Ivingswood Academy

Handwriting Policy

Autumn 2026

This policy was approved by the Local Academy Committee in Autumn 2026.

Next review Date: Autumn 2029

Introduction:

This guidance has been written in line with the statutory requirements for Writing/Handwriting across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2.

In this policy you will find the content taught and the endpoints for each year group so that expectations and outcomes are clear.

At Ivingswood Academy, the handwriting programme we follow is called ***Nelson Handwriting***. Nelson Handwriting is a whole-school programme designed to help all children develop a confident, legible and personal handwriting style and meet higher curriculum expectations.

Aims:

- To have a consistent approach to handwriting across the whole school to ensure high levels of presentation.
- To adopt a common approach towards handwriting by all adults when writing in children's books, on the whiteboard or on displays and resources.
- Children to achieve a neat, legible style with correctly formed letters in cursive handwriting.
- Children to develop good fluency and foundational transcription skills whilst writing, so that eventually they can write with confidence.

Development of learning and teaching handwriting:

In Nursery, the focus is on strengthening the muscles in the hand, shapes/patterns and developing grip and also developing letter formation in a pre-cursive style.

In EYFS, children are supported from the earliest stages of learning to write. Children are taught letter formation in conjunction with their daily RWI Phonics programme. Children are taught phrases (as set out by RWI) to aid retention and skill when forming each letter. Handwriting is taught daily within RWI sessions. There are also additional handwriting sessions where children use a workbook, when appropriate, to support letter formation. A clear focus on posture, pencil grip, fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination is planned for and provided within these lessons and the wider curriculum. The formation of numbers 0 - 9 are also taught.

In Year 1, conditions are clearly set and created for good writing: atmosphere, seating and posture, and pencil grip, as well as continuing to develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Each pupil has a workbook that has a flap on the front cover which reminds children how to prepare for writing. Videos show how children should sit, how they should hold their pencil and how they should position their paper on the desk. All of the lower-case and capital letters are covered with clear and consistent instructions about how to start and finish letters. The digits 0-9 are clearly taught and the letters are grouped into sets based on how they are formed, and children practise these in a cumulative manner.

In Year 2, children revise the previously-learned joins with an emphasis on relative height. Children recap their learning of lower-case and capital letters and practise forming them with consistency. Children are also given the opportunity to continue to practise using print letters, and are reminded that some letters are best left unjoined when next to other letters.

In Years 3 and 4, children continue to practise and develop their handwriting skills. The idea of writing with a slant is introduced for the first time. Pupils are provided with practice in joining using diagonal and horizontal strokes as well as the 'break letters' that are best left unjoined. There is an emphasis on spacing letters consistently and on keeping ascenders and descenders in proportion.

At Years 5-6, Nelson Handwriting continues to provide structured practice for the skills that have been developed so far. Children continue to practise the joins and the break letters, looking at consistency of sizing and spacing. We empower children to develop their own style of handwriting from a secure base, choosing their writing implement and style as appropriate to the occasion.

Time allocated for Handwriting:

All children have at least 2 handwriting sessions a week. Handwriting expectations are reinforced daily in every lesson. Children who find handwriting difficult will be targeted for further intervention

Handwriting - End Points	
National Curriculum Expectations	
YR	Pupils should be taught to: ● Hold a pencil effectively– using the tripod grip in almost all cases. ● Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing. ● Write recognisable letters and numbers, most of which are correctly formed.
Y1	Pupils should be taught to: • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • 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) • leave spaces between words.
Y2	Pupils should be taught to: • form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another • It is the minimum expectation that pupils will: 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 unjoined • 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.
Y3	● Pupils should be taught to: • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (e.g. ensure downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).
Y4	● Pupils should be taught to: • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left unjoined ● increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (e.g. ensure downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch).
Y5	● Pupils should be taught to: • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: - choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices - deciding whether or not to join specific letters ● choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task
Y6	● Pupils should be taught to: • write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by: - choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices - deciding whether or not to join specific letters ● choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

RWI Letter formation guide for KS1:

 Maisie, mountain, mountain	 Round the apple, down the leaf	 Slither down the snake	 Round his bottom, up his tall neck, down to his feet	 Down the tower, across the tower
 Down the body, dot for the head	 Down Nobby, over his net	 Down the plait and over the pirate's face	 Round her face, down her hair and give her a curl	 All around the orange
 Curl around the caterpillar	 Down the kangaroo's body, tail and leg	 Down and under, up to the top and draw the puddle	 Down the laces to the heel, round the toe	 Down the stem, and draw the leaves
 Lift off the top and scoop out the egg	 Down the long leg	 Down the head to the hooves and over his back	 Down his back, then curl over his arm	 Down his body curl and dot
 Down a wing, up a wing	 Down a horn up a horn and under his head	 Down, up, down, up	 Zig - zag - zig	 Round her head, up past her earrings and down her hair
 Down the arm and leg and repeat the other side				

Pen License

A Pen License will be given to pupils when they have displayed neat and consistent handwriting across the curriculum. Only then will they be allowed to use a school handwriting pen. Pens are blue ink. The class teacher will decide when children qualify for their pen license. This is a special award to be celebrated!

Posture

Chairs and desks within classrooms are matched to children's age and height. Children's backs should be straight and feet resting on the floor. A right- handed child should have their book slanted to the left. For a left-handed child the book should be slanted to the right. Always make sure that the hand that is not holding the pencil or pen holds the paper. Children are taught how to sit correctly and how to hold the correct posture as part of their handwriting lessons.

Provision for left handed children

At least 10% of the population are left-handed, the majority of whom are boys. Left-handed children should sit on the left side of right-handed children, so their elbows don't bump. They are encouraged to find a comfortable orientation for their paper, usually slightly to the left of the centre of their body, and to have their fingers about 1.5 cm from the point of their pencil.

Pencil Grip

If children are to develop a fluid and rapid writing style then they must learn how to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient pencil control. Right-hander – a tripod grip is generally accepted as the most efficient way of holding a pencil. It should be lightly held between the thumb and forefinger about 3cm from the point. The middle finger provides additional support. Left-handers - The tripod grip should be the most favoured method of pencil holding but children should be aware that when making joining strokes the letters are pushed, not pulled. Encourage left handed children to hold their pencil far enough away from the point to allow them to read what they are writing. Care should be taken that children do not grip the pencil too tightly as this produces tenseness in the arm and shoulder and also increases pressure on the paper.

SEND

It is appreciated that some children, for a variety of reasons, have problems with legible, correctly formed and orientated handwriting. Children needing additional support are given short bursts of handwriting practice, with a Learning Support Assistant, or Class Teacher, as often as possible. Sometimes handwriting targets may form part of a 'SEND Support Plan.' Children with Special Educational needs, where necessary, will be provided with adaptations such as pencil grips, enlarged practise paper or a laptop.

Assessment, Monitoring and Moderation

Children in the EYFS are assessed on an ongoing basis through observation; handwriting informs part of this. Handwriting endpoints are used to assess handwriting progress. Within Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, handwriting is also assessed as part of children's writing assessments using the assessment criteria for given year groups.

Expectations for Standards of Presentation for Pupils and Staff

Pupils are expected to:

● Look after exercise books and not draw or scribble in or on them.

● The date and title of all work must appear at the top of the page and must be neatly underlined.

● From Y1 onwards pupils must use rulers to draw straight lines.

● Children should increasingly plan their work to make it look attractive and well presented.

● They should not use writing or drawing media that is not approved or fit for the purpose.

● If drawing a graph or a table, this must be in pencil.

Staff are expected to:

● Set a positive example to children by modelling good handwriting when writing on the board, when marking children's books and on displays.

● Teachers strive to model the cursive style and use appropriate joins, demonstrating the fluency and legibility of the style appropriate to year group endpoints.

