



St Alban's CofE Primary School Our Ambitious Handwriting Curriculum



Intent

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.

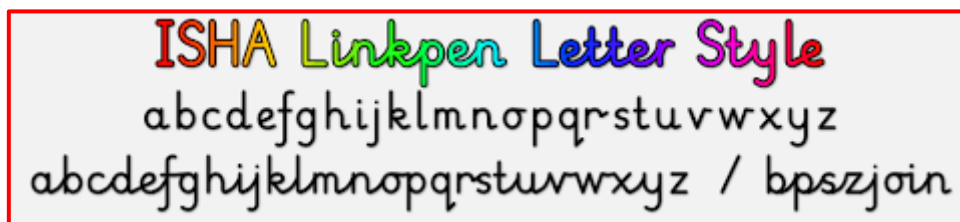
The National Handwriting Association point out that legible handwriting that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content. The Institute of Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) state that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

Our intention is that every child is taught the semi-cursive style and can write legibly, fluently and at speed. To instil in each child the feeling of personal triumph of seeing a completed task achieved by hand.

"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."

ISHA

At St. Alban's we made the deliberate choice of investing in the ISHA (Improvement in Schools through Handwriting and Art) guidance by Martin Harvey and Debbie Watson. As mentioned, the handwriting style is semi-cursive, chosen for its simplistic, but very clear as well as omitting "loops and lead-ins" which are features of more complex handwriting styles.



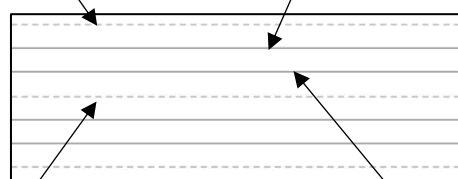
We made the choice of linking all back strokes (those on the bottom right line) as we felt it would be easier for children to know they join all letters rather than remember which ones join and those that don't.

Books:

From FS2 to Y6, all books or line guides use the following four lines:

Top Broken Line

Top Solid Line



Bottom Broken Line

Bottom Solid Line

Reception

Code: HW.EX.12



KS1 – Handwriting & RWI

Code: HW.EX.03



KS1 – English & Foundation Subjects

Code: HW.EX.11



Y3 & Y4 – English & Independent Writing

KS2 Handwriting

Code: HW.EX.04



In KS2, Other than the books mentioned, all children have plain books and we use line guides the same size as code HW.EX.04.

Teaching Sequence

ISHA has created letter families based on the similarities of the types of strokes and lines. By group letters this way, children can start to create schemas between certain letters.

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 1. The Straight Line Family

i l t j letters based on a single vertical line

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 2. The Coathanger Family

c o a d g q e letters based on a c shape

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 2. The Coathanger Family

c o a d g q e letters based on a c shape

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 3. The Bridge Family

m n r h b k p letters that have a vertical down stroke followed by a diagonal movement to the right.

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 3. The Bridge Family Contd..

m n r h b k p letters that have a vertical down stroke followed by a diagonal movement to the right.

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 4. The Zig Zag Family

v w are placed together as a pair.

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 5. The Smile Family

u y are placed together as a pair.

Lower Case Letter Formation

Family 6. The Misfits!

s f x z letters that are unique and individual and do not fit with any other letter groups.

A	AAA	B	BBB
C	CCC	D	DDD
E	EEE	F	FFF
G	GGG	H	HHH
I	III	J	JJJ

K	KKK	L	LLL
M	MMM	N	NNN
O	OOO	P	PPP
Q	QQQ	R	RRR
S	SSS	T	TTT
U	UUU	V	VVV

W	WWW	X	XXX
Y	YYY	Z	ZZZ

Language

Consistency of language is very important when teaching handwriting to ensure children begin to assimilate patterns and shapes and link letters together that look similar to each other. We remain consistent across St. Alban's when describing where letters sit on the lines so children don't receive mixed messages or become confused.

Top Broken Line
Top Solid Line
Bottom Solid Line
Bottom Broken Line

Short Lines

Tall Lines

Tail Lines

North-east Joining Line
or
Diagonal joining stroke

This block contains a series of handwriting examples on four-line guides. The first row shows the four lines: Top Broken Line, Top Solid Line, Bottom Solid Line, and Bottom Broken Line. The next three rows show 'Short Lines', 'Tall Lines', and 'Tail Lines' with arrows indicating the direction of the strokes. The final row shows 'North-east Joining Line or Diagonal joining stroke' with examples of letters like 'h' and 'a' connected by a diagonal stroke.

Narrow bridges

Letters with triangles

Joins with wedges

Coat hanger hooks

Egg shapes in the coat hanger letters

Shoe lace k

This block contains a series of handwriting examples on four-line guides. The first row shows 'Narrow bridges' with letters 'n', 'h', 'm', and 'j'. The second row shows 'Letters with triangles' with 'd', 'b', and 'y'. The third row shows 'Joins with wedges' with 'i', 'ch', and 'da'. The fourth row shows 'Coat hanger hooks' with 'c', 's', and 'f'. The fifth row shows 'Egg shapes in the coat hanger letters' with 'c', 'o', 'a', 'd', 'g', and 'g'. The sixth row shows 'Shoe lace k' with the letter 'k'.

Small letters

Tall letters

Tail letters

Narrow letters

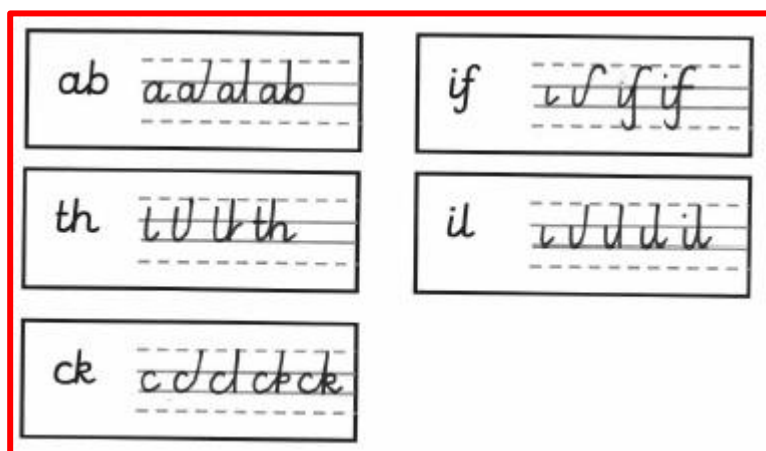
Letters with sharp points

Narrow curved tails

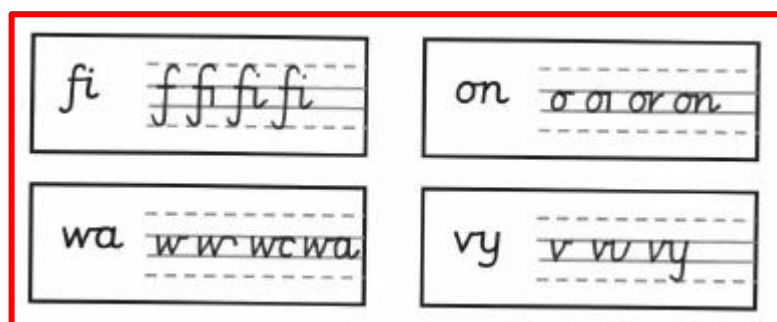
This block contains a series of handwriting examples on four-line guides. The first row shows 'Small letters' with 'e', 'i', 'u', 'x', 'z', and 'r'. The second row shows 'Tall letters' with 'd', 'k', and 'l'. The third row shows 'Tail letters' with 'j', 'p', 'g', and 'y'. The fourth row shows 'Narrow letters' with 'n' and 'b'. The fifth row shows 'Letters with sharp points' with 'v' and 'w'. The sixth row shows 'Narrow curved tails' with 'j', 'g', and 'y'.

Joins

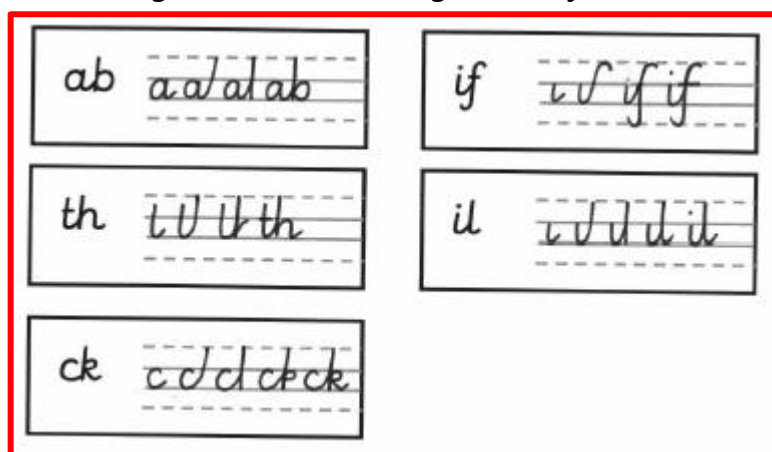
These are examples of joins which follow the "up and over stop reverse route":



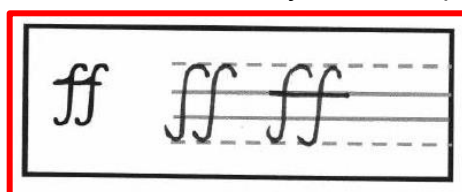
These are examples where letters join on the top solid line.



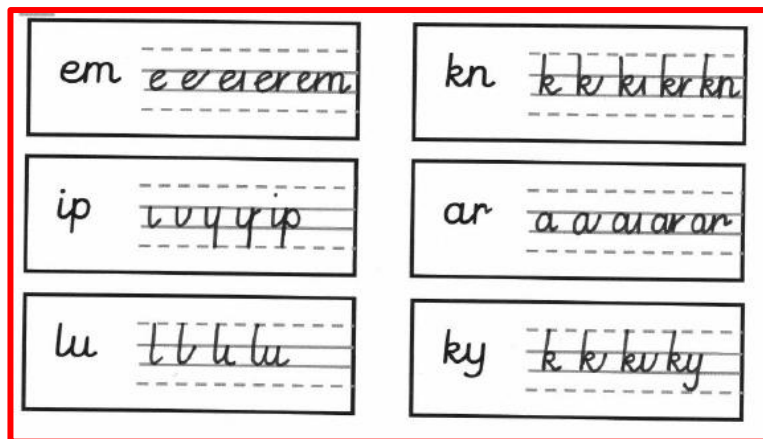
These letters are joined from the preceding letter with a diagonal stroke which straightens up at the top solid line then pushes straight up to the top broken line before coming straight back down tracing the line just made.



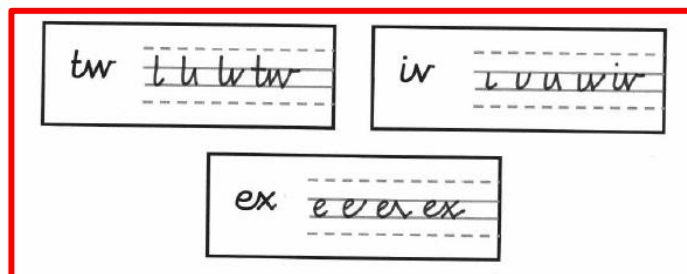
When joining two letter f's together – for efficiency and speed – use a "double cross". Draw the two tall strokes of the f next to each other and then cross together with one horizontal cross bar which sits exactly on the top solid line.



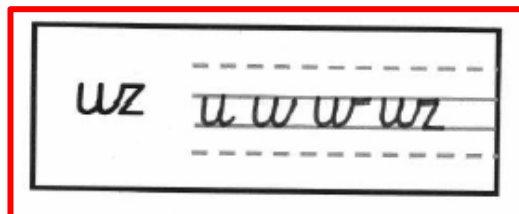
These letters are joined from the preceding letter with a diagonal joining stroke, straightening up to push to the top solid line before coming straight back down, tracing the line just made.



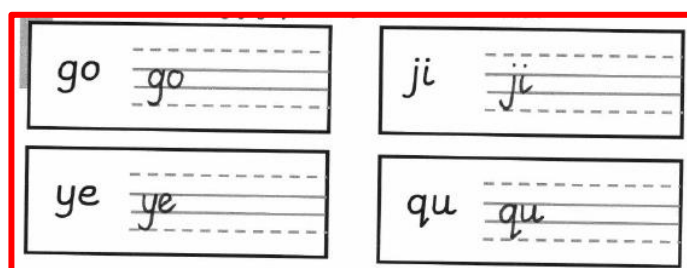
These letters are joined from the preceding letter at the top solid line before going diagonally down to the right.



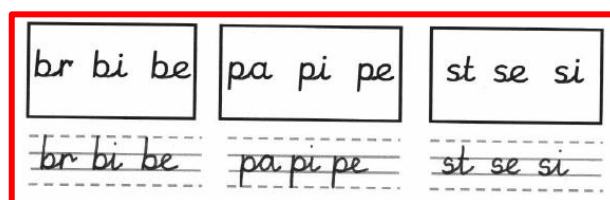
The letter z is joined from the preceding letter at the top solid line before going straight across the top solid line to start the formation of the letter z.



All the tail letters are break letters. They do not join on to the next letter. g j y q do not join onto the next letter.



We made the decision to join b p and s. We felt it made it easier to remember the style.

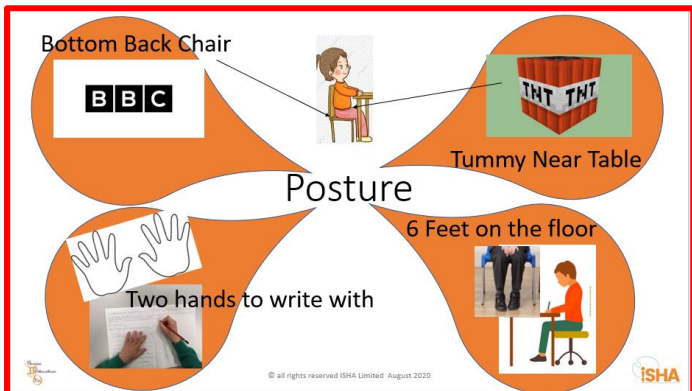


Expectations & Modelling

- 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.

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.

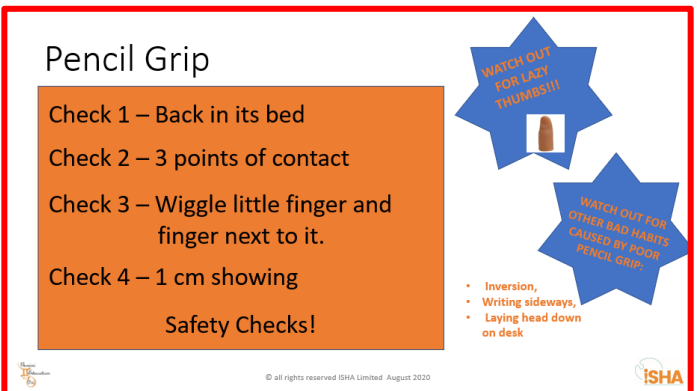
Pencil Grip and posture are two fundamental aspects of high-quality handwriting. Here is the expectation we have of our children:



Posture

- Bottom Back Chair (BBC)
- Tummy Near Table
- 6 Feet on the floor
- Two hands to write with

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Pencil Grip

- Check 1 – Back in its bed
- Check 2 – 3 points of contact
- Check 3 – Wiggle little finger and finger next to it.
- Check 4 – 1 cm showing

Safety Checks!

- Inversion,
- Writing sideways,
- Laying head down on desk

WATCH OUT FOR LAZY THUMB!!!

WATCH OUT FOR OTHER BAD HABITS CAUSED BY POOR PENCIL GRIP!

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Frequency of Lessons:

- **Reception** 1 x 10-15-minute session every day & 2 directed small group session per week lasting 10minutes each.
- **KS1:** KS1 administers daily handwriting lessons that last 10-15 minutes each.
- **KS2:** KS2 administers daily handwriting lesson in Autumn term which drops to 3 per week from Spring onwards.

Feedback:

During lessons, teachers will be actively manoeuvring around the class, making observations and intervening when necessary. Live feedback is the primary feedback strategy the children will receive as it gives them the opportunity to correct mistakes within the same lesson. Children will be expected to self-assess throughout lessons – with placing a dot under handwriting they are happy/please with being the main strategy.

Assessment:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| FS | - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases. |
| | - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. |
| Y1 | - Form upper case letters correctly. |
| | - Form lower case letters correctly. |
| | - Separate words with spaces. |
| | - Form digits correctly. |
| Y2 | - Use appropriate spaces between words. |
| | - Form capital letters and digits correctly and in relation to each other. |
| 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.

Support

- **“Write from the Start”** scheme to be used as 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,

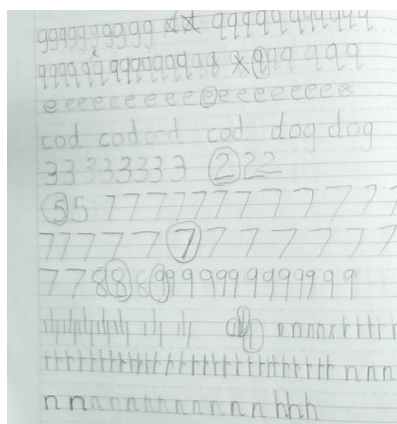
 - *Confusion between left and right*
 - *A lack of commitment to one hand*
 - *A natural tendency for left-handers to pull the hand across the body from right to left*
 - *A general lack of maturity*

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:**
 - *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 table as their elbows will collide.*

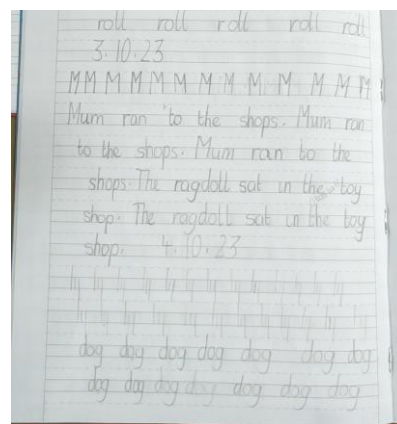
Examples

Reception

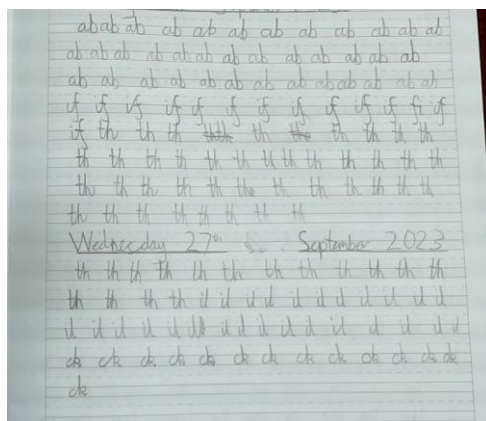
Y2



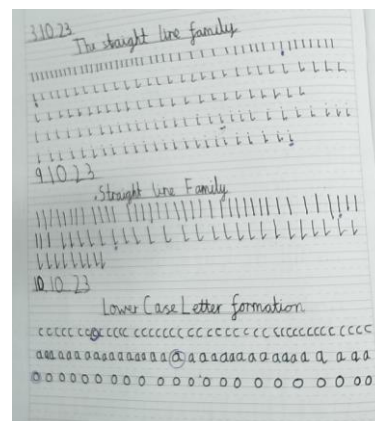
Y1



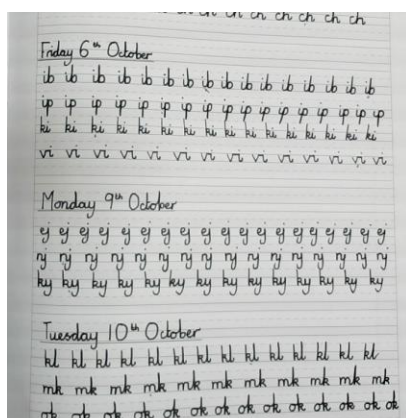
Y3



Y4



Y5



Y6



