
Handwriting Policy 2026-27



Kindness



Focus



Creativity



Responsibility



Collaboration

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An Introduction to New Wave Federation

The fundamental principle of the New Wave Federation is to develop schools full of learning, laughter and friendship where all children feel happy, safe and valued.

At New Wave Federation, we provide the best possible primary education in stimulating and creative environments. Our schools develop a love of learning inspired by high-quality teaching. We identify and build upon our children's individual strengths and talents so they are equipped to have successful futures.

We expect all children in our schools to reach age-related expectations and our central purpose is to support pupils and families to overcome any barriers that they face. Each pupil reaching their full potential is what inspires our teachers and drives our vision of 'Excellence for All.'

Children educated in our schools are open-minded, committed and confident. We encourage a positive partnership between home, school and the wider community. The schools value and have a strong relationship with their communities. The children in our care, develop into individuals who will lead happy and rewarding lives.

The New Wave Federation comprises four Hackney schools - Grazebrook Primary School in Stoke Newington; Shacklewell Primary School in Dalston, Thomas Fairchild in Hoxton and Woodberry Down Primary School in Manor House.



The New Wave Approach to Handwriting

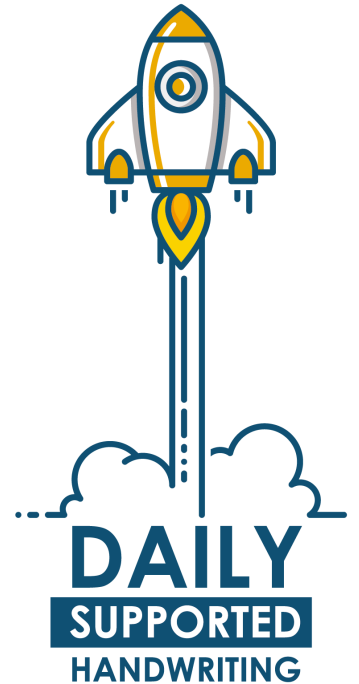
At New Wave Federation we understand that handwriting is a complex skill involving a range of cognitive, linguistic, perceptual and motor abilities. Mastering handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects a child's ability to communicate across the curriculum and their potential to express themselves coherently and effectively.

Our principal aim is for handwriting to become an automatic, effortless process, which frees pupils' working memory to focus on the content of their writing. This requires mastering a continuous cursive style, which is one of the more demanding movement skills a child is expected to learn. A flexible, fluent and legible handwriting style will empower children to write with confidence and creativity. The correct formation of all letters needs to become automatic and may require a lot of practice and ongoing support.

Given the complexity of handwriting, it is vital that it is taught systematically and to a high standard through regular demonstration, explanation and practice. We call this **Daily Supported Handwriting**. This policy will guide you through all the key information you will need to become an expert handwriting teacher.

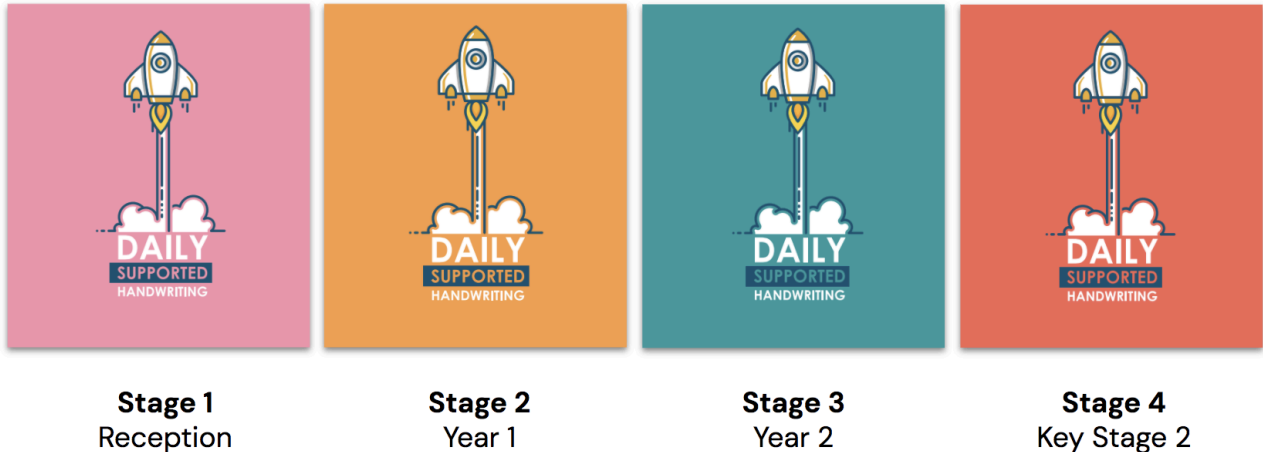
At New Wave our key aims for handwriting are that:

- Handwriting carries the same importance in writing as grammar, structure and organisation.
- All pupils should develop a fluent, neat and legible style of handwriting of which they can be proud of.
- All pupils should understand the importance of clear and neat presentation in order to communicate meaning clearly.
- Pupils should take great pride in the presentation of their work.
- All pupils should be able to write quickly and comfortably, expressing themselves creatively and imaginatively across the curriculum and for a range of purposes.



Organisation and Teaching Sequence

Daily Supported Handwriting (DSH) lessons are taught from September in Reception. As children move through the school they progress through different stages of handwriting and learn increasingly complex formations and joins, which are taught through the booklets pictured below.



Reception

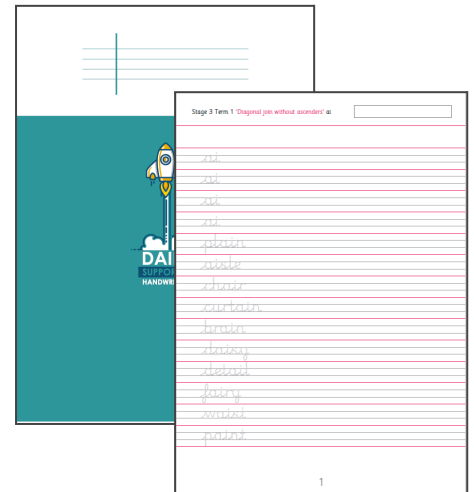
- In Term 1 pupils are taught the basic letter formations using their *Read Write Inc* mnemonics, e.g. “round the apple and down the leaf”. The focus is on starting and ending letter formations in the correct place.
- The order children learn their letter formations mirrors the order they learn their [Set 1 sounds](#) in their RWI lessons.
- Once children know their basic formations, the focus is then teaching children to write on the line with ascenders and descenders.
- In Terms 2 and 3, children continue to practise forming their letters and are given opportunities to practise CVC and Reception High Frequency Words.

Year 1

- In Term 1, pupils begin to learn the ‘**continuous cursive**’ handwriting style for the six letter groups. Pupils progress through the letter groups and the six joins by practising specific letters and words with these joins. See **page 7** for more information about continuous cursive.
- In Terms 2 and 3, pupils continue to develop their knowledge of the letter groups and joins. They apply their knowledge by writing longer words, including key words from the Key Stage 1 High Frequency Word List.

Year 2

- Pupils begin the year refreshing on the six joins and revising the Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence for the vowel digraph and trigraphs, as taught in Year 1.
- This is followed by children being introduced to a new spelling focus each day as outlined in the Spelling Appendix in the National Curriculum.
- By Terms 2 and 3, it is expected that **all children are able to join consistently and correctly using the continuous cursive style.**



Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

- Pupils should enter KS2 **with a clear understanding of all the cursive letter groups and the six joins**.
- Any children who have left KS1 unable to form letters correctly or join, should be prioritised for a daily 5-10 minute one-to-one handwriting intervention. KS1 DSH exercise books can be used for these interventions.
- Children should acquire their **pen licence** by the end of Year 4. Children in Years 5 and 6 need to complete Daily Supported Handwriting and all written work in pen. It is at the teacher's discretion when to award a child with the 'Pen Licence', but all children should have one by the time they leave Year 4.

Monday 20th September



DAILY SUPPORTED HANDWRITING

Focus:

Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders.

Apply:

The cat ate an apple. The crow made the ant cry by eating his cracker.





Continuous Cursive

Within the Federation our handwriting style is what is known as the 'continuous cursive' style which means we use joined-up writing, in which each letter is formed without taking the pencil/pen off the paper, so each word is formed in one, flowing movement.

Key features of continuous cursive:

- The majority of letters start on the line with an 'entry stroke'.
- The majority of letters end on the line with a 'flick'.
- The pencil only leaves the paper when the word is complete.
- 'ts' are crossed and 'i's' are dotted when the whole word is complete.
- There are six basic joins that children are taught (see below).
- Children should be taught to use the handwriting lines efficiently to ensure that the cap height of letters and descenders and ascenders are formed correctly.
- There is a clear distinction between capital letters and lowercase letters.
- The continuous flow of writing ultimately improves speed, spelling and fluency.



Continuous Cursive Handwriting

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj

Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt

Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Letter Groups and Joins

From the start of Year 1, children learn the six **continuous cursive letter groups** or 'families' - see table below. Letters are grouped by the way they are formed, which makes it easier for children to start and finish their letter formations in the correct place.

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

From Year 1 children will also be taught the **six basic joins**. These joins, outlined in the table below, are taught to children and practised throughout KS1 and KS2.

Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders	<i>ai, ar, us, au, aw, er, ew, ir, ur, ss, as, ea, ae, ee, ie, se, ue</i>
Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders	<i>ou, vi, wi, xe, ere, oe, re, ure, ve, we, oi, on, oo, ot, ov, ow, oa</i>
Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders	<i>ab, ul, it, ch, kn, ll, sh, th, ed, be, de, br</i>
Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders	<i>ol, wh, ot</i>
Diagonal joins to letters with descenders	<i>ff, ph, qu, igh, ing, ng, squ, fe, ge, pe</i>
Horizontal joins to letters with descenders	<i>op, oy</i>

Lesson Structure

To maximise the effective use of lesson time, DSH lessons follow a specific structure. This ensures that each lesson includes ample teacher demonstration and time to practise.

KS1

WARM UP: Finger stretches and exercises MTYT. See examples [here](#).

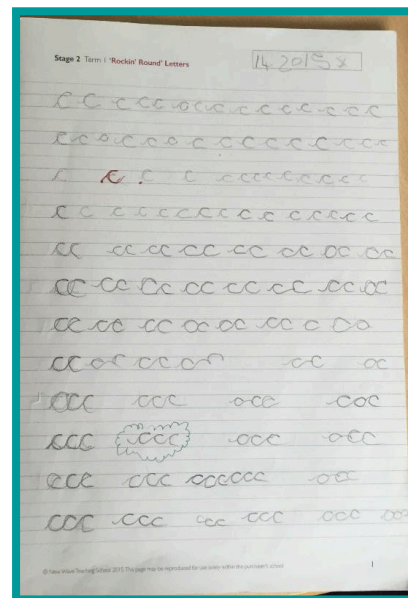
MAIN FOCUS: Introduce the main focus, e.g. cursive 'c'

SHORT DATE: Model writing the short date on the flip chart for children to copy.

TEACHER'S TURN: Model the focus formation on lined flipchart paper, constantly talking about what you are doing.

CHILDREN'S TURN –

- (1) air write with pencil grip
- (2) assess formations and praise
- (3) Send to tables - constant assessment as you walk about the room
- (4) over-the-shoulder intervention: model, hand-over-hand, scaffold, observe



CLOSING: Give the children immediate feedback and, perhaps, final teacher modelling to correct any errors. Children can also self-assess and circle their best formation example in green pen.

KS2

WARM UP: [Finger exercises](#) and then practise patterns - MY TURN, YOUR TURN

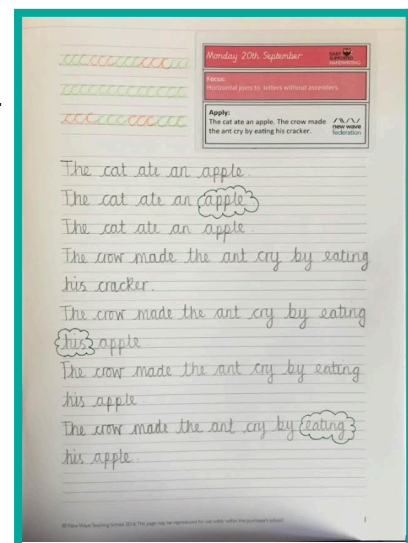
MAIN FOCUS: Linked to one of the 6 handwriting joins.

MY TURN: Model on the flipchart, constantly talking about what you are doing.

YOUR TURN

- (1) air write with pencil grip
- (2) assess formations and praise
- (3) Send to tables - constant assessment as you walk about the room
- (4) over-the-shoulder intervention: model, hand-over-hand, scaffold, observe

AFL: Children are asked to write a sentence without demonstration and without a model. They have to write from memory.



CLOSING: Give the children immediate feedback and, perhaps, final teacher modelling to correct any errors. Children can also self-assess and circle their best formation example in green pen.

Sitting Position and Pencil Grip

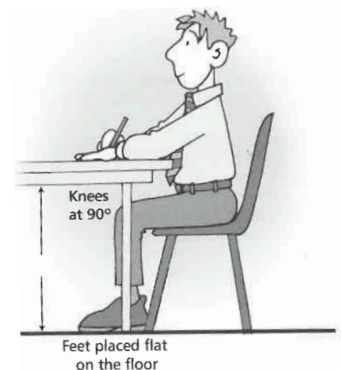
To develop a neat, legible cursive style we must also consider each child's pencil grip and their sitting position. Small improvements in these areas can have a huge positive impact on children's handwriting.

When sending children to tables, in any lesson, teachers must consider:

- Seating position
- Paper position
- Ample table space
- Pencil grip

Sitting position

- The writer should be positioned square to the table
- Feet flat on the ground
- Knees at 90 degree angle
- Elbows at the height of the desktop
- Writing surface should be stable - no leaning on books / whiteboards
- Ensure good lighting and view



The position of paper affects posture

- 2 key points to rotate the paper slightly when writing.
- Non writing hand should be in a supportive position to maintain the correct paper position.
- Sharp pencil must be used - quality resourcing is key - no pencil toppers.

Left-handed writer

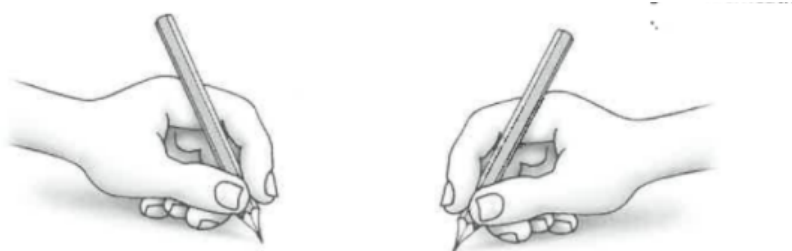


Right-handed writer

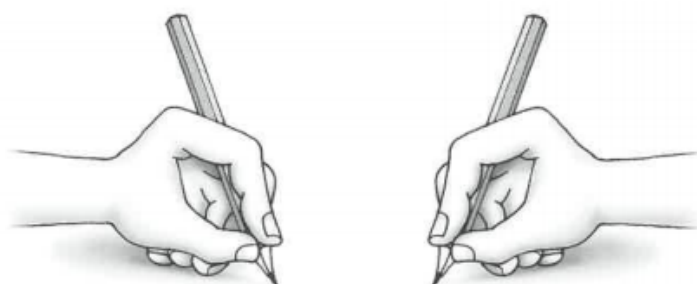


Pencil grip

The **dynamic tripod grip** is the conventional pencil hold using the index finger, middle finger and thumb. The index finger sits on top of the pencil and the pencil is held between the thumb and the middle finger with the middle finger underneath.



Lots of research has been conducted around effective and ineffective pencil holds. The conclusion is that it is possible to create fluent, legible handwriting of appropriate speed with a range of **alternative pencil grips**. What makes a pencil grip effective is good control and a good level of comfort. Below is an example of an effective alternative pencil grip.



Whether a child develop the dynamic pencil grip or an alternate pencil group, teachers must:

- Ensure the **tension** is correct - too tight can cause pain in the thumb, digits, hand and arms. Too loose causes lack of control when writing.
- Check pencil **pressure** - some pupils apply too much pressure which slows down the writing process and causes discomfort. The use of a mechanical pencil can be a successful short term intervention. Support children to let their pencil ice skate on the paper.
- Discuss the use of **pencil grips** with the SENCo if necessary. There are a wide range of pencil grips available for children who need additional support in the early stages of writing.

If you have any issues or concerns with teaching handwriting, do talk to the English lead in your school who will be able to advise you to ensure the best outcomes for your pupils.

<i>Policy reviewed</i>	July 2024
<i>Adopted by Governing Body</i>	July 2024
<i>Review date</i>	July 2026