

Handwriting Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Tonacliffe, we recognise handwriting as an essential life skill that enables children to communicate, learn, record ideas and express themselves effectively. Handwriting is a taught skill that requires structured teaching, regular practice and a clear progression from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through to Year 6. This policy provides a consistent whole-school approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of handwriting. It is based on the guidance published by the National Handwriting Association (NHA) in *Developing a Handwriting Policy: A Practical Guide for Schools* (2025). [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

2. Aims

We aim for all pupils to:

- Develop legible, fluent and efficient handwriting.
- Learn correct letter formation from the beginning of their writing journey.
- Develop confidence and pride in their written work.
- Write comfortably and at an appropriate speed for different purposes.
- Understand when handwriting and technology are each the most appropriate communication tools.
- Become effective "hybrid writers" who can communicate through both handwriting and digital means. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

3. Principles of Effective Handwriting

Our handwriting curriculum is based on the following principles:

- Handwriting is explicitly taught and practised.
- Correct letter formation is prioritised before introducing joins.
- Teaching follows a clear progression from EYFS to Year 6.
- Consistent expectations and language are used across the school.
- Staff model handwriting accurately.
- Progression is informed by assessment and observation.
- All pupils, including those with SEND, receive appropriate support to succeed. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

4. Handwriting Style

After consideration of current research and National Curriculum requirements, Tonacliffe adopts a **simple modern handwriting style**.

Our approach:

- Children are taught clear, simple letter formations.
- Letters are initially taught unjoined.
- Exit flicks are taught where appropriate.
- Joining is introduced only when letter formation, sizing and positioning are secure.
- Some letters remain unjoined where this supports legibility and fluency.

We do not teach continuous cursive from the outset. Evidence indicates that secure letter formation should precede joining. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

N.B. This approach is applicable for children beginning Reception September 2026. Previous year groups have been taught cursive handwriting from their reception year. Therefore, they will continue cursive handwriting, unless they are not developmentally ready.

5. Handwriting in the Curriculum

Handwriting is taught:

EYFS

- Through mark-making opportunities.
- Through fine motor development activities.
- Through adult-led and child-initiated learning.
- Alongside phonics whilst maintaining explicit handwriting instruction.

Key Stage 1

- Daily handwriting lessons.
- Explicit teaching of letter formation.
- Introduction of letter families.
- Development of spacing and alignment.

Key Stage 2

- Continued explicit teaching (5 sessions over every two week period).
- Development of joined handwriting.
- Increased focus on fluency, legibility and speed.
- Opportunities to apply handwriting across the curriculum. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

6. Agreed Handwriting Vocabulary

Consistent vocabulary will be used throughout the school.

Key terms include:

- Baseline

- Ascender (tall letter)
- Descender (tail letter)
- Letter body
- Capital letter
- Lower-case letter
- Exit stroke
- Join
- Break letter
- Spacing
- Alignment
- Fluency

Staff will use age-appropriate language while maintaining consistency across year groups.

[\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

7. Early Years Foundation Stage

We recognise that successful handwriting begins with physical development and readiness.

Children will be provided with:

- Fine motor development opportunities.
- Gross motor activities.
- Mark-making experiences.
- Access to a range of writing materials.
- Explicit modelling of correct letter formation.
- Opportunities to learn and practise writing their own names.

Children are only expected to begin formal letter formation when they demonstrate developmental readiness. Practitioners monitor readiness carefully through observation. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

8. P Checks: Setting Children Up for Success

Teachers will ensure that pupils understand and apply the "P Checks".

Posture

Children should:

- Sit with backs supported.
- Place feet flat on the floor.
- Sit close to the table.
- Support paper with their non-writing hand.

Pencil Grip

Children are encouraged to use an efficient tripod grasp where possible.

Staff recognise that some alternative grips may be effective and comfortable and should not automatically be corrected. [\[NHA_Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

Paper Position

Right-handed pupils

- Paper positioned slightly to the right.
- Paper tilted anticlockwise.

Left-handed pupils

- Paper positioned slightly to the left.
- Paper tilted clockwise.

Pressure

Children are taught to:

- Apply appropriate writing pressure.
 - Develop relaxed and efficient pencil control.
 - Complete warm-up activities before handwriting sessions where appropriate.
- [\[NHA_Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

9. Resources

The school will provide:

- Appropriate pencils and pens.
- Exercise books with suitable line spacing.
- Whiteboards and markers.
- Writing slopes and specialist equipment where required.
- Resources to support pupils with additional needs.

Line spacing will be selected to match pupils' developmental stage and handwriting size.

[\[NHA_Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

10. Teaching Sequence (S Factors)

Handwriting teaching follows the recognised progression of:

1. **Shape** – Correct letter formation.
2. **Space** – Appropriate spacing between letters and words.
3. **Size** – Consistent sizing and proportions.
4. **Sitting on the Line** – Correct alignment.
5. **Stringing Together** – Joining letters.
6. **Slant** – Consistent letter angle.
7. **Speed** – Developing fluency.
8. **Style** – Personal, efficient handwriting style. [\[NHA_Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

11. Organisation of Teaching

EYFS

- Frequent short sessions.
- Integrated within broader learning opportunities.

KS1

- Daily direct handwriting teaching.
- Application across curriculum writing.

KS2

- Regular focused handwriting lessons.
- Reinforcement through all written work.

Teachers model handwriting consistently and provide regular opportunities for practice.

[\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

12. Provision for Left-Handed Pupils

The school recognises the specific needs of left-handed pupils.

Support may include:

- Appropriate seating arrangements.
- Correct paper positioning.
- Suitable writing tools.
- Additional modelling and guidance.

Staff receive training to understand the needs of left-handed writers. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

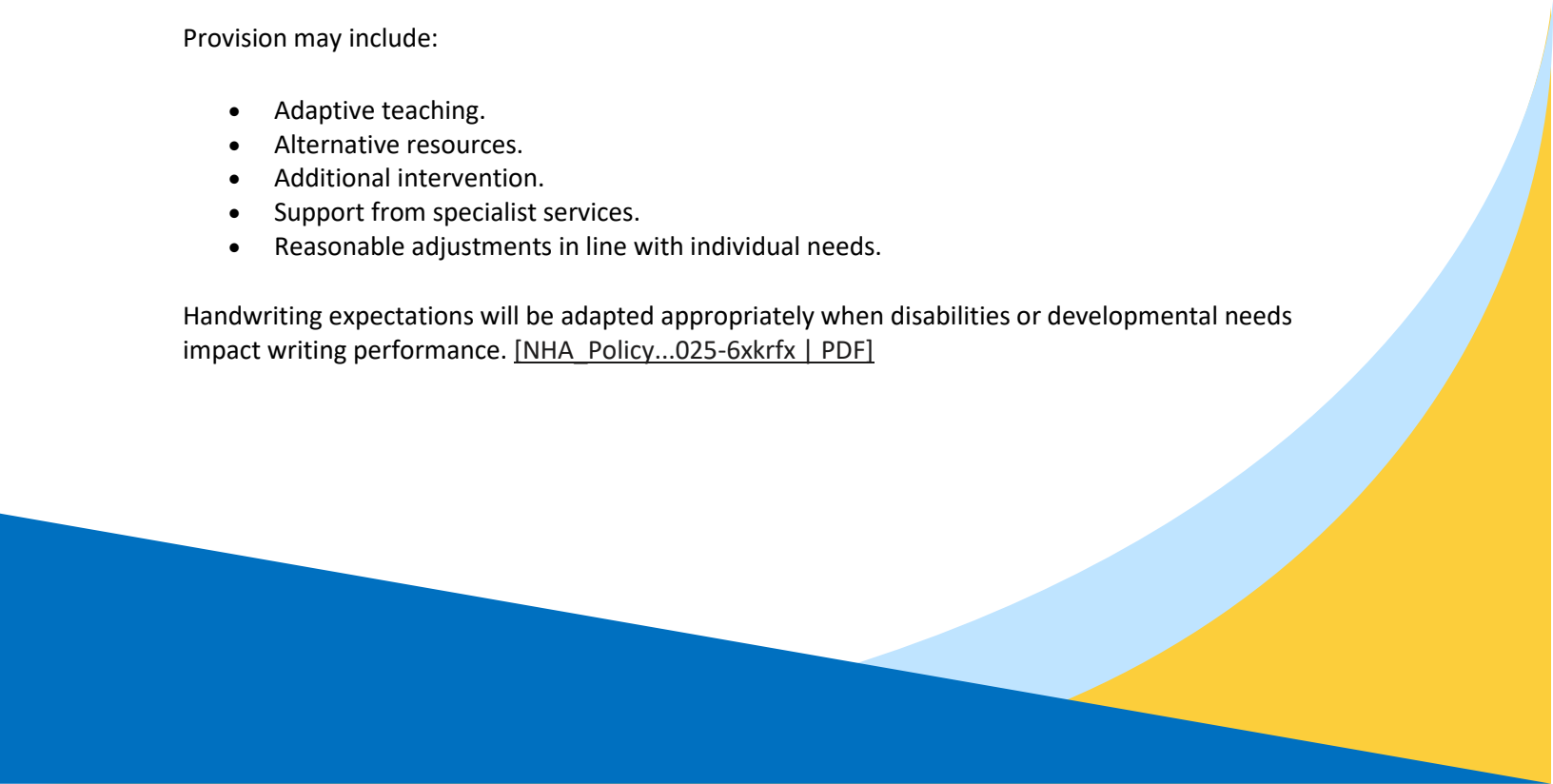
13. SEND and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring all pupils can access handwriting teaching.

Provision may include:

- Adaptive teaching.
- Alternative resources.
- Additional intervention.
- Support from specialist services.
- Reasonable adjustments in line with individual needs.

Handwriting expectations will be adapted appropriately when disabilities or developmental needs impact writing performance. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)



14. Supporting Pupils with Handwriting Difficulties

Support follows a graduated approach:

Tier 1 – Universal Provision

High-quality classroom teaching for all pupils.

Tier 2 – Targeted Intervention

Small-group or individual intervention for pupils requiring additional support.

Tier 3 – Specialist Intervention

Specialist assessment and support from external professionals where required. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

Interventions focus on identifying underlying causes rather than simply correcting the written product.

15. Assessment

Assessment is ongoing and informs future teaching.

Assessment includes:

- Observation of writing processes.
- Review of written outcomes.
- Monitoring of progress through the S Factors.
- Teacher assessment against National Curriculum expectations.
- Identification of pupils requiring additional support.

Handwriting assessment forms part of regular writing assessment processes. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

16. Handwriting and Technology

We recognise that children need both handwriting and keyboarding skills.

Pupils will be taught:

- When handwriting is the most appropriate method of recording.
- Basic keyboard skills.
- Digital literacy skills appropriate for their age.

Technology may also be used to support pupils with identified handwriting difficulties. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

17. Partnership with Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are important partners in developing handwriting skills.

The school will:

- Share handwriting expectations.
- Provide information about letter formation.
- Offer guidance for supporting handwriting at home.
- Communicate concerns and celebrate progress.

A consistent approach between home and school supports the best outcomes for children.

[\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

Monitoring and Review

The Literacy Subject Leader will monitor implementation through:

- Lesson observations.
- Work scrutiny.
- Pupil voice.
- Staff feedback.
- Assessment outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if statutory guidance changes. [\[NHA Policy...025-6xkrfx | PDF\]](#)

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