



PENPOL SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

Signed by:

_____ **Head Teacher** **Date:** _____

_____ **Chair of Governors** **Date:** _____

Designed: September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

Introduction

At Penpol School, we recognise the importance of teaching our children to develop a neat, legible and speedy handwriting style. We place particular emphasis on a consistent cursive, joined-up approach, using *Letter-join* as the basis for our teaching. This programme supports all the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum.

Despite the increasing use of digital tools for writing, we firmly believe that handwriting remains a vital skill. It influences not only the presentation and clarity of pupils' work but also their confidence and fluency across the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should be able to produce fluent, legible and increasingly rapid joined-up handwriting. They should also understand when to use different handwriting styles, such as cursive, printed or capital letters depending on purpose and context.

Our goal is to make handwriting an automatic process that supports, rather than interferes with, a child's ability to express their thoughts clearly and creatively.

Our Approach – Informed by Research and Best Practice

Our handwriting curriculum is shaped by educational research and national guidance.

We align our teaching with evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which states:

"If children have to concentrate to ensure their handwriting and spelling is accurate, they will be less able to think about the content of their writing. Gaining automaticity with both requires explicit teaching, extensive practice and effective feedback."

In line with the DfE Writing Framework 2025, our approach is explicit, cumulative and engaging, helping children gain confidence and satisfaction as they progress. The framework highlights:

"Pupils can gain great satisfaction and pleasure in learning how to write if the teaching is explicit, cumulative and engaging."

It also notes:

"Gaining a new skill becomes a source of pride, in the same way as learning to play a musical instrument."

"A key objective, therefore, is for pupils to achieve automaticity in handwriting."

We also support the view that children should not be required to write independently before they have the necessary skills, as this can confuse and discourage them. Instead, we provide clear

instruction, modelling and guided practice to help them succeed by following the EEF The 'Five-a-day' principle: High quality teaching benefits pupils with SEND.

Aims

At Penpol School, we aim for our pupils to:

- Develop a neat, legible and fluent handwriting style using continuous cursive letters.
- Achieve automaticity in handwriting, enabling them to focus on the content of their writing.
- Understand the importance of presentation, and how different letterforms (e.g. cursive, printed, capital letters) support communication.
- Experience coherence and continuity in handwriting instruction from Reception through to Year 6.
- Take pride and enjoyment in their handwriting, building a solid foundation for broader literacy development.

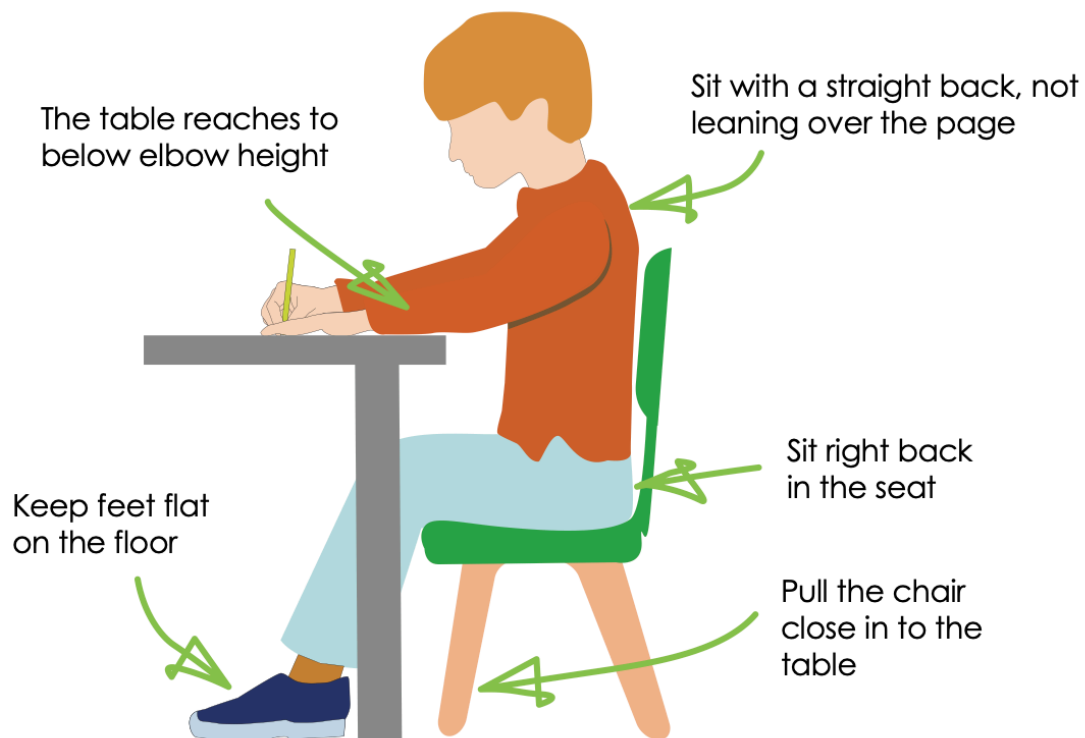
Letter Formation

- Children will be taught using the Read Write Inc rhymes to form lower case letters from foundation stage onwards (see Appendix 4)
- Once children are ready to join letters, children will be taught to join using Letter-join (see Appendix 1)
- Capital letters will not be joined (see Appendix 2)

Correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

Children should be taught to sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly. The Handwriting Song can support this (see Appendix 3).

SITTING POSITION



The Tripod Pencil Grip

Both right and left handed children should be encouraged to use the tripod grip which allows the pen/pencil to be held securely whilst allowing controlled movements of the pen/pencil nib.

- 1) Nip - Nip the pencil with your index finger and thumb with the nib pointing towards you.
- 2) Flip - With your free hand, flip the pencil from underneath.
- 3) Grip - Use your middle finger to support the underside of the pencil.

Teaching Time

Daily practice is necessary until letter formation is accurate. In EYFS and KS1, pupils need explicit handwriting teaching in addition to the writing they do in phonics lessons. Handwriting is a cross-curriculum task and will be taken into consideration during all lessons. Formal teaching of handwriting is to be carried out regularly and systematically through the Letter-join scheme to ensure Key Stage targets are met. Year 2 and across Key Stage 2, pupils also use 'Bubble Writing' as a handwriting scaffold at the start of lessons across the curriculum (see appendix 7). This provides regular handwriting practice and reinforces high expectations for presentation and letter formation.

Handwriting Requirements and the National Curriculum

In line with the National Curriculum and the DfE Writing Framework 2025, handwriting at Penpol School is taught precisely and progressively, following a clearly sequenced progression from Reception through to Year 6. Pupils are gradually guided through each stage of handwriting development, ensuring they acquire the necessary skills in a structured, supportive and engaging way. This includes the explicit teaching of both letter formation (controlling the size, speed and direction) and the physical elements of writing (correct pencil grip, body posture and paper positioning).

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In Reception, pupils are taught to:

- Engage in frequent handwriting practice in a playful and purposeful context.
- Sit correctly at the table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly by using the handwriting song (see appendix 3).
- Develop fine motor control and a tripod pencil grip through daily activities.
- Produce controlled straight lines to support early letter formation.
- Write letters a–z and digits 0–9, using correct movement sequences linked to RWI letter formation rhymes (see appendix 4).
- Begin to write their own name independently.
- Recognise and group letters into shape families (see Appendix 5).

Year 1

Pupils are taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, with feet flat on the floor, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly by using the handwriting song (see appendix 3).
- Begin forming lower-case letters in the correct direction, using the appropriate start and end points as guided by RWI rhymes (see Appendix 3).
- Leave appropriate spacing between words.
- Form capital letters (see Appendix 2).
- Form digits 0–9.
- Recognise and practise letter families—groups of letters with similar formations (see Appendix 5).
- Begin to join letters using the *Letter-join* scheme (see Appendix 1).

Year 2

Pupils are taught to:

- Write legibly using correctly joined upper and lower-case letters (see Appendix 1 and 2).

- Ensure letters sit on the baseline and maintain consistent sizing, with accurate use of ascenders and descenders.
- Leave clear spacing between words and form numerals consistently.
- Use capital letters appropriately and form printed letters where necessary.
- Begin to develop automaticity in handwriting, supporting creative and independent writing.

Key Stage 2 Progression

Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to refine their handwriting through focused teaching that develops quality, speed and stamina:

Quality

- Letters are consistently sized, with even word spacing.
- Ascenders and descenders are parallel and do not touch lines above or below.

Speed

- Pupils improve their writing speed, enabling ideas to flow more freely during extended writing.
- They learn to take quick notes where appropriate.

Stamina

- Pupils develop the physical endurance and motor control to write for extended periods without fatigue.

In addition, pupils gain full awareness of when to use different handwriting styles for different purposes:

- Neat, cursive handwriting for extended writing tasks, stories and letters.
- Printed or capital letters for posters, labels, headings and form-filling.
- Fast, functional handwriting or shorthand for note-taking and dictation.

Year 3 and Year 4

- Pupils use joined, cursive handwriting consistently across independent work.
- Handwriting continues to be taught explicitly to improve fluency, which supports spelling and composition.
- Pupils develop increasing confidence and ease in transcribing their ideas efficiently.

Year 5 and Year 6

- Pupils write legibly, fluently, and with increasing speed.
- They begin to make decisions about personal style, including:
 - Which letter shapes to use when given a choice.
 - Whether or not to join specific letters for clarity or speed.

- Pupils choose the most appropriate writing implement for a given task (e.g. pencil for note-taking, pen for final drafts).

Assessment and Intervention

At Penpol School, we recognise that handwriting is not just a physical skill, but a key contributor to a child's academic progress, self-esteem and confidence. As such, careful assessment and timely intervention are essential to ensure every pupil makes progress and feels successful.

Ongoing Assessment

- Handwriting is assessed regularly, primarily during discrete handwriting sessions and also through pupils' written work across the curriculum.
- Teachers carefully observe pupils during lessons to identify errors in letter formation and provide timely support.
- Verbal feedback is given regularly and teachers will intervene when necessary to model correct formation and address misconceptions.
- Where needed, written models and scaffolds are provided to reinforce expectations and support independent improvement.
- Reception and KS1 monitor children's letter formation and pencil grip by using our Handwriting Letter Formation Assessment grid (see Appendix 8).
- Assessment is recorded using the Sonar Assessment Tracker, enabling staff to track progress across the year and identify pupils who may require additional support.

Teaching Consolidation

Before progressing to new handwriting joins, styles or expectations, teachers must ensure that children have consolidated prior learning. This includes:

- Secure letter formation.
- Consistent sizing, spacing and alignment.
- Confident use of joins introduced at each stage.

Teachers should avoid moving on too quickly and must ensure that pupils are secure in their current stage of handwriting before introducing new content. This ensures a strong foundation and prevents gaps in fluency or confidence.

Targeted Intervention

For pupils who need further support with handwriting, additional handwriting sessions may be delivered using:

- *Read Write Inc.* formation rhymes (especially for early writers).
- The *Letter-join Recovery Programme* for pupils who have fallen behind or need targeted support.

Teachers will identify the most appropriate resources and strategies to help each child succeed, which may include:

- The *Letter-join* app (accessible in school and at home).
- Pencil grips or thicker pencils to support fine motor development.
- Cushions, sloped writing surfaces or posture aids to improve writing stamina.
- Coloured line guides or writing overlays to support spatial awareness and line placement.
- Bubble Writing templates

These interventions are planned and reviewed regularly to ensure they are having the intended impact and that pupils are making measurable progress toward achieving fluency and confidence in their handwriting.

Inclusion

At Penpol School, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils are supported to become fluent, legible and confident writers, regardless of their individual needs. We recognise that handwriting can and should be an inclusive experience, and we make adaptations wherever necessary to ensure every child can succeed.

Whole-class handwriting teaching allows all pupils to benefit from explicit instruction and modelling, while also allowing time for targeted support for individuals or small groups during practice time.

The Importance of Supervised Practice

"Practice without supervision can hinder a pupil's ability to build a strong mental model of the movement patterns that underpin letter formation." (DfE Writing Framework 2025)

At Penpol, we believe that guided and supervised practice is essential, particularly for younger learners and those who need additional support. Pupils are given close feedback and correction during handwriting time to ensure they are reinforcing accurate patterns and developing effective muscle memory for fluent writing.

Supporting All Learners

While the vast majority of children will be able to develop fluent, legible handwriting through high-quality teaching and consistent practice, some pupils may need more tailored support.

Teachers are responsible for identifying children who may require additional help and should liaise with the SENDCO when handwriting is affected by fine or gross motor skill difficulties or other physical or developmental needs.

Adaptations may include:

- Adjusting seating, lighting, and table angles.
- Providing specialist resources such as:
 - Pencil grips
 - Slanted writing boards or cushions
 - Thicker pencils
 - Coloured line guides
- The Letter-join app (for visual reinforcement)
- Implementing programmes such as the Letter-join Recovery Programme.
- Seeking advice from Occupational Therapists or external professionals where appropriate.

Supporting Left-Handed Pupils

Left-handed children may require specific guidance and adjustments to ensure they make the same progress as their peers. We will ensure:

- Teachers are aware that modelling letter formation as a right-handed adult can be difficult for left-handed children to mirror. Left-handed pupils may need individual or group demonstrations using mirrored or side-by-side modelling.
- Paper is positioned to the far right and slanted appropriately to suit the child's needs.
- Left-handed children are seated to the left of right-handed peers to avoid competition for space.
- Extra supervision and practice time is provided to monitor progress and offer support as needed.
- Pupils are encouraged to keep their writing hand below the line they are writing on, to avoid smudging and maintain clarity.

Supporting Pupils with Physical Disabilities

Children with physical disabilities may require specialist support or adjustments to enable them to develop handwriting skills:

- Additional support to build gross and fine motor strength will be provided as appropriate.
- Tools such as pencil grips, writing slopes, cushions or visual guides will be offered to improve comfort and positioning.
- Advice from the Occupational Therapist will be sought to tailor provision and ensure each child's physical needs are fully supported.

By embedding inclusive practices into our handwriting provision, Penpol School ensures that every child has the opportunity to succeed, experience pride in their progress and develop essential writing skills that support learning across the curriculum.

Expectation for Teaching, Modelling and Consistency

At Penpol School, we are committed to maintain high standards of handwriting and presentation across all year groups and throughout the curriculum. These expectations apply not only during handwriting lessons but also across all writing tasks and subject areas.

High Expectations Across the Curriculum

In line with the DfE Writing Framework 2025, teachers should ensure that:

"Pupils practise handwriting regularly and consistently throughout primary school to develop and maintain fluency and legibility."

Teachers are expected to:

- Ensure that pupils practise handwriting regularly, as part of both discrete sessions and through cross-curricular writing tasks.
- Expect consistently high standards of handwriting and presentation in all pupils' work, across all subjects.
- Support pupils to develop fluency and legibility, adapting support and expectations as needed to match their stage of development.

Teacher Modelling

The teacher's own handwriting is a powerful model for pupils. Therefore, teachers' handwriting must be of a consistently high standard across all work presented to pupils, including:

- Modelling letter formation during handwriting instruction.
- Writing on the board, flip charts, visualisers displays and posters.
- Writing in children's books, whether during marking, feedback or example writing.
- Modelling the correct formation, size, spacing and alignment of letters in all settings.
- Modelling of handwriting should be explicit and consistent, throughout the curriculum.

Pupil Presentation and Book Expectations

The quality of handwriting in all pupil books must reflect the high standards expected at Penpol School. Teachers should not accept anything less than the best of each child's ability and pupils should be regularly reminded of these expectations.

The Book Expectations, outlined clearly at the front of every pupil's book, serve as a shared reference for both pupils and staff to maintain consistency and pride in presentation. These expectations are:

- I will present my work neatly, using my best handwriting, accurate spelling and correct sentence structure and punctuation.

- I will keep my book tidy by sticking work in neatly, crossing out mistakes with one straight line and keeping pages doodle-free.
- I will use classroom resources and my prior knowledge to support my learning.
- I will apply new vocabulary from the vocabulary wall in my learning.
- I will edit my work with a purple polishing pen and self-assess each lesson against the success criteria.

Pupils are expected to take pride in their work, understanding that presentation reflects effort and attention to detail. Pupils should experience coherence and continuity in handwriting teaching and expectations across all year groups. Regular opportunities for feedback and improvement in handwriting are built into the curriculum, promoting a sense of achievement and personal pride.

Celebrating Handwriting

In our classrooms, we aim to foster a culture that celebrates individual progress and achievement at Penpol School. A high emphasis is placed upon high standards of presentation. As a result, achievement and progress in handwriting are actively celebrated. Excellent examples of handwriting are displayed in classrooms in ways chosen by individual teachers. Pupils are praised and rewarded for example, through Class Dojo points, stickers, stamps etc. This ensures children are recognised for their effort and improvements. Teachers also use visualisers to share and celebrate neat handwriting within the classroom. Handwriting is further celebrated through English Whole Class Marking sheets and during lessons, providing pupils with ongoing encouragement and recognition. In our classrooms, we want teachers to develop a culture that celebrates individuals progress and achievement.

Handwriting at Home

As a catalyst to speedy handwriting, we encourage parents and carers to use the RWI handwriting rhymes and/ or the Letter-join resources at home. Children have access to the Home Edition of Letter-join.

Appendix 1 – Cursive alphabet letter formation (lower case)

a b c d e f

g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

Appendix 2 – Cursive alphabet letter formation (upper case)

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

Our Handwriting Song

1 2 3 4
Are my feet flat
on the floor?

5 6 7 8
My chair is in, my
back is straight



9 10 11 12
This is how my
pencil's held (nip,
flip, grip)

13 14 15 16
Now I'm ready for my writing!



Appendix 4 - Read Write Inc rhymes to form lower case letters



Maisie, mountain, mountain



Around the apple and down the leaf



Slither down the snake



Around the dinosaurs bottom and up to his neck



Down the tower, across the tower



Down the insects body and a dot for his head.



Down Nobby and over his net



Down the pirates plait and around the pirates face



Round the girls face, down her hair and give her a curl



All around the orange



Curl around the caterpillar



Down the kangaroo's body curl his tail and leg



Down and under the umbrella, up to the top and down to the puddle



Down the laces, over the toe and to the heel



Down the stem and draw the leaves



Slice into the egg, go over the top, then under the egg.



Down the long leg



Down the horse's head to his hooves and over his back



sh says the horse to the hissing snake



Down his back then curl over his arm



Down his body curl and dot



Down the wing up the wing



Down a horn, up a horn and under the yak's head



Down up, down up



The princess in the tower is saved by the horse, thank you!



Zig, zag, zig



The horse sneezes when the caterpillar's hairs get up his nose
ch-ch-choo



The queen never goes out without her umbrella



Down the arm and leg, repeat the other side



Thing on a string

Appendix 5 – Read Write Inc. groups of letters (special friends from RWI)



nk

I think I stink

ay



May I play?



ee

What can you see?

igh



Fly high

ow



Blow the snow

oo



Poo at the zoo

oo



Look at a book

ar



Start the car

or



Shut the door

air



That's not fair

ir



Whirl and twirl

ou



Shout it out

oy



Toy from a boy

ea



Cup of tea

oi



Spoil the boy

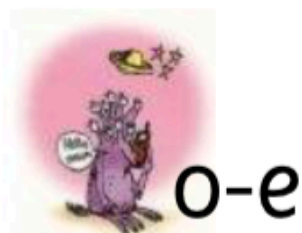
Appendix 5 – Read Write Inc. groups of letters (special friends from RWI)



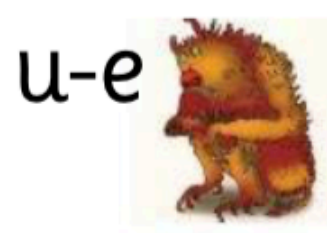
Make a cake



Nice smile



Phone home



Huge brute



Yawn at dawn



Nurse with a purse



A better letter



Brown cow



Snail in the rain



Goat in a boat



Chew and stew



Fire fire



Hear with your ear



Sure it's pure

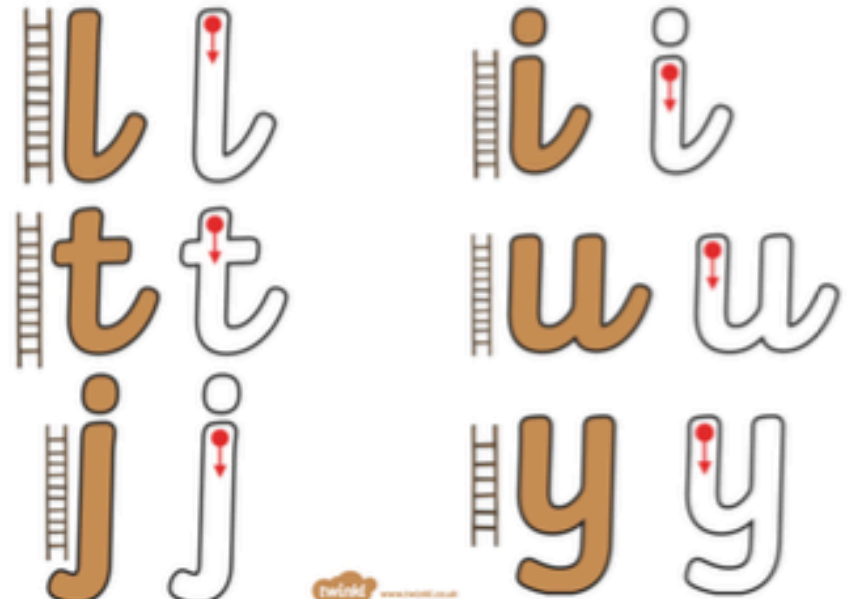


Care and share

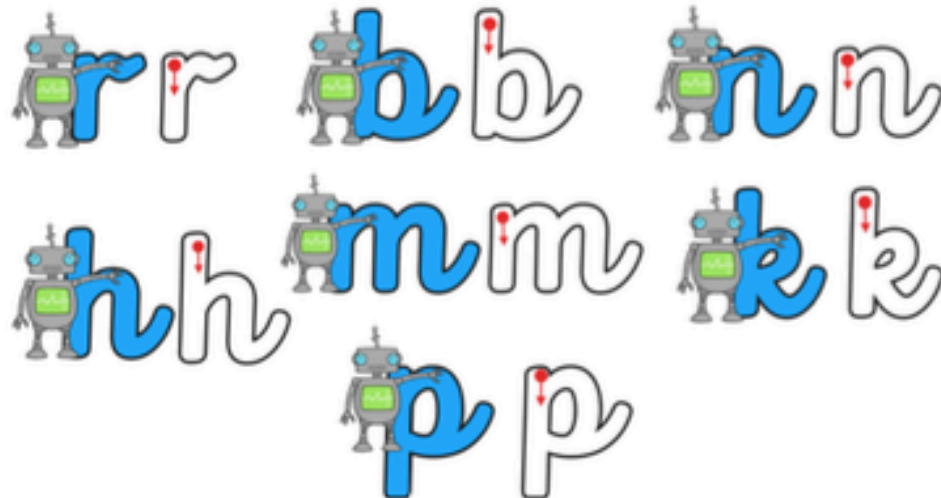
Curly Caterpillar Letters



Ladder Letters



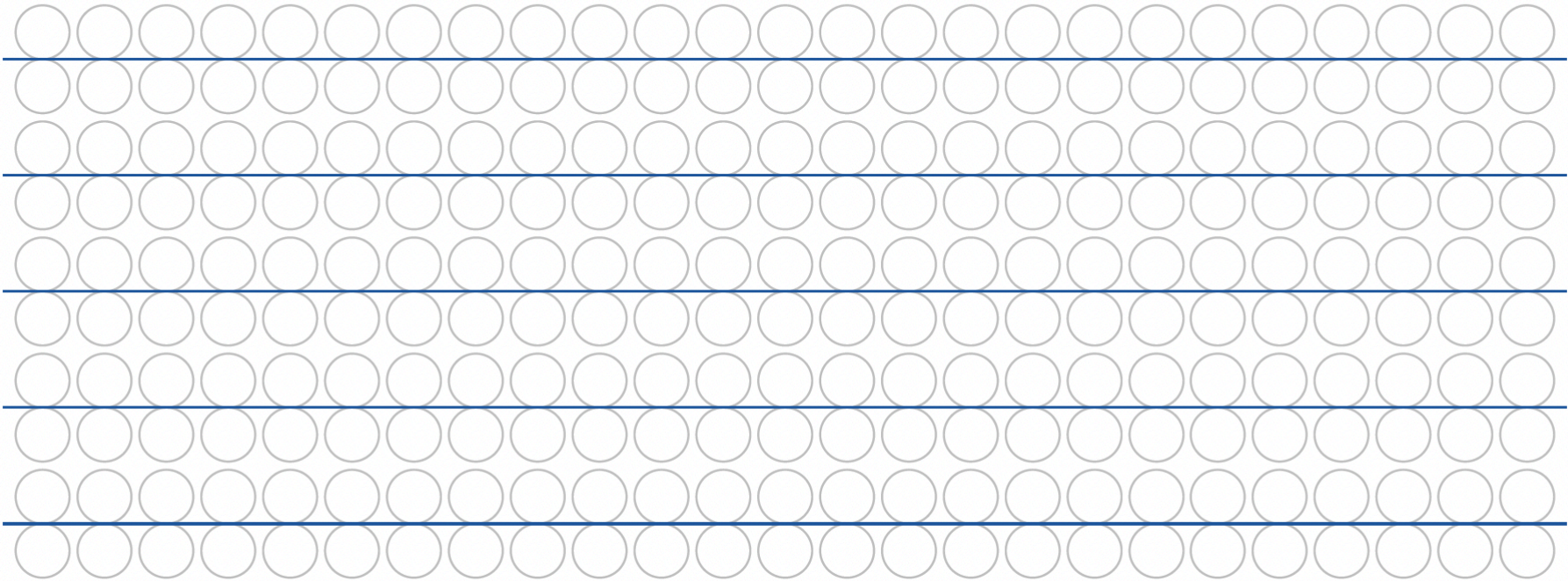
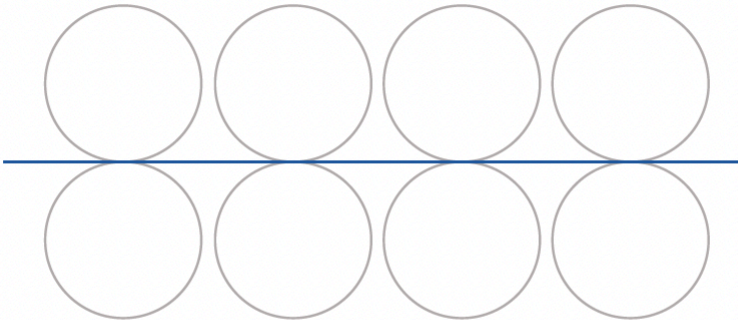
One-Armed Robot Letters



Zigzag Monster Letters



Appendix 7 – Bubble Writing

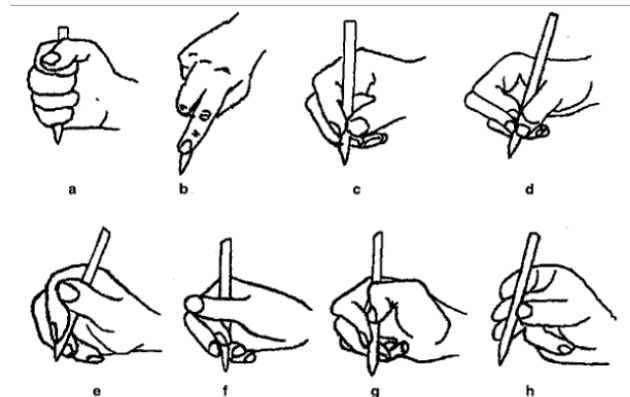


Appendix 8 – Handwriting Letter Formation Assessment

Handwriting Letter Formation Assessment |

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Left handed



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