



## **St Alban's Handwriting Policy**

### **Why is handwriting important at St Alban's?**

In an age of ever-increasing technology, the importance of keeping the skill of handwriting is stronger than ever. Handwriting is an essential asset within cultural capital that helps prepare them for their future success.

The National Handwriting Association point out that legible handwriting that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content.

The Institute of Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) state that writing by hand appears to improve our ability to remember things because we have to coordinate verbal and fine movement systems. Research from Princeton University corroborates this saying “Handwriting has been linked to tapping into specific areas of the brain that typing does not.”

*At St Alban's we believe after children have been taught how to successfully write, they should be focusing on idea formation, not letter formation.*

### **Expectations & Modelling**

- At St Alban's we use Nelson Handwriting Scheme.
- Handwriting lessons should be in line with school policy and should build on what has gone before.
- As handwriting is a movement skill, demonstration by a competent teacher is essential.
- When children practice their handwriting, teachers should observe them carefully and be ready to intervene with support and encouragement.
- In the early stages of writing, the process is more important than the product.
- Every effort should be made to prevent significant faults becoming ingrained habits that will be difficult to break.
  - Faulty pen/pencil grip
  - Incorrect letter formation
  - Reversals and inversions
  - Poor posture and paper positioning
- Where, appropriate, teachers should be modelling joined handwriting outside of handwriting practice on lines.



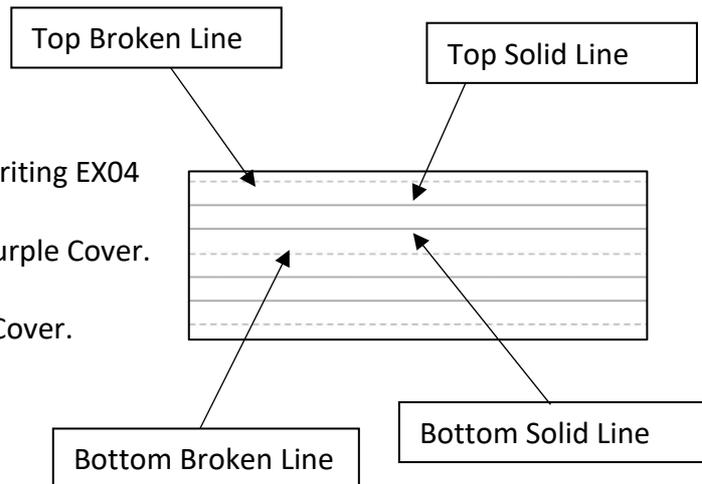
**KS2 Books:**

**KS2:**

**Handwriting** = A4 EPSL Books for Handwriting EX04  
4mm. Green cover. 32 Pages.

**Foundation Subjects** = Oversized A4+. Purple Cover.  
12mm. Margin.

**Literacy Books** = Oversized A4+. Yellow Cover.  
12mm. Margin.



Each piece of work will follow the schools DUMTUM (**D**ate **U**nderline **M**iss a **L**ine **T**itle **U**nderline **M**iss a **L**ine). Y3 which just write the short date in order to maximise handwriting time.

**KS2 Frequency of Lessons:**

There will be 3 handwriting lessons per week in Autumn term and 2 lessons per week in Spring & Summer. Each lesson will last for 10 minutes (approximately).

**KS2 Marking:**

**KS2:** During the lessons, children will be asked to reflect on their own handwriting or their partners. They will use a purple pen if they are reflecting on their own handwriting or a red pen if someone else is reflecting on their handwriting.

Staff will give instant feedback to pupils during handwriting lessons. This may involve additional modelling in the pupils books.

**Assessment:**

**KS2:** Children will mainly be assessed through their writing assessment. The following are the yearly statements. Further guidance on year group expectations are in this document.

**Y3** = Can mostly join handwriting legibly.

**Y4** = Can mostly join handwriting legibly.

**Y5** = Can join handwriting legibly.

**Y6** = Can join handwriting legibly.

The key to a child achieving these statements are consistency across multiple pieces of writing. Should a child not be on track to achieve these statements, other strategies will be put in place to support them.



<p>An individual assessment should be made on the children within the Autumn term.</p>	<p>A self-assessment guide should be stuck inside the children’s handwriting books.</p>
<p><b>Individual assessment</b></p> <p>To assess the progress of individual children it is necessary to observe them as they write, as well as studying their finished writing. Criteria for individual assessments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the child adopt the correct posture?</li> <li>• Does the child hold the pen/pencil correctly?</li> <li>• Does the child use the correct movement when forming and/or joining letters?</li> <li>• Does the child reverse or invert any letters?</li> <li>• Does the child write fluently and rhythmically?</li> <li>• Is the writing easily legible?</li> <li>• Is the writing appropriate?</li> <li>• Is the pupil’s handwriting development in line with the statutory curricula? (see pages 24–31)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Handwriting Checklist</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>? Are you forming your letters correctly?</li> <li>? Are any letters too tall or too short?</li> <li>? Are any descenders too long or too curly?</li> <li>? Is there a space between your letters?</li> <li>? Is there a space between your words?</li> <li>? Are you making the four joins correctly?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagonal joins to letters without ascenders <i>ai, ar, un</i></li> <li>• Diagonal joins to letters with ascenders <i>ab, ul, it</i></li> <li>• Horizontal joins to letters without ascenders <i>ou, vi, wi</i></li> <li>• Horizontal joins to letters with ascenders <i>ot, wh, ot</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Getting ready to write</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you sitting comfortably with both feet on the floor?</li> <li>Are you holding your pencil correctly?</li> <li>Is your paper at the correct angle?</li> </ul>

### Support

- **“Write from the Start”** scheme to be used an intervention. It is a Programme to Develop the Fine Motor and Perceptual Skills Necessary for Effective Handwriting.
- **Faulty Pencil Grip:** An over-tight pencil grip is the most common fault. Crooking of the forefinger and pressing too hard are common indicators of this. Children should be encouraged to relax and to hold the pencil lightly between their thumb and their middle finger, while their forefinger rests lightly on the pencil.
- **Incorrect Letter Formation:** Children are often able to write letters which are correctly shaped but which have been produced by incorrect movements. If bad habits of this kind are allowed to become ingrained, the child will be seriously hampered when he or she progresses to joined writing. It is important, in the early stages of development that,
  - *All letters are started in the correct place*
  - *In general, movements start at the top and go down*
  - *Ovals are made with an anti-clockwise movement*
- **Reversal, inversion and mirror writing:** Common problems include,
  - *Reversals: b for d and p for q*
  - *Inversions: w for m*
  - *Mirror Writing: was for saw*

Causes include,

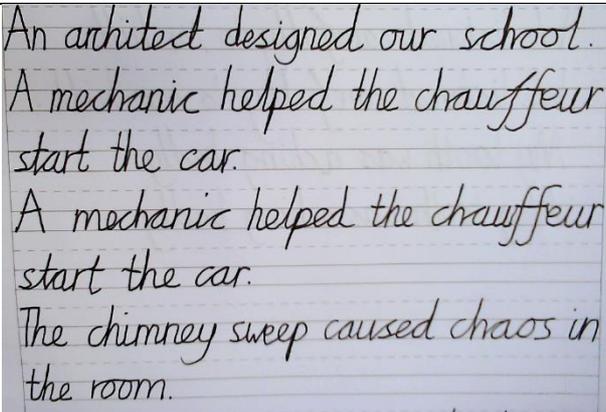
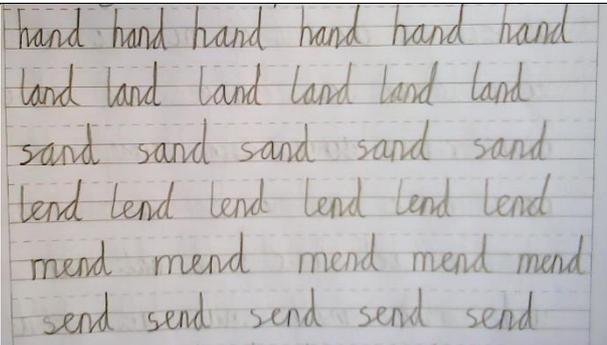
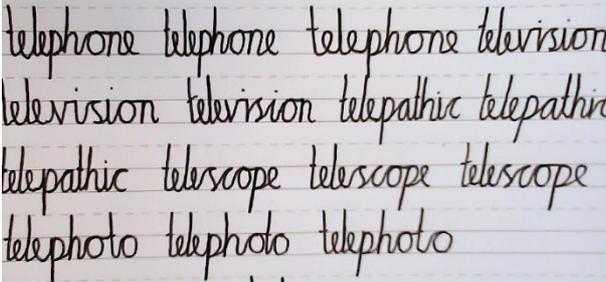
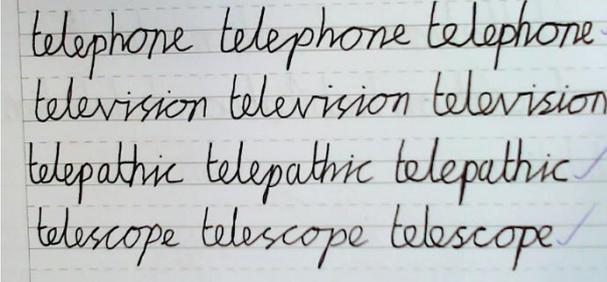
  - *Confusion between left and right*
  - *A lack of commitment to one hand*
  - *A natural tendency for left-handers to pull the hand across the body from right to left*
  - *A general lack of maturity*



Children with these problems can be helped by increased emphasis on the writing direction and the consistent use of one hand for writing.

- **Left-Handers:**
  - Nelson offers a “how to hold a writing implement correctly” video for left handed writers.
  - Many left handers adopt a hooked pencil hold which can result in a tired grip that affects the quality of their writing. When they begin to use a pen, their hand can easily smudge the ink as they write.
  - If a child has already “hooked” a pencil hold, do not force them to change. Instead, encourage them to angle their paper at 8° to the left.
  - Right-handed children should not be seated on the left-hand side of a them as their elbows will collide.

**Year Group Expectations**

<b>Y3</b>	
	
<p><b>END OF YEAR 3 EXPECTATIONS</b></p> <p>In Year 3, the child has progressed to joining all letters as a matter of course. Capital letters are used correctly and not joined. There are still some inconsistencies in letter sizing as the child becomes familiar with joining multiple letters. Handwriting is legible and flows well across the page and children at this stage are generally fitting more words per line.</p>	
<b>Y4</b>	
	



**END OF YEAR 4 EXPECTATIONS**

In Year 4, the child has progressed to ensuring writing is neat, fluent and joined. Letter sizes are consistent and work is neat and clear. Neat, clear handwriting is also used when the child has ‘purple pen edited’ their work to make improvements.

**Y5**

distant distant distant distant distant distant  
 distance distance distance distance distance  
 assistant assistant assistant assistant assistant  
 assistance assistance assistance assistance assistance  
 tolerant tolerant tolerant tolerant tolerant  
 tolerance tolerance tolerance tolerance tolerance  
 defiant defiant defiant defiant defiant  
 defiance defiance defiance defiance defiance  
 elegant elegant elegant elegant elegant  
 elegance elegance elegance elegance elegance

illogical illogical illogical illogical illogical  
 illegible illegible illegible illegible illegible  
 impractical impractical impractical  
 imperfect imperfect imperfect imperfect  
 incorrect incorrect incorrect incorrect  
 misspell misspell misspell misspell  
 unfair unfair unfair unfair unfair  
 untidy untidy untidy untidy untidy

**END OF YEAR 5 EXPECTATIONS**

In Year 5, the child has progressed to using a more personal style. Handwriting is still neat, joined and fluent but the child is making personal adaptations to their writing that allow them to write at speed.

**Y6**

Twist Twist Twist Twist Twist Twist Twist Twist Twist  
 Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin  
 Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger  
 stealing Stealing Stealing Stealing Stealing Stealing Stealing  
 pick-pocket pick-pocket pick-pocket pick-pocket

Twist Twist Twist Twist  
 Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin Fagin  
 Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger Dodger  
 stealing stealing stealing stealing

**END OF YEAR 6 EXPECTATIONS**

In Year 6, writing is joined, neat and legible and children use a personal style that means they can write at speed. The child will consider when it is best to join a letter and when it is quicker not to. Children in Year 6 must produce neat, joined and fluent writing in order to meet the expected standard in writing for the end of Key Stage 2.

**Appendix:**

**The letter forms**

The lower-case alphabet for Starter Level:

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

The lower-case alphabet for Books 1 to 6:

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

A letter slant of 8° from the vertical to the right is introduced in Pupil Book 3:

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

The lower-case print alphabet:

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

The capital letters and numerals:

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

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

**The letter groups**

**Letter families**

In year one, *Nelson Handwriting* groups the letters into sets based on handwriting families. These are letters that are formed in similar ways.

**Set 1**

c a o d g q s f e

**Set 2**

i l t u j y

**Set 3**

r n m h k b p

**Set 4**

v w x z



## Joining groups

The joining groups divide the letters according to how they will join to other letters.

### Group 1

a c d e h i k l m n s t u

Thirteen letters with exit flicks plus s.

### Group 2

a c d e g i j m n o p q r s u v w x y

Nineteen letters which start at the top of the x-height.

### Group 3

b f h k l t

Six letters which start at the top of the ascender.

### Group 4

f o r v w

Five letters which finish at the top of the x-height.

### The break letters

b g j p q x y z

Eight letters after which no join is made. Joins are not made to or from the letter z.

## The joins

	Group	→	Group	
The first join	1	→	2	in am
The second join	1	→	3	ab ch
The third join	4	→	2	oa wo
The fourth join	4	→	3	wh ob
The break letters				bigger

## The joined style

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

### Letter size

Book	x-height of letter (mm)
Starter Workbook A	10
Starter Workbooks B & C	8
Book 1A and 1B	6
Book 2	5
Book 3	4
Book 4	4
Book 5	3
Book 6	3