

Supporting your child with handwriting

Parent/Carer guide

Handwriting improves with comfort,
practice and confidence.

Small, regular steps at home increase
handwriting improvement alongside the
support we provide in school.



Set up for success

A comfortable position makes writing easier and less tiring.

- **Seating:** feet flat on the floor, back supported, and the table at about elbow height.
- **Light:** good light from the side opposite the writing hand (from the left for right-handers, from the right for left-handers), so the hand does not cast a shadow.
- **Paper:** tilt it slightly. Right-handers tilt the top to the left; left-handers tilt the top to the right.
- **Pen:** pick one that feels comfortable and flows smoothly, so less pressure is needed. Left-handers often find it helps to hold the pen a little further back from the tip so they can see what they have written.
- **Grip:** relaxed rather than tight. White knuckles or a hand that aches are signs of too much pressure.

Warm up first

A minute of warming up before homework or revision helps the hand and get ready to write.

- Shake out the hands, then stretch the fingers wide like a firework and relax them using a rubber band.
- Squeeze a stress ball or putty about ten times with each hand.
- Touch your thumb to the tip of each finger on the same hand in order (Index – Middle – Ring - Pinky) and then back again, going as fast and accurately as you can.

Build motor skills away from the page

Handwriting relies on strong shoulders and core for stability and on small, controlled hand movements for detail. Many everyday activities build both.

- **Hands and fingers:** cooking and baking, drawing or sketching, playing an instrument, model-making, crafts, gardening and DIY.
- **Shoulders and core:** swimming, climbing, press-ups against a wall, throwing and catching, and other sport.

These do not need to feel like practice. Anything that gets the hands working carefully helps.

A simple practice routine:

1. Warm up the hands for a minute.
2. Write a few sentences slowly, focusing on one thing only: letter size, spacing or joins.
3. Write a few more at a comfortable pace, such as a diary entry, a list, or a summary of something learned today.
4. Stop while it still feels manageable, and point out one thing that looks better.

Little and often works better than one long session. Five to ten minutes, three or four times a week, is plenty.

Encourage your child:

Praise effort and specific improvements, such as “your spacing is much clearer”.

Choose one target at a time rather than correcting everything.

Let your child choose what to write about. Writing they care about gets more effort.

Take a break if their hand is tired. Rushed or painful writing reinforces poor habits.

In summary:

- Set up a comfortable writing space.
- Practise for 5 to 10 minutes, a few times a week.
- Build hand motor skill strength through everyday activities.
- Praise effort and progress, not just neatness.