



Maple Primary School Handwriting Guidance

At Maple Primary School, we view handwriting as an essential foundational skill (often called *transcription*). When children learn to form letters fluently, accurately, and without strain, writing becomes second nature. Building handwriting fluency frees up mental energy so children can focus fully on *composition*—selecting rich vocabulary, crafting sentences, and structuring creative ideas. Here is what you need to know to support your child at home.

1. The '4 Ps' Before Writing Starts

Whenever your child sits down to write, help them check these four physical habits (See Appendix 1):

- **Posture:** Feet flat on the floor, sitting comfortably upright.
- **Pencil Grip:** A comfortable tripod grip (held between thumb and forefinger, resting on the middle finger).
- **Paper Position:** Angle paper slightly (slanted left for right-handers; slanted right for left-handers). Non writing arm to steady paper.
- **Pressure:** Smooth, balanced pressure—not pressing too hard into the paper.

2. Where letters sit on the line - The 3-Zone Line System (Key Stage 1) (See Appendix 2)

In Key Stage 1, we use visual guidelines (*Sky, Grass, Earth*) to help children understand letter sizes and proportions:

- **Sky Zone (Ascenders):** Tall letters with stems that stretch upwards into the sky (b, d, h, k, l, t).
- **Grass Zone (Main Body):** Short letters that sit neatly in the grass (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z).
- **Earth Zone (Descenders):** Letters with tails that drop down below the line into the earth (g, j, p, q, y).

3. School Progression & Tools

Stage	Focus	Writing Tools
EYFS (Reception)	Developing hand strength, comfortable pencil grip, and learning basic unjoined letters.	Pencils, crayons, chalk, paintbrushes.
KS1 (Years 1–2)	Forming correct letter shapes, sizing letters consistently, and sitting them correctly on lines (sky, grass, earth). Early joins start in Year 2.	Standard HB pencils.
KS2 (Years 3–6)	Developing fluent, joined handwriting, legibility, and writing stamina.	Smooth blue ink handwriting pens (pencils retained for Maths).

4. Essential Things to Remember

- **Break Letters:** In our school style, these letters are never joined to the next letter: b p g j q x y z.
- **Capitals:** Capital letters never join to lowercase letters.
- **Left-Handed Writers:** Angle paper downwards to the right and hold the pencil 1.5cm – 3cm back from the tip. This helps them see what they are writing and prevents smudging.

5. How You Can Help at Home

- **Keep it short:** 5 minutes of regular, positive daily practice is far better than long, tiring sessions.
- **Focus on praise:** Ask your child to pick their favourite, neatest letter on the page.
- **Make it fun for younger learners:** Build hand strength through playdough, tweezers, chalking outdoors, or writing in sand/rice trays.

Appendix 1

POSTURE

- 90° feet to floor
- 90° knees to chair
- 90° back to seat back
- Pencil held between thumb and forefinger
- Wrist of the writing hand supported on the table
- Non-writing arm to steady paper



PENCIL GRIP

LEFT-HANDED GRIP



High Hand Placement
(Left-handed baoid
(left-handed to avoid
smudging): 1.5 - 3 cm

RIGHT-HANDED GRIP



Standard Tip-to-Grip
(Right-handed, optimal
control): <1 cm

PAPER

Paper position for right-handed writer



Paper position for left-handed writer



Appendix 2

3-line visual guide system (Sky, Grass, Earth)

