# St Thomas Handwriting Policy

## The Importance of Handwriting

Fluent, well-formed and efficient handwriting enables children to increase the speed of their writing and helps them to communicate their meaning effectively. With focus on the development of handwriting throughout the primary years, children will develop embedded skills relieving them of the concentration and pressure that would otherwise be required to write neatly. Efficient handwriting develops children's writing stamina and allows them to focus on the quality of their content. Good handwriting demonstrates pride as well as an awareness of audience. Handwriting supports all areas of the curriculum. Confidence in one style of handwriting will then lead to greater creativity when older, eventually leading to more independence.

## Handwriting the St Thomas Way

Handwriting begins with developing core strength, gross motor and fine motor development. This is usually covered in our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum but specific activities can be implemented for older children as needed. Children will use the letter formation from our Read Write Inc phonics programme at the start of their school journey. Eventually children will progress into precursive script, where all letters (except z) start with a lead in and end with a lead out (except r and x). Once mastered, children will learn how to join letters together. Not all letters will be joined together and these will be referred to as "break letters." There will be a small break before the letter z and a small break after capital letters and the letters r and x.

Consistent letter formation will include:

- Only one size of capital letter that reaches to the same heights as the lower-case ascender.
- No capital letter descends below the line.
- There are three sizes of lower case lettering and in the early stages of handwriting we refer to these using the RWI terminology of sun (ascenders), boat and water (descenders) letters.
- Each of the three sizes of lower case lettering must be consistent in size.

Handwriting will be taught discretely:

- In Reception during phonics lessons
- In Year 1 and Year 2 during phonics lessons and in handwriting sessions where children are introduced to pre-cursive (Year 1) and joining (Year 2).
- In Years 3 and 4 in handwriting lessons and linked to spelling
- In Years 5 and 6 through spelling and English lessons

Inclusion

- All children are supported in their handwriting based on the stage they are currently working within

Oct 2025

- Staff may use additional resources to support children depending on their needs.

## Age Related Expectations – Handwriting Progression

| | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
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| Letter Formation, Placement and Positioning (Transcription: Handwriting) | ● Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Suggested tools: pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons.<br>● Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.<br>● Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.<br>● Form lower case and capital letters correctly, using anti-clockwise movements.<br><br>**Early Years Goals:**<br>●Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.<br>●Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. | To write lower case and capital letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place with a good level of consistency.<br><br>To sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly.<br><br>To form digits 0-9.<br><br>To understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these. | To write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters.<br><br>To form lower case letters of the correct size, relative to one another.<br><br>To use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. | To use a neat, joined handwriting style with increasing accuracy and speed. | To increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [e.g. by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch]. | To increase the speed of their handwriting so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of writing down what they want to say.<br><br>To be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, e.g. quick notes or a final handwritten version. | To write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:<br>● choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters;<br>● choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task. |
| Joining Letters (Transcription: Handwriting) | | To begin to use pre-cursive script, starting on the line for each letter (except z). | To begin to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters. | To continue to use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and to understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined. | To confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing to increase fluency. | To confidently use diagonal and horizontal joining strokes throughout their independent writing in a legible, fluent and speedy way. | To recognise when to use an unjoined style (e.g. for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address or for algebra) and capital letters (e.g. for filling in a form). |

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## Teaching Guidance

All years should refer to the *RWI Handwriting Guidance* attached to teach the "perfect handwriting position." All years will have display materials linked with age related expectations to support children with their handwriting practice.

**Reception:**

Use RWI rhymes and phrases to form letters in print following **RWI Handwriting stage 1a.**

Use of ergonomic pencils to support development of tripod grip.

Formation tracked on assessment grids as a part of both Writing and Physical Development Early Learning Goals.

**Year 1:**

Form capital letters correctly using RWI Capital guidance.

Letters grouped into families. Use of sun, boat, and sea to position letters on the line. Use RWI phrases of around, down, curly and zigzag. Use **RWI Handwriting stage 1b**.

Handwriting sessions: Begin to practice pre-cursive writing with lead ins starting on the line and lead outs (see script below). Handwriting lessons for 3x 15 minutes weekly.

Autumn 1: Dough Disco, Fine motor continuous provision

Autumn 2: Capital letters, numbers and print

Spring term: pre cursive

Summer term: pre cursive linked to CEW, pre cursive name writing

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y* **z**

**Year 2:**

Children begin to use pre-cursive in English and RWI lessons.

Handwriting sessions: Begin to join letters. Use **RWI handwriting stages 2-3** and continue using sun, boat, sea terminology. Use RWI phrases of arm joins or washing line joins. Introduce Break Letters (break before z, break after capital letters, r and x). 3x 15 minutes weekly.

Autumn 1: precursive re-cap, introduction of joins

Autumn 2: Consolidation of joins and break letters

Spring term: cursive linked to CEW and weekly spelling patterns

Summer term: cursive linked to CEW and weekly spelling patterns

Oct 2025

# St Thomas Handwriting Policy

## Year 3:

Children expected to start joining in English lessons.

Teacher to determine when to switch to KS2 English books (smaller lines).

1x20 minute handwriting focus using the Letterjoin scheme (Module 4) at the start of the week. Handwriting focus to then be included in morning work/spelling lessons where applicable to reinforce the skill taught at the start of the week (3x weekly).

Teachers to identify gaps in attainment and use RWI/Letterjoin scheme as appropriate to target individual children.

## Year 4:

Children to consolidate joining across curriculum and all be using KS2 English books.

Begin to introduce pens when children have consolidated their joining skills and are joining confidently and consistently. Teacher to determine which pen is appropriate on an individual basis.

1x20 minute handwriting focus using the Letterjoin scheme (Module 5) at the start of the week. Handwriting focus to then be included in morning work/spelling lessons where applicable to reinforce the skill taught at the start of the week (3x weekly).

Teachers to identify gaps in attainment and use RWI/Letterjoin scheme as appropriate to target individual children.

## Years 5/6:

Children to consolidate joining across curriculum and all be using KS2 English books.

Teachers to identify gaps in attainment and use RWI/Letterjoin scheme as appropriate to target individual children (Letterjoin modules 6/7).

## Appendix:

RWI Handwriting Guidance

RWI Capital Letter Guidance

RWI Handwriting Stages 1a, 1b, 2 and 3.

Progressive display materials for each year group

Letterjoin manual

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