Friezland Primary School
Committed to making a difference

HANDWRITING POLICY

A coherent approach to transcription, fluency and presentation

Policy owner	Headteacher / English subject leader
Approved by	Governing board
Adopted	July 2026
Review date	July 2027 or earlier if national guidance changes

1. Purpose and intent

At Friezland Primary School, handwriting is taught explicitly as a foundational transcription skill. Our aim is for every pupil to write legibly, fluently and with increasing automaticity so that handwriting does not place an unnecessary burden on working memory or prevent pupils from communicating their ideas. The policy sets out the school's entitlement, progression, teaching approach, assessment and targeted support from Reception to Year 6.

Our principles

- Handwriting is taught directly, frequently and in short, focused sessions, with additional practice in authentic writing.
- Print is secured before joining. Letters are formed with the correct starting point, direction and orientation before speed is increased.
- Handwriting, spelling and sentence construction are treated as essential foundations of writing; pupils are not expected to sustain extended writing before the necessary transcription skills are sufficiently secure.
- Teaching is responsive: errors are corrected promptly so that pupils do not rehearse inefficient or incorrect motor patterns.
- Adaptations and intervention are proportionate to assessed need and enable pupils, including those with SEND, to participate in the same ambitious curriculum.
- Left-handed pupils receive explicit teaching about paper position, posture and pencil movement.

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils and staff. It should be read alongside the English curriculum, phonics progression, presentation expectations, SEND policy, assessment policy and the linked implementation resources listed on page 6.

2. National framework and school expectations

This policy reflects the National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study, the Department for Education Writing Framework (2025), the statutory EYFS framework and current Ofsted school inspection materials. The Writing Framework identifies handwriting, spelling and sentence construction as the foundations of writing and emphasises explicit teaching, sufficient practice and careful progression towards automaticity.

Alignment with the renewed Ofsted inspection toolkit

The policy is designed to make the school's intended curriculum, implementation and impact visible in normal practice rather than to generate evidence specifically for inspection. It supports the following evaluation areas:

- Curriculum and teaching: a clearly sequenced handwriting curriculum, explicit modelling, frequent practice and consistent language.
- Inclusion: early identification, reasonable adjustments, targeted intervention and a strong expectation that pupils with SEND access an ambitious curriculum.
- Achievement: regular review of pupils' letter formation, fluency, legibility and application across the curriculum.
- Early years: developmentally appropriate attention to posture, gross and fine motor readiness, pencil control, letter formation and application through phonics and writing.
- Leadership and governance: agreed expectations, staff training, monitoring, evaluation and timely improvement action.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher and governors	Set the strategic expectation; ensure sufficient time, resources and training; evaluate implementation and impact.
English subject leader	Maintain progression and resources; support staff; monitor teaching, books and outcomes; coordinate moderation and action planning.
Class teachers	Teach the agreed sequence; model accurately; check posture and grip; intervene during practice; assess and adapt teaching.
SENDCo and support staff	Help identify barriers; select and review adaptations or Griffin OT Write Rules intervention; ensure classroom transfer and avoid parallel low-expectation provision.

Non-negotiable expectations

- All adults model the school's agreed letter formations and joining conventions.
- Pupils receive immediate, specific feedback during handwriting practice.
- No pupil repeatedly practises an incorrect formation unchecked.
- Presentation expectations never override accessibility or a pupil's reasonable adjustment.

3. Curriculum progression and entitlement

Handwriting is practised daily. The amount and context change as pupils become increasingly automatic, but the expectation of regular practice continues through Year 6. Detailed half-termly sequences are contained in the school's Handwriting Progression document.

Phase	Curriculum emphasis	End-point / next step
Reception	Writing readiness, posture, functional grip, pre-writing patterns, lower-case formation linked to taught phonics; use of formation rhymes; capitals introduced after lower-case foundations.	Correct orientation and increasingly accurate formation; growing control; progression from unlined work to writing on a line when ready.
Year 1	Daily consolidation of lower-case and capital formation, relative size, spacing and common exception words; apply taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences in words and sentences.	All letters begin and end in the correct place; growing consistency in size and placement.
Year 2	Secure print, size and spacing; introduce diagonal joins from HT3 in the agreed sequence; apply joins in common graphemes and suffixes.	Accurate letter formation and increasing control of diagonal joins without sacrificing legibility.
Year 3	Retrieve diagonal joins; introduce horizontal joins; practise joins to ascenders and non-ascenders; make informed choices about selected joins.	Consistent joined handwriting; movement from handwriting guidelines towards ordinary lines where appropriate.
Year 4	Retrieve and apply all taught joins; improve accurate transcription, speed and consistency; begin to develop a personal style.	Fluent, legible writing at increasing speed; appropriate joining decisions.
Years 5-6	Daily practice within English and spelling, targeted to curriculum vocabulary and identified inconsistencies; maintain automaticity, legibility and efficient personal style.	Sustained, legible and fluent handwriting across subjects, with presentation appropriate to purpose.

Joining and pens

Joining is introduced only after secure print formation. Pupils are not required to join every letter. From Year 3, a pen licence may be awarded when a pupil demonstrates correct formation, consistent application of year-group joins, appropriate relative size, legibility, fluency and sustained presentation across subjects. Pens are not removed as a sanction; any decline is addressed through teaching and support.

Books and writing lines

Pupils use the book or line scaffold most appropriate to their current handwriting needs. Progression from unlined paper to wide handwriting guidelines, narrower guidelines and ordinary lines is based on assessment rather than age alone. Temporary scaffolds may be reintroduced when a pupil is learning a new formation or join.

4. Teaching handwriting at Friezland

Handwriting is taught through a consistent lesson routine. Sessions are brief, active and focused. The teacher makes the movement visible, explains the precise learning and gives pupils enough successful repetitions to establish the motor pattern.

Agreed lesson sequence

1. Introduce	Share the unit and lesson outcome in child-friendly language. Pupils know the specific improvement they are working on.
2. Revisit readiness	Re-establish posture, paper position and functional grip. Rehearse “Nip, Flip, Grip”.
3. Warm up	Use brief Griffin OT arm-shake and finger exercises where helpful. Explain the purpose: control, stamina and fluency.
4. Explicitly teach and model	Teach the new letter shape, formation or join. Model on appropriately lined paper using the visualiser or board. Say the agreed formation rhyme or movement language. Show correct formation and common errors.
5. Do and jump in	Pupils practise. Adults circulate and correct posture, grip, starting position, direction, placement, spacing or joins immediately.
6. Review and correct	Use a teacher model or pupil example to identify one precise point for improvement. Pupils correct and repeat successfully.

Teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1

- Handwriting is taught daily and reinforced in phonics, spelling and writing.
- Lower-case formation is prioritised before capitals and before joining.
- ELS formation visuals and rhymes are used consistently to reinforce starting points, direction and orientation.
- Teachers distinguish handwriting instruction from phonics instruction while allowing pupils to apply both together in words and sentences.
- Gross motor, fine motor and visual-motor readiness activities are used purposefully rather than as substitutes for explicit letter teaching.

Teaching in Key Stage 2

- Short handwriting practice is visible within English and/or spelling and is shaped by the planned joining sequence, curriculum vocabulary and assessment.
- Whole words and sentences are modelled so that pupils transfer isolated practice into normal writing.
- Pupils develop speed only while maintaining legibility and efficient formation; personal style is encouraged within agreed conventions.

5. Assessment, adaptation and intervention

Assessment and feedback

Teachers assess handwriting through direct observation and normal written work. Assessment focuses on posture and paper position, functional pencil grasp, starting point and direction, orientation, continuous formation, placement on the line, relative size, spacing, joins, legibility, fluency and independence. The pupil and teacher checklists support consistent language but do not replace professional judgement.

- Reception baseline and ongoing checks identify writing-readiness and formation needs.
- Teachers review whether skills taught in practice transfer into English and wider-curriculum books.
- Feedback is precise and limited to the most useful next step, followed by immediate successful practice.
- The subject leader samples outcomes across groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Universal adaptations

Adaptations may include adjusted seating or desk height, paper angle and position, left-handed modelling, appropriate pencil or grip, enlarged or reduced line guides, visual prompts, reduced copying distance, additional rehearsal, movement breaks and alternative recording where required. Adaptations should reduce barriers while maintaining the intended handwriting knowledge wherever possible.

Targeted Griffin OT Write Rules intervention

Where assessment identifies that a pupil is not making sufficient progress through high-quality classroom teaching and additional practice, the Griffin OT Write Rules programme may be used as a short-term, targeted intervention. It may address pencil control, starting position, orientation, continuous formation, placement on the line, relative size and spacing. Pupils access the parts that match their identified needs rather than automatically completing the programme in full. Progress is reviewed through observation and samples from intervention and ordinary classroom writing; provision is adapted or ended when the pupil applies the skill with increasing consistency and independence. The programme supports, but does not replace, the school's agreed curriculum.

Formation families used in intervention

Movement family	Letters	Core rule
Start at the Top / Long Ladder	l, t, i, j, u, y	Begin at the top and move down.
No Lifting / One-Armed Robot	r, n, m, h, b, p	Keep the pencil on the page while moving down, back up and around.
Starts Like Curly C / Curly Caterpillar	c, o, a, d, g, q, f, s, e	Use a curved, anticlockwise movement.
Let's Fall / Zig-Zag	v, w, x, z, k	Use controlled diagonal or oblique strokes.

6. Quality assurance, implementation and review

What leaders will monitor

- The progression is taught in the intended sequence and staff use agreed formation and joining conventions.
- Teaching includes explicit modelling, guided practice, active circulation and immediate correction.
- Pupils' handwriting becomes more accurate, legible and automatic over time and transfers across subjects.
- Pupils who fall behind are identified early; adaptations and intervention are matched to need and reviewed for impact.
- Staff workload is proportionate: leaders use normal curriculum evidence, not inspection-specific paperwork.

Evidence considered

Leaders draw on lesson visits, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of English and wider-curriculum books, progression checks, intervention records and national outcomes. Evaluation considers the quality and impact of provision for all groups, not simply completion of activities.

Linked implementation documents

Detailed Handwriting Progression	Half-termly sequences from Reception to Year 6, milestones, joins, line guidance and pen-licence expectations.
Handwriting Lesson Flow Chart	The agreed lesson routine: introduce, revisit, warm up, teach/model, do and jump in, peer review and correct.
EYFS Letter Families	Movement-family groupings and child-friendly titles used to organise targeted formation practice.
Letter Formation Rhyme Mat	ELS-aligned visual and verbal cues for individual lower-case letter formation.
Nip, Flip, Grip	A visual prompt for establishing a functional pencil grip.
Pupil Handwriting Checklist	Pupil-facing prompts for readiness, writing and checking work.
Teaching Handwriting Checklist	Staff-facing implementation checklist for modelling, feedback and active intervention.
Griffin OT Write Rules adaptation	A targeted support resource used selectively for pupils whose assessed needs require it.

Key external references

Department for Education: The Writing Framework (2025); National Curriculum in England: English programmes of study; Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage; Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework and State-funded School Inspection Toolkit (current version, including materials for use from September 2026).

Review and approval

The policy is reviewed annually by the English subject leader and headteacher, informed by monitoring and pupil outcomes. Material changes are presented to governors. Staff are briefed on agreed changes and implementation resources are updated together so that policy and practice remain aligned.

Appendix A: Handwriting lesson flow chart

Handwriting – Lesson flow Chart



Introduce: Key learning (unit and lesson outcome)



Re-visit: Using the pen pals screen revisit with the children what is good posture for writing? What does a good writer look like? and rehearse and practice Nip, Grip, Flip.




Griffin OT: arm shake and finger exercise video warm ups



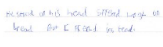
Teach: New letter shapes/ joins/ letter formation as shown on screen Teach and model onto lines (using visualizer/ WB with lines). Model using word rhymes for individual letters



Snappy oral re-visit: Nip, Flip, Grip



Do and jump in:

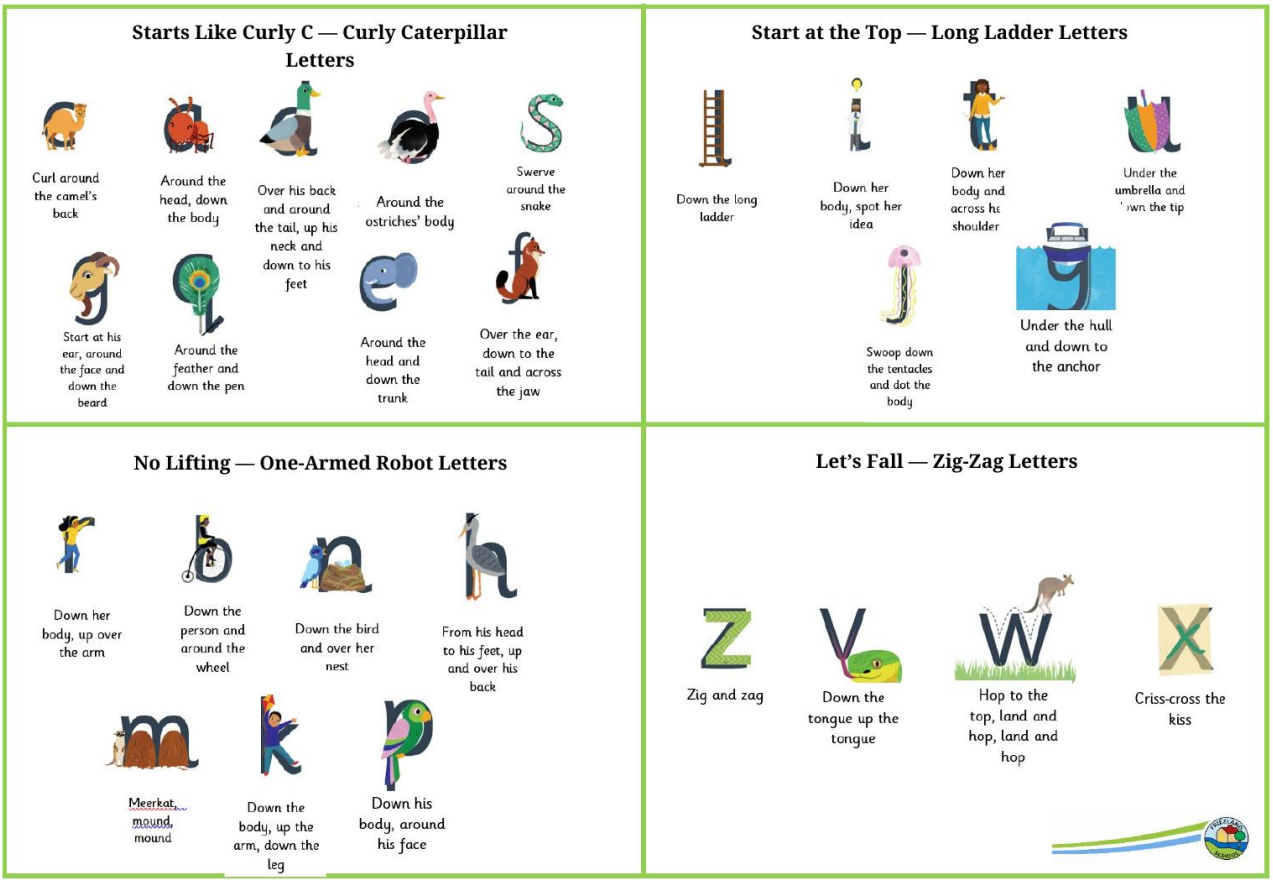


Peer Review: Use teacher examples or individual pupil examples to identify specific areas to trouble shoot (letter spacing between joins)

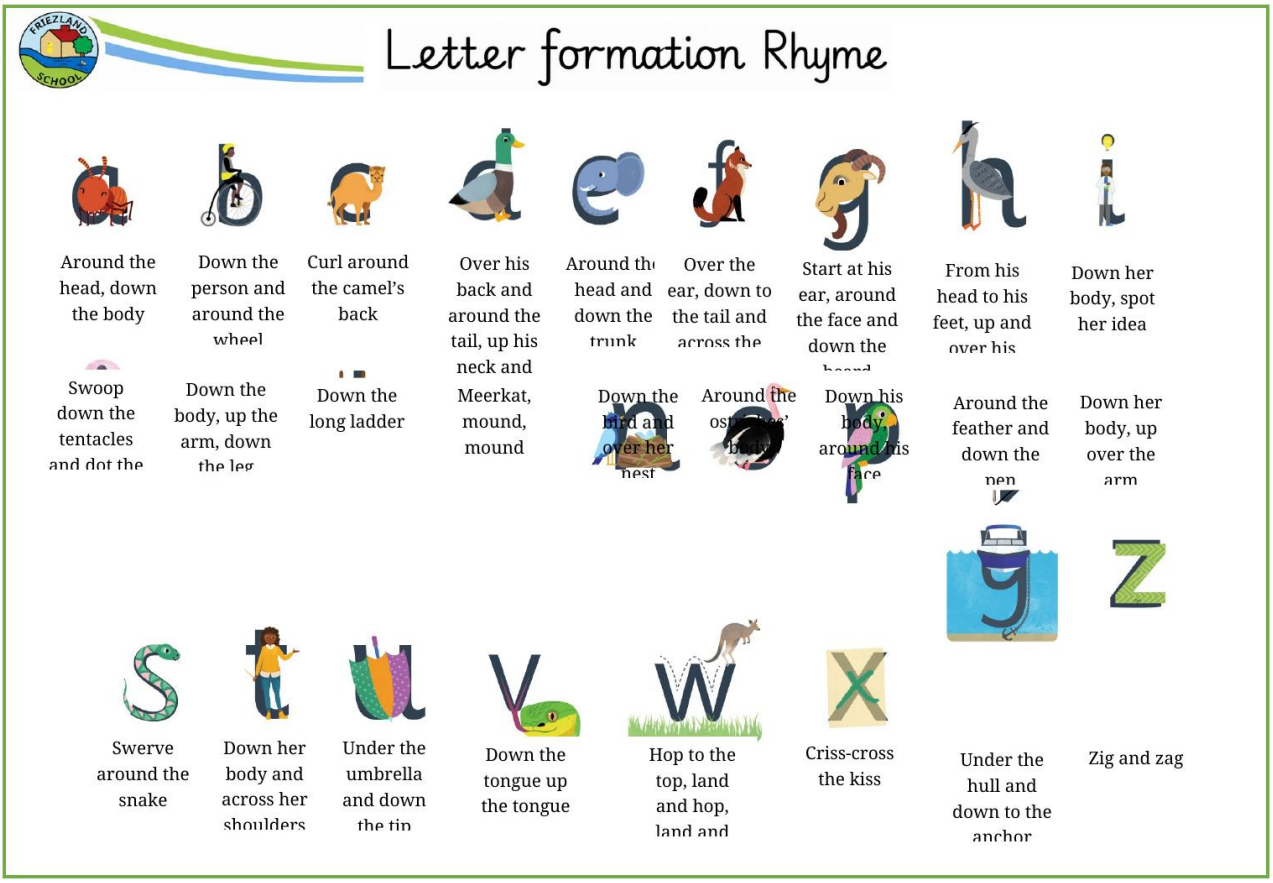


Correct, do and jump in:

Appendix B: EYFS letter families



Appendix C: Letter formation rhymes



Appendix D: Nip, Flip, Grip



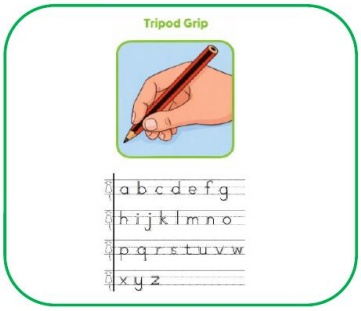
Appendix E: Pupil handwriting checklist

My Handwriting Checklist



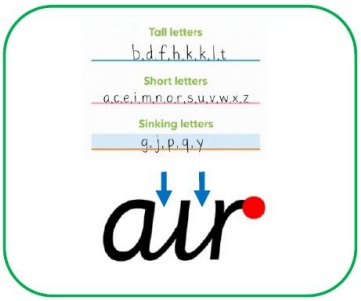
Ready to write

- ☐ Sit smart with your back in your chair
- ☐ Feet flat
- ☐ Book in the right place
- ☐ Nip – Flip – Grip



While I write

- ☐ Start in the right place
- ☐ Letters on the line
- ☐ Correct letter sizes (ascenders and descenders)
- ☐ Tripod grip
- ☐ Space between *joins*



Check my work

- ☐ Joins are correct
- ☐ Correct spacing
- ☐ Letter size compared to other letters
- ☐ ascenders and descenders are correct
- ☐ Fluency and presentation
- ☐ I corrected any improvements in

Appendix F: Teaching handwriting checklist

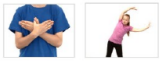
Teaching hand writing checklist



☐ Share unit outcome
☐ Share lesson outcome in child-friendly language
☐ Children know *what* they are improving today



☐ Re-establish **posture**
☐ Re-check **grip**
☐ Children rehearse before writing again



☐ Arm shake
☐ Finger exercises
☐ Purpose explained (**control, stamina, fluency**)



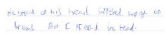
☐ Explicit teaching of new letter **shapes** / **joins** / **formations**
☐ Use writen visuals on screen – Model on lines / Visualizer
☐ Say word rhymes aloud while modelling
☐ Model both *correct formation* and *common mistakes*
☐ Language is consistent across classes (words in bold)



☐ Re-establish **posture**
☐ Re-check **nip, flip, grip**
☐ Fast, confident and whole-class



☐ Teacher actively circulates
☐ Address **posture**, **Tri pod grip** or **letter formation** immediately
☐ Intervene *during* writing, not after
☐ Corrections are specific (e.g. **spacing between joins**, **entry strokes**)
☐ No pupil practises incorrect formation unchecked



☐ Use teacher examples **or pupil work**
☐ Identify **one specific area** to troubleshoot
☐ Language is precise (e.g. “letter spacing between joins”)



☐ Teacher actively circulates again
☐ Immediate **corrections** given
☐ No passive observation