

Left-handed children may need to position their paper at an angle on the table. The tripod grip (thumb and first finger grip the pencil, which then rests on the side of the second finger) should be encouraged. All teachers are aware of the specific needs of **left-handed pupils** and make appropriate provision:

- Paper should be positioned 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.
- Left-handed pupils should sit to the left of a right-handed child so that they are not competing for space.
- At first, it may be necessary to put a mark at the left side of the page to indicate where writing begins as some left-handed children mirror-write from the right.

### **Home/School Links**

Parents and carers are introduced to the school's handwriting style through information on the website.

Parents and carers are also made aware of the school's handwriting style and policy at Year Group Welcome Meetings at the beginning of each year.

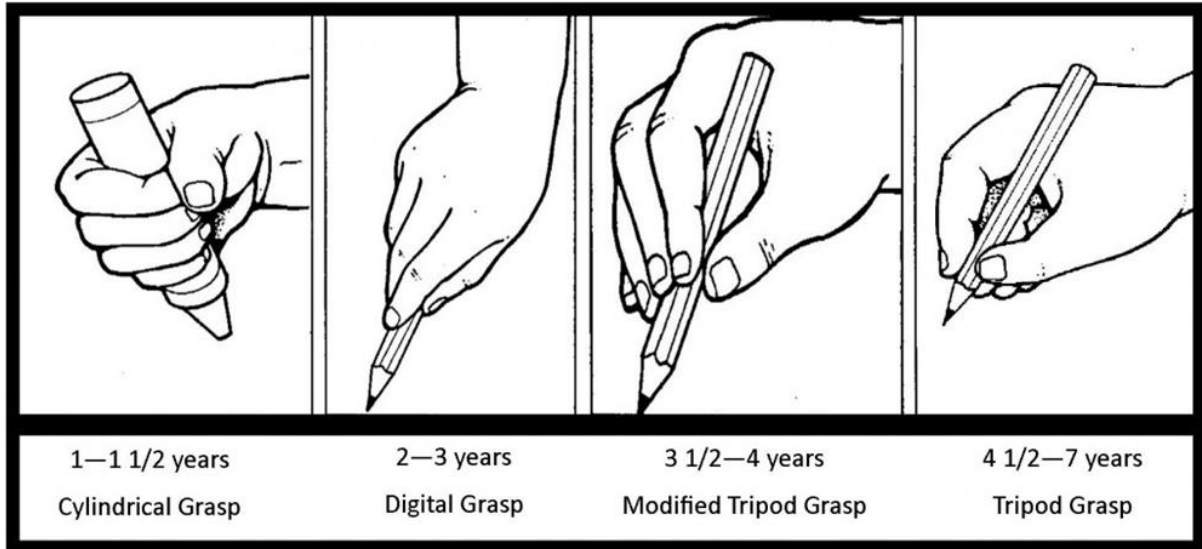
Parents and carers should be encouraged to promote the school's handwriting style when doing learning activities at home such as spelling practice and projects for display.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Delivery of the Handwriting policy will be monitored within the school monitoring cycle: teacher observations, planning and book monitoring, pupil interviews, analysis of the writing data and parent/carer feedback.

**Appendix A**

*Types of Grasps*



### Appendix B

*Gross Motor Control* is the term used to describe the development of controlled movements of the whole body, or limbs such as the legs or arms. Of particular importance in relation to handwriting is the development of good posture and balance. Activities to develop gross motor control include:

- Dancing and skipping
- Running and jumping to music
- Use of small apparatus e.g. throwing, rolling, catching, kicking and bouncing balls
- Throwing a range of equipment at targets
- Cycling
- Gripping and swinging on climbing frames
- Playing parachute games
- Building with large-scale construction kits
- Hammering
- Consolidate vocabulary of movement by talking about movements such as, *going round and round, making curves, springing up and sliding down, making long, slow movements or quick, jumpy movements*
- Make large movements in the air with arms, hands and shoulders with dance ribbons and use music to do it to different rhythms.
- Balancing equipment.

*Fine Motor Control* is the term used to describe smaller movements, usually of the hand and fingers (or of the feet and toes). Activities and exercises to develop fine motor control include:

- Folding paper
- Cutting
- Fitting things into frames like geometric shapes
- Model making
- Scrunching different types of paper
- Building and stacking bricks
- Screw toys and wood working tools
- Using pegs
- Pegboards
- Modelling with malleable materials like play dough, plasticine and clay
- Drawing and tracing in sand and other sensory materials such as flour, slimy corn flour, jelly etc.
- Creating rubbings
- Sand and water play in general, including sieving, pouring, squeezing sponges and picking up toys using tools e.g. fishing rods and cranes
- Sewing and weaving
- Chopping and peeling when cooking
- Develop the pincer movement by using tweezers/tongs to pick up sequins, beads, buttons and feathers, sprinkling glitter, sand and salt
- Scribbling and drawing with chalk, variety of pens, different thicknesses of paint brushes, pencils and paints on small, large boards and easels, floor and on small and large paper
- Playing with tactile and magnetic letters
- Puzzles
- Games and miming involving finger and wrist movement e.g. finger puppets, actions to Nursery Rhymes/Songs

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- Draw letters on backs/different textures e.g. carpet, sandpaper
- Washing, wringing, rubbing, shaking and folding clothes
- Marble runs
- Playing musical instruments
- Popping bubbles
- Fastening clothes
- Use stencils to trace letters or tracing paper
- Writing and drawing various writing patterns

### *Hand gym/miming activities to relax fingers and hands before writing:*

- Sit in the writing position but with arms dangling limply. While in this position let the hands flutter loosely.
- Let the forearms lay limply on the table in the correct writing position. Raise and lower the elbows several times.
- Place elbows on the table with the forearms held upright. Let the hands flap loosely backwards and forwards.
- Clench and unclench the fists.
- Drum lightly with fingers on the table.
- Circle the hands, inwards, then outwards.
- Squeezing and moulding dough in different ways.
- Making horizontal and vertical eights using hands and fingers.
- Massage each hand and wiggle fingers.
- Hold the pen in the tripod grip lightly. With the forefinger tap the pencil lightly.

Appendix C

## The four joins



### Four Basic Joins

- ☑ Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders, eg *ai, ar, us*.
- ☑ Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders, eg *ou, ni, ni*.
- ☑ Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders, eg *ab, ul, it*.
- ☑ Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders, eg *ol, wh, ot*.

Appendix D

<b>Continuous cursive letter groups</b>	
<b>Rockin' Round Letters</b>	<i>c a g q d o s</i>
<b>Climb and Slide Letters</b>	<i>i l t u y j</i>
<b>Tunnel Letters</b>	<i>r n h b p k</i>
<b>Loop and Hook Letters</b>	<i>e f</i>
<b>Square Letters</b>	<i>x z</i>
<b>Zig Zag Letters</b>	<i>v w</i>

Appendix E

<p>a</p>  <p>Around the apple and down the leaf.</p>	<p>b</p>  <p>Down the laces to the heel and around the toe.</p>	<p>c</p>  <p>Curly around the caterpillar.</p>	<p>d</p>  <p>Around the dinosaurs bottom, up his tall neck &amp; down to his toes.</p>	<p>e</p>  <p>Lift off the top and scoop out the egg.</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>Down the stem and draw the leaves.</p>
<p>g</p>  <p>Around the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl.</p>	<p>h</p>  <p>Down the head, to his hooves and over his back.</p>	<p>i</p>  <p>Down the body and dot for the head.</p>	<p>j</p>  <p>Down his body, curl, dot for his head.</p>	<p>k</p>  <p>Down the kangaroo's body tail and leg.</p>	<p>l</p>  <p>Down the long leg.</p>
<p>m</p>  <p>Down Maisie, mountain, mountain.</p>	<p>n</p>  <p>Down Nobby and over his net.</p>	<p>o</p>  <p>All around the orange.</p>	<p>p</p>  <p>Down the pirates plait and around his face.</p>	<p>q</p>  <p>Round her head, up past her earring, down her hair, and flick.</p>	<p>r</p>  <p>Down the robots back and curl over his arm.</p>
<p>s</p>  <p>Slither down the snake.</p>	<p>t</p>  <p>Down the tower, across the tower.</p>	<p>u</p>  <p>Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle.</p>	<p>v</p>  <p>Down a wing, up a wing.</p>	<p>w</p>  <p>Down, up, down, up.</p>	<p>x</p>  <p>Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side.</p>
<p>y</p>  <p>Down a horn, up a horn and under head.</p>	<p>z</p>  <p>Zig-zag-zig.</p>				