



APPLECROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting, Presentation & Word Processing Policy

Approved: MAR26

Overview

While technology has impacted the different ways we communicate, the ability to handwrite legibly remains a vital skill in many aspects of everyday life. At Applecross Primary School, we are dedicated to preparing students for the future. An essential part of this is ensuring that every student has the ability to write fluently and legibly.

Handwriting skills, like other aspects of the writing process, develop over time. With demonstration and opportunities for practice, and with application in meaningful contexts, handwriting movement patterns are established and reinforced, becoming 'automatic' processes within the learner's control.

Children should be taught handwriting explicitly with consistent verbal prompts for letters and numbers. Teachers provide a strong handwriting model, articulating the process. Whole-class, small group, individual writing and guided writing create opportunities for specific instruction.

Rationale

If handwriting (along with other factors such as phonics and grammar) is automatic, the writer has more working memory available to focus on other aspects of writing such as creativity, the synthesis of information and attending to the needs of an audience.

"Learning handwriting can be compared to learning times tables. Just as we know that in mathematics, a good automatic knowledge of the times tables can free up the brain for higher-order thinking, the same can be said for handwriting. If it is automatic, children can concentrate on the content of what they are writing instead of focusing on correct letter formation etc. This means they are better able to generate ideas and retain information." <https://pld-literacy.org/the-importance-of-teaching-handwriting-for-cognitive-development/>

Handwriting is an essential component of the curriculum and needs to be taught explicitly. Particular emphasis needs to be given to this skill in the early years so that fluent, cursive writing is developed as soon as possible. Students in the early years should be given extensive pre-writing activities to develop their fine-motor skills.

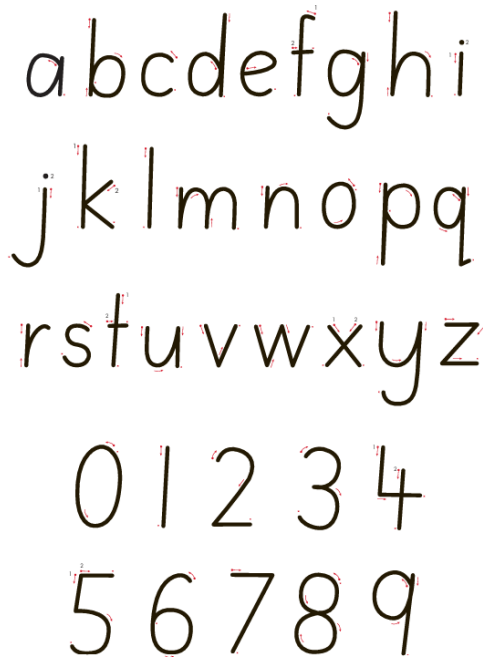
Ref: the SAGE Handbook of Writing Development by Roger Beard, Professor Debra Myhill, Dr Jeni Riley and Dr Martin Nystrand (2009)

Font

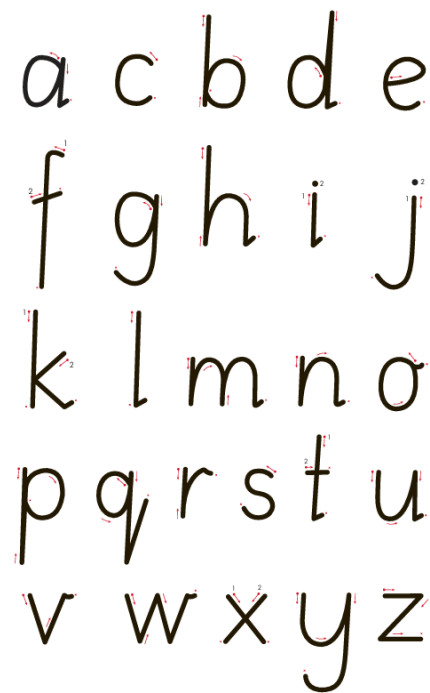
At Applecross Primary School, the South Australian (SA) font is the standard for handwriting instruction. Teachers intentionally use and demonstrate this font during handwriting lessons and model SA font when writing with students. The design of the SA font supports students in writing letters that are both easy to form and legible to others. It also offers a clear path for students as they progress from print writing to cursive as they advance through their schooling.

In the early years, the focus is on developing fine motor skills, understanding directionality (such as writing left to right and top to bottom), and learning letter formation through basic pre-writing patterns. The ergonomic design of the SA font supports natural wrist and arm movements, benefiting both right and left-handed writers. The SA font incorporates several developmental stages, allowing students to practice foundational movements in both manuscript and cursive writing. Ultimately, the goal is for students to develop their own fluent and legible handwriting style, which will serve them well throughout their lives.

APPENDIX 2C - FOUNDATION SCRIPT LETTERS AND NUMERALS



APPENDIX 2D - LETTERS WITH LINKS



Ref: [Handwriting in the South Australian Curriculum](#)

Curriculum

The Western Australian Curriculum: English requires teachers to formally teach and assess aspects of students handwriting. It recognizes the need for all students to develop a personal handwriting style that is legible, fluent, and automatic and supports writing for extended periods.

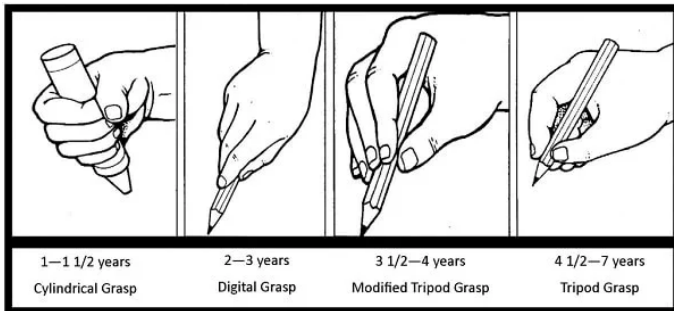
Department of Education Handwriting Guidelines (revised 2016)

Table 1: Extract from English P-10 Scope and Sequence (implementation 2025)

	Pre-Primary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Handwriting	Form most lower- and upper-case letters using learnt letter formations and correct starting points and directionality	Write words using unjoined lower- and upper-case letters	Write words legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined lower- and upper-case letters	Write words using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size	Write words using clearly formed joined letters, with developing fluency and automaticity	Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic	Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to purpose and audience

Pencil Grip

It is important to establish and reinforce a proper pencil grip as early as possible. The tripod grip is the preferred grip as it allows for proper control of the pencil, but this is not the only effective grip. It is felt that handwriting difficulties could be avoided in later years if there is an early emphasis on strong fine motor skills. The goal of a proper pencil grip is that it is stable and comfortable and can be moved with the smaller muscles of the fingers rather than the whole hand.



Ref: The Development of Appropriate Pencil Grip (PLD)

Posture

Keep your back straight, head up and lean forward slightly.
Place your feet flat on the floor.
Rest your non-writing arm on the desk.

Paper Position

Place your page directly in front of you.
Left-handed students, slightly rotate your paper clockwise.
Right-handed students, slightly rotate your paper anticlockwise.

Pencil Grip

Hold your pencil using your thumb, index finger and middle finger.
Make sure your pencil grip is not too tight.

Differentiation

Students with disabilities, learning difficulties, and/or fine motor coordination challenges are likely to have difficulties with handwriting. These students may require teaching and learning adjustments, such as:

- Alternative input devices (keyboards, switches and voice recognition software)
- Alternative writing tools (pencil grips, writing scaffolds, and templates).

Refer to Appendix 1: Accommodations for Handwriting Difficulties (DSF)

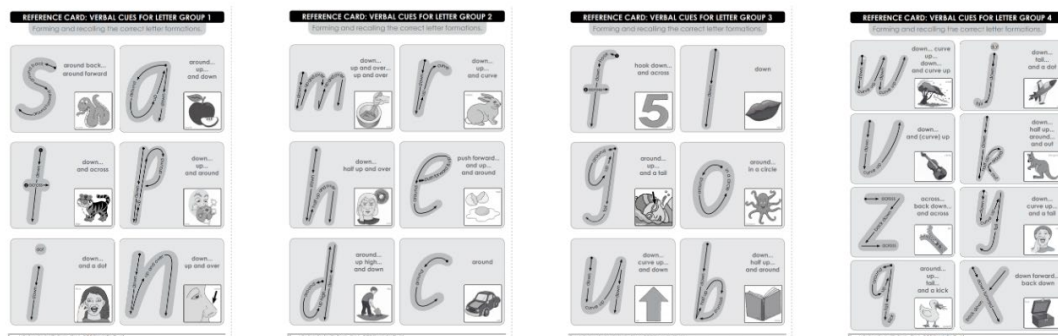
Implementation

“Researcher Dr Virginia Berninger, suggests teaching print first as it transfers better to word recognition; then introducing cursive later (in the middle primary years) as it assists in the development of speed for compositions; and finally in the upper primary years the introduction of touch-typing skills.”

[Teach Handwriting for Cognitive Development | PLD Literacy](#)

Staff will use common language linked to PLD’s Structured Synthetic Phonics approach

PLD’s Structured Synthetic Phonics approach is based on the latest research and incorporates phonics instruction with writing instruction.



OFFICIAL

Staff will be implementing the Applecross Primary School Handwriting and Presentation Policy from the commencement of Semester 1, 2026. SA font will be taught across the school from 2026 onwards with teachers understanding that students will likely use a combination of the previously taught Victorian Modern Cursive font and SA font as they transition. Students in Year 3 and beyond who move schools, having already established an effective handwriting style, are not required to change that style.

	Kindy	Pre-Primary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
SCS A		Form most lower- and upper-case letters using learnt letter formations and correct starting points and directionality	Write words using unjoined lower- and upper-case letters	Write words legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined lower- and upper-case letters	Write words using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size	Write words using clearly formed joined letters, with developing fluency and automaticity	Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic	Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to purpose and audience
Lesson	Pre-writing strokes. Intro to individual letter and number formation writing.	Explicitly teach lessons at least two times a week. Consistent prompting formations for both letters and numbers.	Explicitly teach lessons at least twice a week. Consistent prompting formations for both letters and numbers. Repeated practice within textbook. Regular, embedded assessment opportunities within the textbook.		Demonstration of the letter/join concept on each page within textbook. Students work independently, with over the shoulder marking to ensure quality. Regular, embedded assessment opportunities within the textbook.		Beginning to develop a personal style. No textbook on student book list.	
Lines	Blank paper, tracing, whiteboards	Blank and lined paper in Term 1. 24mm dotted thirds from Term 2.	Semester 1: 24mm Semester 2: 18mm	18mm	14mm dotted thirds Grid book in Maths	8-9mm lined book for writing 9mm dotted thirds for spelling Grid book in Maths		
Writing tools	Book list??	Students use triangular grip pencils. They cross out mistakes, erasers only used on vary rare occasions.	Write in pencil. Corrections are erased or crossed-out if no eraser.		Write in pencil, occasionally pen for some students. Maths is always in pencil. Corrections are erased or crossed-out if no eraser.		Only pencil, blue or black pen. Cross out word if writing in pen, erase if pencil. Cross out no matter pen or pencil Year 6 students write with pen from Term 1 If year 6's are going to start the year with pens we can do the same from Term 4.	
Fine motor	Fine motor activities involving pincer grip: - tongs - pegs - cutting - tracing - open and close	Fine motor activities incorporated throughout the week across subject areas.					Students required to cut and glue their own work. A mix of digital and hard copy presentation tasks. Assignment Presentation Skills – Cutting and assembling a poster one per semester	



Book Work Expectations

Year 1-2

One line

12/2 Title
 When we do work in our books, we use our best handwriting and use the whole line.

In between each paragraph, we leave an empty line.

13/2 Second Title
 If we only use half of a page, we will rule off and start our work underneath.

We take pride in our work and don't scribble. If we make a mistake, we put a line through it or rub it out. Any words we are unsure of, we underline.

All work has a title and date

Rule off instead of starting a new page

No scribbles or drawings

Work glued in neatly



Book Work Expectations

Year 3-6

Two lines

12/2 Title
 When we do work in our books, we use our best handwriting and use the whole line.

In between each paragraph, we leave an empty line.

13/2 Second Title
 If we only use half of a page, we will rule off and start our work underneath.

We take pride in our work and don't scribble. If we make a mistake, we put a line through it or rub it out. Any words we are unsure of, we underline.

All work has a title and date

Rule off instead of starting a new page

No scribbles or drawings

Work glued in neatly

Word Processing Skills

All learning areas within the WA Curriculum refer to many opportunities for the application of ICT skills. From an early age students should be supported to develop word processing skills with the English curriculum aiming for students to use a range of software applications to construct and edit print and multimodal texts.

Table 2: Extract from English P-10 Scope and Sequence (implementation from 2025)

	Pre-Primary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Text structure, organisation and features	Explore conventions of print and screen, including how books and simple digital texts are usually organised	Explore how print and digital texts are organised using features, such as page numbers, table of contents, headings and titles, navigation buttons, swipe screens, verbal commands, links and images	Navigate print and digital texts using chapters, table of contents, indexes, sidebar menus, drop-down menus or links	Identify the purpose of layout features in print and digital texts, and the words and symbols used for navigation	Identify text navigation features of print and digital texts that enhance readability, including headlines, drop-down menus, links, graphics and layout	No content	No content
Creating Texts	Explore the use of digital tools to create or add to a visual or spoken text	Explore features of familiar digital tools to create or add to texts	Use features of digital tools to create or add to texts	Use features of digital tools to create or add to texts for a purpose	Use features of digital tools to create or add to texts for a variety of purposes	Use features of digital tools to create or add to texts for a purpose and audience	Select and use features of digital tools to create or add to texts for a purpose and audience

Table 3: Suggested teaching and learning opportunities during lessons within the Computer Lab

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Word	Login to computer Open Microsoft Word Type simple words and sentences Save document with support	Paragraphs in writing Format font: size, colour, align, font type Use bold, italics and underline Insert shape and fill colour Cut and paste images Save documents and retrieve files from documents	Paragraphs formatting: line spacing, alignment on page Adjust font style Use highlighting tool Use spell-check and editing tools Inserting images and resizing Saving on shared device (iPad)	Use document templates correctly Page layout: headers, footers & margins Create structured documents: titles and headings	Track changes and comments for peer editing Using smart art, icons and shapes for visual explanations Use themes and styles for document consistency	Table of contents and automatic numbering Inserting tables and charts Captions on images/charts/tables/etc. Saving documents to PDF for publishing and sharing
PowerPoint	Open PowerPoint and create a new presentation Add and type on a single slide Insert simple clipart/pictures Use large, clear font and colours Save with teacher support	Create a multi-slide presentation (2-3 slides) Add titles and basic text boxes Insert and resize clipart/pictures Apply a simple design theme Practice presenting to peers with support	Structure a presentation with a clear beginning, middle and end Add slide layouts (title, contents, etc) Insert shapes and WordArt for headings Use transitions between slides Save and retrieve files	Use templates and themes consistently Add images, diagrams and captions Insert and format simple charts/tables Record basic narration or add speaker notes Experiment with animation with support	Collaborate on shared presentations Use hyperlinks Insert audio/video into slides Evaluate the effectiveness or design (contrast and readability)	Use slide master for consistent designs Insert SmartArt to organise ideas visually Integrate excel charts Customise animations and transitions for purpose Export presentations as PDF or video Deliver polished oral presentation with confidence

Suggested programs to support the development of touch typing include:

- BBC touch typing program
- Typing.com
- Type club

Next Review: MAR27