

Handwriting: A Guide for Parents and Carers



Handwriting is an integral part of our English Curriculum at Swallowfield. Effective and efficient writing depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting. Good handwriting is an essential skill for life that also helps to build confidence in writing and assists in the 'over-learning' involved in teaching spelling.

How do we teach handwriting at Swallowfield?

Early Years (Busy Bees and Reception)

In the Early Years, children are provided with opportunities to develop their fine motor skills through a variety of activities. Fine motor skills are the ability to make movements using the small muscles in our hands and wrists; they are essential in enabling children to hold a pencil and to write neatly. Opportunities for mark making (writing in its earliest form) are also provided on a daily basis. In Reception, children are taught how to form each letter using the Read Write Inc. letter rhyme and a selection of Nelson handwriting resources. They are also taught how to form the digits 0-9.

Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2)

In years 1 and 2, the children become more familiar with the correct formation of letters and digits and the focus moves to correct orientation and size. Handwriting lessons focus on forming ascenders (tall letters) and decenders (letters that go below the line) correctly and moving towards writing letters with a consistent size and using appropriate spacing between words. Towards the end of Year 2, the children are introduced to some of the initial joins.

Key Stage Two (Years 3,4,5 and 6)

In year 3, the children are taught how to write in a joined style. They are taught which letters to join and which letters are best left unjoined. As they progress through KS2, the children develop a fluent joined handwriting style that becomes more consistent and easier read. Their stamina for writing at length also increases as they progress through the key stage. When the children have demonstrated consistently neat handwriting, they may be awarded a pen license and given a pen to use at school.

How can you support your child at home?

- Have a small selection of handwriting materials readily available at home. Soft pencils, fiber-tip pens and some sheets of scrap paper are enough for a start.
- Let handwriting play a part in your family's daily life, for example: making lists and labels, keeping a family diary, leaving notes for each other in busy households, keeping in touch with distant friends and relatives, designing and making home-made notepads and greetings cards.
- Handwriting practice doesn't always have to involve pencils and paper. Chalk, paintbrushes and water, sand, shaving foam and playdough are all great ways to develop fine motor skills and practice letter formation at home.
- If doing some focused handwriting practice, encourage your child to think about the correct letter formation. Sitting at a table when focusing on handwriting is best and encourage your child to write on a line, even if they have to draw it themselves.
- Focus on writing for enjoyment and praising effort; rather than perfection!

Additional Materials

If you would like more information about how we teach handwriting at Swallowfield, please visit our website. <https://swallowfieldlowschool.co.uk/english/> Alternatively, please speak to your child's class teacher or Miss Potter (Writing Leader).

More information about the Nelson Handwriting Scheme and how to help your child at home can also be found at <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/english/primary-handwriting/>