TOLWORTH SCHOOL
Happy children, successful learners

Tolworth School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Handwriting Policy

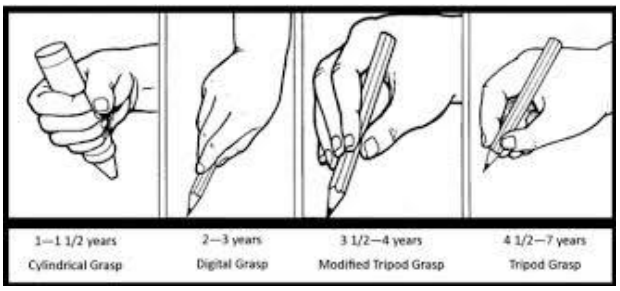
Governors' Committee / Responsible Member of Staff	Literacy Leaders / Senior Leadership Team
Status	Voluntary
Review Cycle	Annual
Date of last review	September 2025
Date of next review	September 2026

Tolworth School Handwriting Policy

Our aim at Tolworth School is to teach the children to have a comfortable, legible, fluent, joined hand that enables them to present work in a neat and organised manner. By presenting a whole school policy on handwriting we hope to ensure that children will have a sense of pride in their work, join up their handwriting sooner and provide continuity through the school.

As soon as the children are developmentally ready, we teach pencil grip and posture for handwriting. Secure learning in the early years lays the crucial groundwork for effective, lifelong handwriting habits. The children's pencil grip and control will develop through different areas of learning:

- Physical development (movement and handling)
- Literacy (writing)
- Expressive arts and design (exploring and using media and materials)



We acknowledge the fundamental importance of developing the 'big muscles of the body' (gross motor) as these support the 'little muscles of the hand' (fine motor).

Progress in all areas of development is monitored to ensure that extra support is given where needed. Where there are wider concerns, the inclusion manager is consulted to provide early intervention programmes .

The curriculum takes into account the different ways children learn and provides for this, as follows:

- Activities to develop handwriting skills are implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activity
- Children are not expected to undertake formal handwriting instruction (ie sitting writing at a table) until they are developmentally ready
- Teaching correct letter formation in letter families is given high priority, especially the letters in the child's own name: this is explicitly taught and practised in developmentally appropriately ways from the beginning of the EYFS
    - Letter families taught are:
        - c o a d g q
        - i l t y u
        - r n m
        - h k b
        - v w
        - x z p j e s f
- The use of capital letters at the beginning of names is modelled clearly
- Staff and children both use spoken language as they form letter shapes and patterns to reinforce cognitive learning
- All staff understand how to intervene sensitively and at an appropriate time, when children are forming letters 'differently' to the school model

Early development of handwriting should include the following activities:

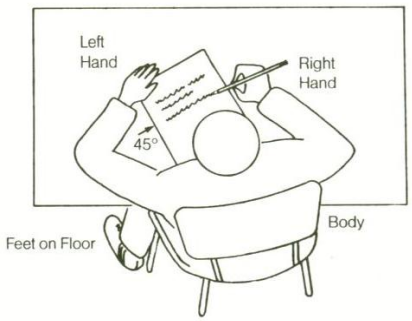
- Development of hand control (threading beads, using plasticine etc...)
- Tracing and drawing patterns from left to right
- Tracing and copying names, words and patterns
- Drawing/writing in sand trays
- Practising forming letters
- Copying in the air/on another child's back with finger
- Opportunities for core strength development.

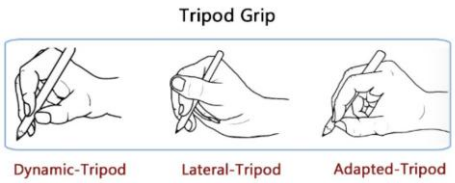
As soon as they are developmentally ready, children are taught the correct letter formation - *no* lead-in but with all letters having a lead out. This ensures that children are not confused about the shape of the letter; all letters end in a way that is ready to be joined to the next letter (as soon as the child can master this). No capital letter joins to its neighbour. Handwriting is practised regularly in small groups with the younger children and as a class as the children become more competent. These sessions should be made relevant and purposeful to pupils.

In Year One and Two, handwriting can be practised through spelling and phonic work, re-drafting work and copying out poems in addition to practise in their handwriting books. In Year Two 'Pen Licences' and handwriting pens can be given out as an incentive for improved handwriting. Children need constant encouragement to keep their letters consistent in size, with clear descenders and suitable spacing between words. Once the children are joining letters, they must be reminded to write the complete word before dotting i's and crossing t's or the flow of the writing is interrupted.

We acknowledge that children need appropriate line spacing in books and on paper to match their developmental needs, to ensure that their letters are not cramped and to allow sufficient space for letter alignment. As most children's fine motor skills improve and their letter formation or joining becomes increasingly accurate, the width between the lines they write on gradually decreases. There can be flexibility at all stages. Plain paper with line guides is also used. Once children are confident in the correct movement of separate letters and the concept of spacing, they will use 'zoned' paper to learn alignment of letters.

There is an expectation that all staff model the correct formation and joins of letters when writing. All staff should make sure children know how to hold a pencil correctly. A child's sitting position is very important and should be checked: children must sit with two feet on the floor and their forearms resting comfortably on the table. The paper must be facing left for right-handers and right for left-handers. Their head should be a reasonable distance from the work. From the earliest age children should be encouraged to hold all mark making implements with a good three finger grip. There are resources in school to aid the development of a good pencil grip e.g. triangular grips.





Provision for left-handed children

All staff are aware of the specific needs of left-handed pupils and make appropriate provision

- Left handed scissors are provided.
- Children are shown how to position paper
- 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 elbows do not bump
- Children should be encouraged to have the correct sitting posture for good handwriting

The progression of handwriting skills will depend on physical development rather than age, however an expected progression is:

EYFS:	Handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing
Year 1:	Consolidating shape

Year 2:	Space, size, sitting, begin to join
Year 3:	Consolidate joining
Years 3&4:	Develop joined handwriting and consolidate consistent use of legible script.
Years 5&6:	Maintain legibility (in joined handwriting) when writing at speed.

Expectations

EYFS expectations

Moving and Handling:
ELG: They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.
40 – 60 months: Uses a pencil and holds it effectively to form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
Pilot ELG:
Fine motor skills: Hold a pencil comfortably using the tripod grip
Writing: Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed

Year 1 Statutory Requirements
Pupils should be taught to:

- sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- form capital letters
- form digits 0-9
- understand which letters belong to which handwriting 'families' (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these

Year 2 Statutory Requirements
Pupils should be taught to:

- form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

All of our children have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children with SEN should follow the school policy wherever possible, however this will depend on the developmental stage of the child.

All classes should provide a range of opportunities to practise handwriting within different areas of the curriculum e.g. finger paints, home corner, writing table and art work. They should have a well-resourced writing area with a variety of pens, pencils and felt tips of varying thickness and a supply of paper and small writing books where the children can practise their skills. Opportunities should be provided to practise a range of handwriting styles according to the purpose of the writing e.g. capitals, bubble writing, italic etc. Additional handwriting aids such as sand, stencils, line guides and pencil holders should be used when needed.

Parents should be aware of the school handwriting policy and should be encouraged to create opportunities for their children to write. The handwriting formation is shared at transition events and parents evenings. It is important that children are given freedom to experiment and that they are praised for their efforts.

Children and adults will develop their own style of writing. We aim to give children the initial basic skills on which they can build.

KS2 Handwriting

Our aim in KS2 at Tolworth Schools is to consolidate and extend children's learning about handwriting technique from KS1. All writing modelled in classrooms and on written displays around the school should conform to our school style. Our primary objective is to support children to develop the ability to write in legible, joined script that can be adapted for different tasks, enabling them to write at speed when they are older. This policy underpins our hope that most children will develop the skills to join their letters effectively and provide continuity of style across the school. Children will have the opportunity to write using pencil and handwriting pens. Children should develop a sense of pride in the development and presentation of their written work, which will contribute to their success and good progress across all areas of the curriculum in KS2.

Year 3 & 4 Statutory Requirements
Pupils should be taught to:

- Consistently form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Develop use of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- Consistently write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Consistently use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

Year 5 & 6 Statutory Requirements
Pupils should be taught to:

- Maintain consistent formation of all letters, relative in size to each other and using accurate diagonal and horizontal strokes to join letters.
- Consistently present their written work in legible script with close attention to neatness and proscribed layout.

All children will have equal access to handwriting lessons and to the resources available. We recognise that some children take longer to develop the necessary skills and we cater for those children by providing additional opportunities for skills development. Children with SEN should follow the school policy wherever possible; however, this will depend on the developmental stage of the child.

All classes should provide a range of opportunities to practise handwriting as required by the individual child based on continual assessment. Opportunities should be provided to practise a range of handwriting styles according to the purpose of the writing e.g. capitals, bubble writing, italics etc. Additional handwriting support will be offered in response to specific needs.

Parents should be aware of the school handwriting policy and should be encouraged to create opportunities for their children to write. The handwriting formation is available at transition events and parents evenings. It is important that children are given freedom to experiment and that they are praised for their efforts. We understand that children will develop their own style of writing, although the emphasis will remain on joined, legible script with children understanding the purpose of developing these skills.