



NORTH WOODVALE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handwriting Policy

Handwriting Policy

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PHILOSOPHY

Handwriting is a skill which, like reading and spelling, affects written communication across the curriculum. The Western Australian Curriculum states that students must produce *legible, correctly formed letters by hand or with the assistance of writing tools, for example, pencil grip or assistive technology.*

Children must be able to write with ease, speed and legibility. Cursive handwriting teaches pupils to join letters and words as a series of flowing movements and patterns. Handwriting skills should be taught regularly and systematically.

North Woodvale Primary School is committed to students developing a personalised, fluent and legible handwriting style that enables them to communicate effectively when writing for different purposes.

The main stages in teaching children handwriting at primary school generally are:

Knowledge

Learners will become aware that:

- print conveys a message
- handwriting is one of a number of skills used in the writing process
- various handwriting styles can be produced with similar techniques
- the purpose and audience for writing influence the style and layout used
- pen lifts have specific functions
- letters can be described using such terms as bodies, heads and tails.

Attitudes

Learners will be supported to develop:

- a positive attitude towards themselves and their handwriting
- the desire to experiment with various handwriting styles, and to develop a personal style
- a willingness to accept responsibility for their own written material.

Skills and Abilities

Learners will develop:

- hand–eye coordination
- fine motor control
- correct letter shapes by following the suggested sequence of movement
- consistent size, slope, spacing, proportion and alignment of letters
- appropriate use of pen lifts
- a relaxed technique
- legible handwriting, even at speed
- strategies to assess their own technique and style.

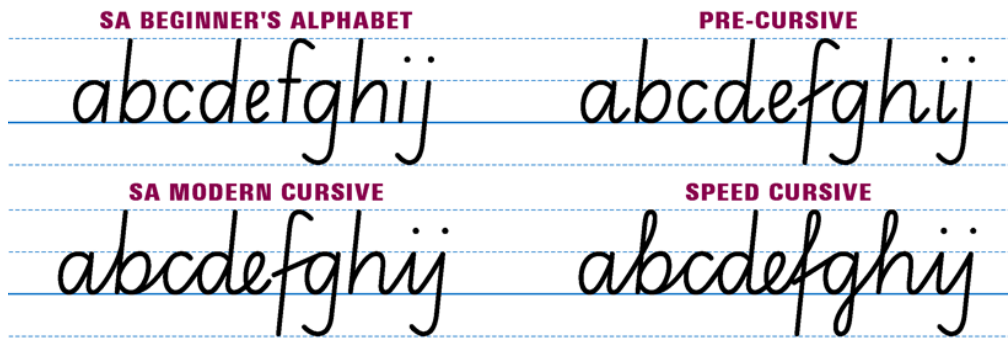
Handwriting skills, like other aspects of the writing process, develop over time. With demonstration and opportunities for practice, and with application in meaningful contexts, handwriting movement patterns are established and reinforced, becoming 'automatic' processes within the learner's control.

Children should be taught handwriting explicitly. During modelled whole-class and shared writing the teacher provides a strong handwriting model, articulating the process. Small group, individual writing and guided writing creates opportunities for specific instruction.

Letter Formation

Teaching correct letter formation involves providing learners with opportunities to talk about the names and features of letters and the sounds they represent. This enhances letter recognition in texts, on computer keyboards and in the environment. When learners practise forming letters, they develop a visual and motor memory of their important features. Looking at the letters and undertaking the movement of writing then helps learners see and feel how each letter is formed, fixing the letter in the learner's visual memory for future identification and reproduction.

BACKGROUND



SABeginnersBold

0123456789

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

TUVWXYZ

North Woodvale Primary School uses the South Australian Font to explicitly teach letter formation developmentally over each Phase of Learning.

Kindergarten to Year 1 students learn a foundation style of handwriting using the South Australian Beginners Font. In Year 2, students will be introduced to the South Australian Pre-Cursive font and from Year 3 onwards, South Australian Modern Cursive is taught. Students learn how to join letters to form a cursive script.

Kindy to Year 6 teachers are encouraged to demonstrate, foster and reinforce the skills, understandings and behaviours that assist students in developing fluent, legible handwriting through the presentation of handwriting lessons on a regular basis.

Lessons should be regular and tailored towards the specific learning needs of students.

Students need to be taught:

- appropriate pencil grip
- correct letter formations
- starting and finishing points
- the correct direction to move in
- the number of strokes involved in producing a letter
- size and spacing of letters.

Students can be shown how letter shapes can be joined, once basic letter shapes and letter sequences have become automatic, to the point of legibility and fluency.

Speed loops can be introduced once students can correctly join letters.

Students may be encouraged to personalise South Australia Modern Cursive once they have a well-developed standard form of handwriting (usually during the middle years of schooling).

Incoming students

Students in Year 3 and beyond who move schools, having already established an effective handwriting style, are not required to change that style. This may include students from overseas.

Students with difficulties

Students with disabilities, learning difficulties and motor coordination issues are likely to also 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)

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Western Australian Curriculum Handwriting from SCASA							
	Pre-Primary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Handwriting Developing a fluent, legible handwriting style, beginning with unjoined letters and moving to joined handwriting	Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations	Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters	Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower case letters	Write using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size	Write using clearly- formed joined letters, and develop increased 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 audience and purpose

KINDERGARTEN

Students beginning Kindergarten will include some children who can draw objects and a few who can copy or even write their own names. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some may appear to have rarely used a pencil. Those who have not had the experience will need many opportunities to engage in manipulative activities to develop the co-ordination of hand and eye before handwriting instruction begins.

Children show their readiness to be taught how to form letters correctly through their physical dexterity, their efforts to copy on their own, and by their enthusiasm to write or through asking for assistance.

- No formal instruction
- Pre-Writing activities following the Letters and Sounds scope and sequence.
- Develop fine motor skills with activities involving pincer grip etc.
 - using tongs
 - pouring
 - open/closing fasteners
 - cutting
 - hand control/pencil grip
 - direction
 - copying/tracing/writing own name

PRE-PRIMARY /YEAR 1 /YEAR 2

The first objectives should be to help children to establish the correct grip, to begin letters at the correct point and to form letters and numerals correctly.

- Numeral formation 1-10.
- Order of letter introduction as per the Letters and Sounds scope and sequence.

Individual help during lessons so the possibility that children practise errors, can be avoided.

Lesson format

A typical handwriting lesson for the children includes exercises to practise handwriting movements, instruction in and practise of specific letters, and application of the letters taught. Several explicit lessons a week should be incorporated in the weekly programme.

Exercises

To assist the children; simple exercises which practise the movements for letters, especially in the early stages. The four main purposes of exercises are to help children to:

- Develop manipulative skill and control
- Learn to copy simple shapes
- Practise movements on which letters are based
- Develop visual discrimination

Verbalising

In regard to handwriting, verbalising means, the children watch and listen as the teacher models the letter and describes the movements, using such language as “Start at the top, down to the line, up, over, down, stop.” The children then repeat the directions aloud as they practise the letter in the air, on paper, etc. As their confidence grows, they can assist in describing the sequence of movements, including reference to the starting point, direction of stroke, and stopping point.

Immediate feedback and correction in a supportive manner is important so that children do not fix incorrect forms in their minds by repeating them.

Capital letters

Teaching of the capital letters is usually left until children are able to write most of the lower-case letters from memory with reasonable accuracy.

Western Australian Curriculum – Handwriting Overview		
<i>Developing a fluent, legible handwriting style, beginning with unjoined letters and moving to joined handwriting</i>		
Pre-Primary	Year 1	Year 2
<i>Produce some lower-case and upper-case letters using learned letter formations</i>	<i>Write using unjoined lower-case and upper-case letters</i>	<i>Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower-case letters</i>
Attempts to use correct pencil grip	Demonstrates consistent formation of letters and numerals	Uses correct letter formation in lower and upper case
Establishes hand preference	Leaves spaces between words and letters	Uses correct formation on numerals
Practises correct letter formation	Writes on lines	Places letters correctly in relation to the line
Writes left to write		Starts to use kicks in pre-cursive font
		Produces neat, legible writing with consistent size/shape of letters and space between words

YEARS 3 - 4 – BEGINNERS CURSIVE

The main objective in Years 3 (introduction) and 4 is to teach the children and provide opportunities both formal and informal to practise linking words and the linking rules associated with the SA Modern Cursive by the addition of **links**.

Although some children may begin to link letters independently, it is important to teach the children the correct way to join letters to one another, these 'links' are the basis on which fluency and speed are built. One formal handwriting lesson a week with a focus of one letter per session.

Western Australian Curriculum – Handwriting Overview	
Developing a fluent, legible handwriting style, beginning with unjoined letters and moving to joined handwriting	
Year 3	Year 4
<i>Write using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size</i>	<i>Write using clearly- formed joined letters, and develop increased fluency and automaticity</i>
Forms letters of the alphabet and numerals correctly and appropriately	Writes using consistent shape, size, slope and formation of letters
Uses lower and upper-case letters of consistent size and formation	Links letters when writing
Begins to use linked script	Uses correct pencil grip and maintains correct body position
Uses relaxed posture and maintains finger movements and arm slide during cursive script patterns	

YEARS 5 - 6

By Year 6 a majority of children are able to form letters correctly and the objectives for handwriting, inclusive not only for specific lessons but for all written work, are to:

- Continue to assist children develop an individual style
- Assist the children to adapt handwriting, eg speed, fluency and endurance, to suit the nature/purpose of the work whilst maintaining the legibility.

Western Australian Curriculum – Handwriting Overview	
Developing a fluent, legible handwriting style, beginning with unjoined letters and moving to joined handwriting	
Year 5	Year 6
<i>Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic</i>	<i>Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to audience and purpose</i>
Maintains existing style, developing consistency, fluency and legibility	Maintains existing style, developing consistency, fluency, legibility and automaticity
Experiments with different writing instruments, surfaces and styles to note the effects of writing with speed.	Experiments with different writing instruments, surfaces and styles to note the effects of writing with speed.
	Practises note-taking at speed (eg telephone messages, recorded interviews)

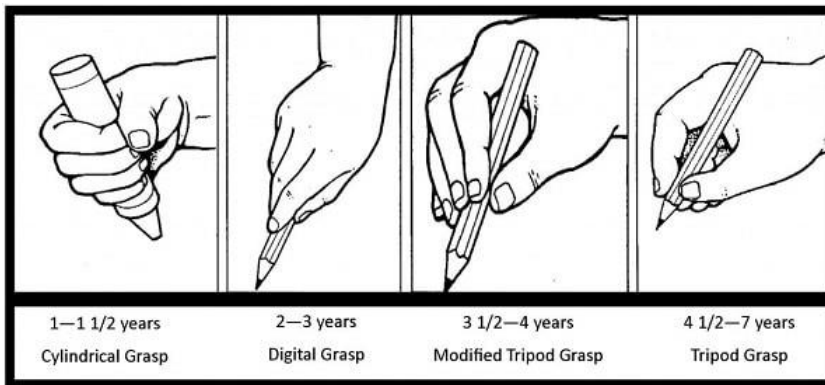
TECHNIQUES AND STYLES

'Technique' refers to the hold of the handwriting instrument, the position of the paper and body, and the actual handwriting movement. 'Style' refers to the manner in which letters (or numerals) are formed and linked together to make words (or numbers).

Suggested methods for holding the pencil

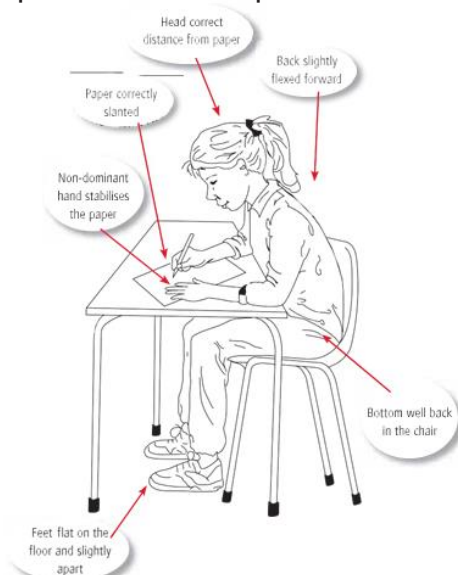
One of the most important decisions affecting the success of a handwriting program is the extent to which learners are taught and encouraged to develop basic techniques.

The tripod grip (see illustration) is the preferred grip but there may be developmental stages as learners move towards its achievement.



Explicit instruction of handwriting movements

The handwriting movement is a combined finger, hand and arm movement. The arm should be supported lightly by the forearm and the little finger. This allows the writing hand to move smoothly across the page. Avoid a fixed forearm. The fingers will flex slightly in moving to form the letter shapes. The hand will move smoothly ahead of the point of contact between instrument and paper. Writers should hold the writing instrument so that fingers are up to 3cm from the end. Left-handers should hold the writing instrument further back from the point so that they can see what is being written. Paper position is also important.



Sitting Position for Handwriting

Formation of letters

The formation of letters involves starting and finishing places, direction of movement and number of strokes per letter. These are important aspects if linking, fluency and speed are to develop with ease. An oval body shape is recommended with a 2 o'clock starting position for all anti-clockwise ovals.

Size

Letter shapes should be in proportion. Within letters, the heads, bodies and tails should be of equal proportions. This means letters will maintain relativity in both width and height to each other. The overall size of writing will depend upon the purpose of the writing and the size of the surface being used. Larger letter shapes help in the establishment and maintenance of combined finger–hand–arm movements in handwriting. Small letter shapes, less than 2mm, may be the result of a tense pen hold and will make the task of identifying incorrect letter shape formation more difficult.

Slope

A slight slope to the right is the outcome of a well- developed cursive technique for learners who are using a relaxed finger–hand–arm movement (see Appendix 1). Slope should be consistent for each individual. However, a variation of 5 to 15 degrees in the slope to the left or right of vertical is acceptable between individuals.

Spacing

Consistent spacing enhances the legibility and appearance of handwriting. Spacing within words, between words, between lines of writing, and the use of blank space on the page should be highlighted to learners.

Alignment

The visual pattern of words becomes more consistent when hooks, kicks, descending letters and ascending letters are positioned accurately in relation to each other.

Cursive style

The correct stroke sequence for each letter should be learned in order to develop a legible, consistent cursive style. The differences between the beginners' alphabet and cursive formation are apparent in the letter **f** and in the exits of **a d h i k l m n o r t u v** and **W**. When cursive formation is being taught, two points should be considered:

- Special attention will be required for letters with exits
- More attention will be required in the spacing of letters.

The linking aspect of handwriting may become apparent to some learners before they have been given instruction in how to link letters because of the simplicity of the cursive alphabet shapes.

Linking

When encouraged to develop a flowing, cursive handwriting technique, learners may naturally begin to link groups of letters. However, teaching will be necessary to avoid the development of awkward links.

The introduction of links should not be a slow and laborious process because letter shapes themselves do not change. There should not be any deliberate drawing of lines between letters. When learners have developed a good handwriting technique, whole groups of links may be introduced concurrently, as the letter shapes are already quite familiar.

There are specific rules related to linking, detailed below:

- There is no link from upper-case letters to lower- case letters.
- The correct starting place and direction of movement for each letter shape are the bases for the development of links.
- The links are the outcome of a flowing handwriting movement rather than deliberately drawn connections between letters in a word.
- Any distortion caused to letter shapes through linking should be discouraged.
- Small groups of letters should be practised rather than individual letters as this is more likely to simulate the movements required for continuous writing.
- Letters that link to the following letter should link directly from the end of the letter to the beginning of the next letter.
- The position at which the letter finishes is important to linking.
- Some letters do not link to other letters. These are **g j x y** and **z**.
- The point at which the exit links to the following letter should be no higher than the exit of **o**.
- There is no link from an **s** if you link to it, for example, **glasses**.
- Do not link to **f** or **z** .

When linking is introduced to learners, they may need to practise:

- Developing the exits before linking to the letters **a d h i k l m n t** and **u**
- Developing the hook on **o r v** and **w**
- Linking directly to other letters
- Linking two letters at a time, or writing short words containing direct links
- Not dotting the or crossing the until the end of words.

Direct links need to be considered and practised during handwriting instruction. These links should be only those that occur in the English language because the teaching of handwriting should support the development of correct spelling. However, there is no specific order for introducing linking of the letters of the alphabet.

Pen lifts

Pen lifts occur in handwriting even though the writer may not be aware of them. These natural pauses relax the hand and help avoid illegibility. Individuals develop pen lifts to suit their personal style and technique. They will occur at various intervals within words, but not always before the same letter.

Learners should be discouraged from making a pen lift during the formation of an individual letter, other than where specifically indicated. As learners increase the speed at which they write, they will develop pen lifts naturally.

Educators should be aware of the functions of pen lifts and encourage learners to use them where necessary. Learners struggling to write long words using continuous links should be shown where pen lifts could be incorporated in order to relax the hand. However, educators who observe learners making frequent pen lifts should look at the technique and stroke sequence used by them to find out why it is happening.

Speed of handwriting

When words are written at considerable speed, legibility can deteriorate due to incorrect handwriting technique or poorly established letter and link formations. Learners can be encouraged to recognise the effects that speed has on their style and be given time to practise handwriting in situations such as brainstorming, where speed is necessary.

Word processing skills

North Woodvale Primary School has a Digital Technologies Scope and Sequence from PP – Year 6. The teaching of Word Processing skills will work in conjunction with this document.

The development of word processing skills is reflected by:

- The constant position of letters on a QWERTY keyboard
- Using the space bar and shift button for capital letters
- Cutting, copying and pasting
- Creating a bulleted list
- Changing the page format from portrait to landscape
- Using different font sizes for effect
- Creating numbered lists
- Aligning, inserting objects and formatting text around objects.

Letter patterns

The anti-clockwise letters:	a d g q c e o s u y f
The 'stick' letters:	l i t j
The clockwise letters:	m n r h b p
The diagonal letters:	k v w x z
Hook links from:	o v w r
Diagonal links from:	a b c d e h i k l m n p s t u
No link from:	g j z y z
Not linked:	Capital letters and Z
May be 'dropped in':	o a c d g s

ASSESSMENT OF HANDWRITING

Assessment of handwriting should be done over a period of time and in a variety of different ways such as:

- Ongoing observation
- Peer assessment
- Product Analysis
- Conferencing

Learners will demonstrate a range of behaviour, attitudes and skills depending on the complexity of the writing task and the degree of support provided. To identify starting points for specific teaching and to monitor progress, educators should assess learners' handwriting in terms of the following qualities:

- legibility—formation, spacing, shape, size and slope
- aesthetic appeal
- speed and fluency.

These can be assessed both formally – approximately every eight to ten weeks depending on the needs of the learners – and informally during regular activities.

Legibility

Skills and behaviour

Assessable skills and behaviour include:

- preparation for writing
 - correct pencil grip
 - appropriate seated position
 - correct paper position
- consistently formed letters with correct
 - starting points position on the line
 - direction of writing
 - spacing
 - shape
 - size
 - slope
- speed and ease of writing (for older learners).

Quality of letter formation

Assessment of letter formation includes consideration of:

- the starting position
- the direction of movement
- the completion of letters as well as the links, where appropriate.

Consistency of handwriting

Assessment of consistency includes consideration of:

- spacing
Are the words spaced evenly or are they over-spaced or too compact?
Is the spacing between letters consistent and appropriate?
- shape
Are similarly formed letters and letter families consistent in shape—particularly on the bodies of letters?
- Size
Are the letters—particularly the bodies of letters—consistent in size?
- Slope
Is there uniformity in the slope of the writing? Are letters upright, or sloping 10–20 degrees to the right?

Aesthetic appeal

The aesthetic appeal of handwriting is largely determined by its legibility. Educators can consider:

- Can it be read easily and quickly?
- Is it attractive and pleasing to view?

Educators can also look at letter structure and quality:

- How consistent is the balance between the head (ascender) and the tail (descender)?
- Has the writing been formed using appropriate pen pressure?
- Is there excessive rotation in letter forms, linking and looping?

Presentation and format also contribute to the attractiveness of the writing. Where appropriate, educators can consider how learners are using conventions such as:

- ruling margins
- headings
- dating work
- layout on the page.

Speed and fluency

Fluent writers who have acquired the necessary skills and are developing an automatic handwriting style can be assessed in terms of the speed of their handwriting in an authentic context. Learners could be given a few minutes to familiarise themselves with some information they need to write, say a message for their parents/ caregivers, and then allowed a few minutes to write it. This could take place on a regular basis – for example, monthly.

BOOKWORK PROCEDURES

General Guidelines K-6

- Ensure students produce the relevant quality and quantity of written work as expected. Ensure all work is corrected or noted
- Teachers display a chart in class outlining the presentation style adopted by North Woodvale Primary School. This will ensure consistency across the school, particularly with students, parents, relief staff etc.
- Students will ensure that they have a neat and tidy tray and all work is filed in the appropriate place

Books

- Students complete all work in a temporary book/pad for the first two weeks of school. During this time, teachers will teach the presentation requirements and standards across the school.
- All books are to have child's name clearly marked
- All books should be covered unless otherwise stipulated by the class teacher
- No pages to be torn from books
- Type and size of exercise books to be decided by classroom teacher
- All books and equipment are to be free of graffiti
- Books which are not well presented may be sent home to be covered or children asked to rewrite work on paper to be stuck into the book

Kindergarten to Year 2 Workbooks

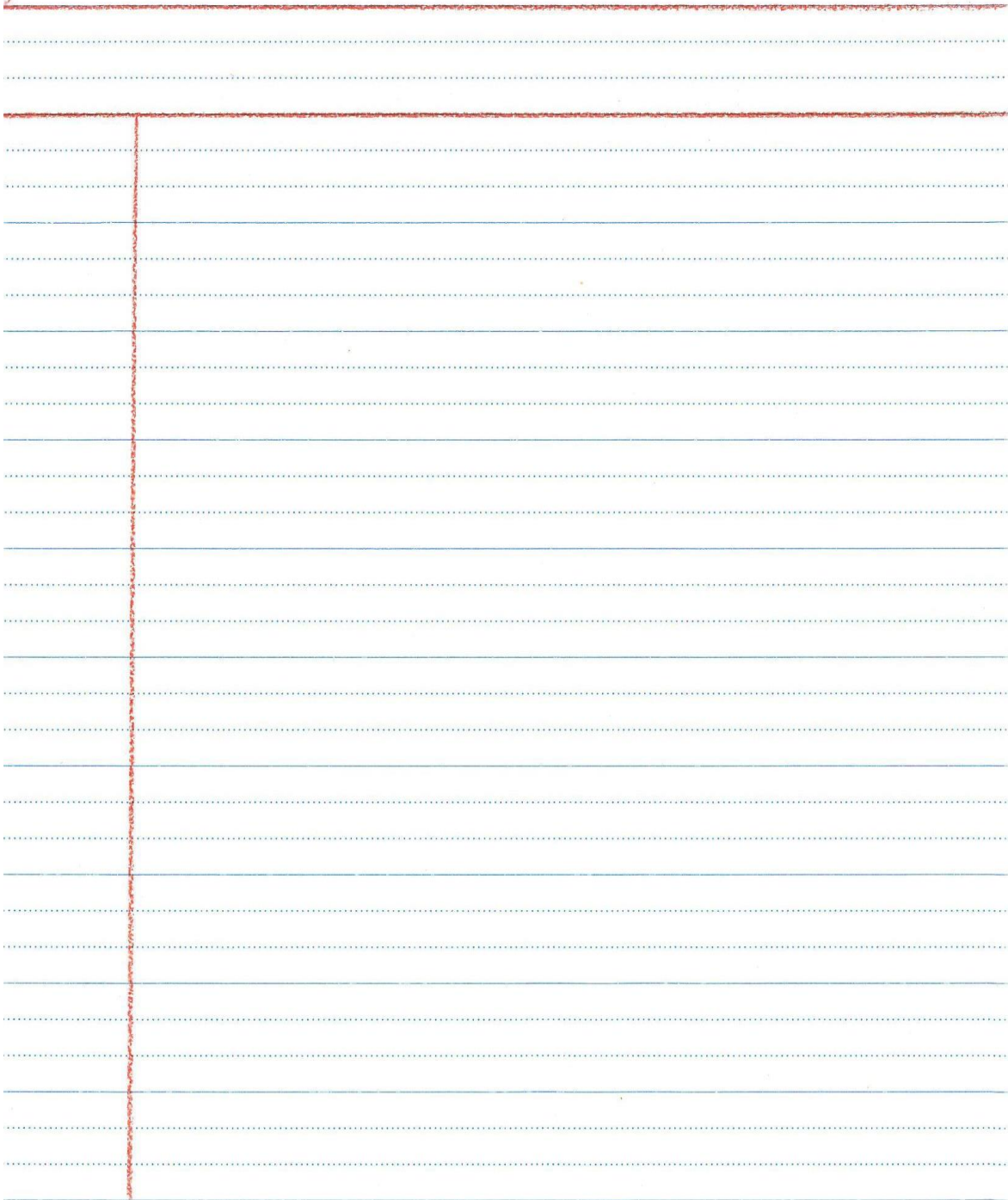
- Kindy to use triangular HB pencils
- PP to use 2B Graphite pencils
- Year 1 -2 to use HB pencils
- Erasers to be used at teacher's discretion
- Errors to be noted by a neat small cross at the end of the error
- Use of rulers introduced in K- PP, continued formally from Year 1
- Pages ruled up in red pencil in Years 1-2 with 2 lines at the top and a 2cm margin. Each new page has the short version of the date at the top left of the page
- Maths pages to be two columns (folded in PP and measured from Year 1).

Year 3 – 6 Workbooks

- Pages ruled up in red pen with 2 lines at the top and a 2cm margin.
- Short form of date at the top left of the page
- Work to be ruled off when activity completed
- Year 3 to use HB pencils;
- Year 4-6 to use blue pen
- No white out or white correction tape is allowed
- Errors to be noted by a neat small cross at the end of the error within brackets
- Dotted thirds to be used for all writing activities (Phased out in Term 4 Year 3)
- Maths columns to be measured so that pages are set up in three columns

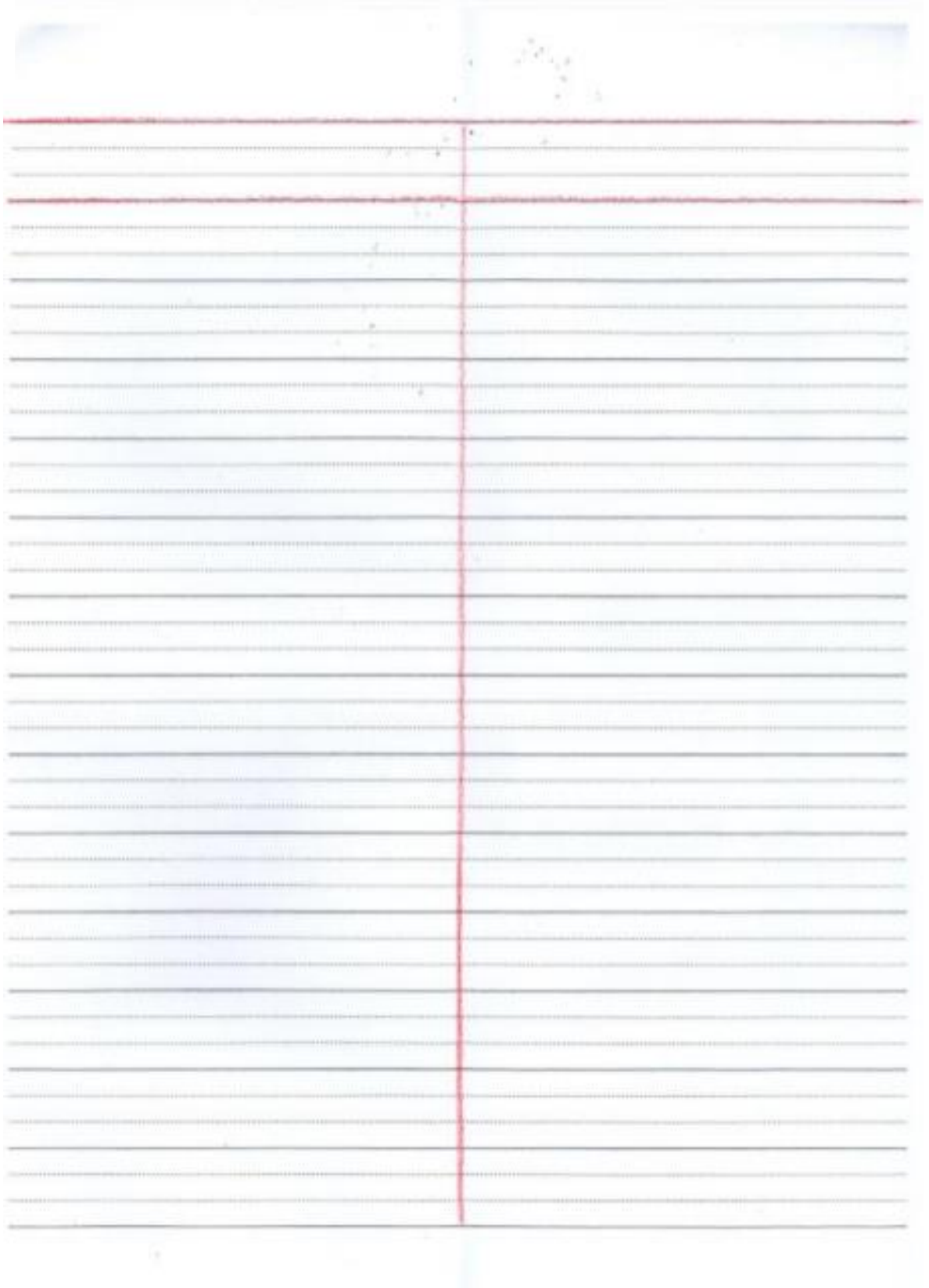
Student Workbook Presentation Standards PP – Year 3

Rule up in red pencil with a wooden ruler with margin



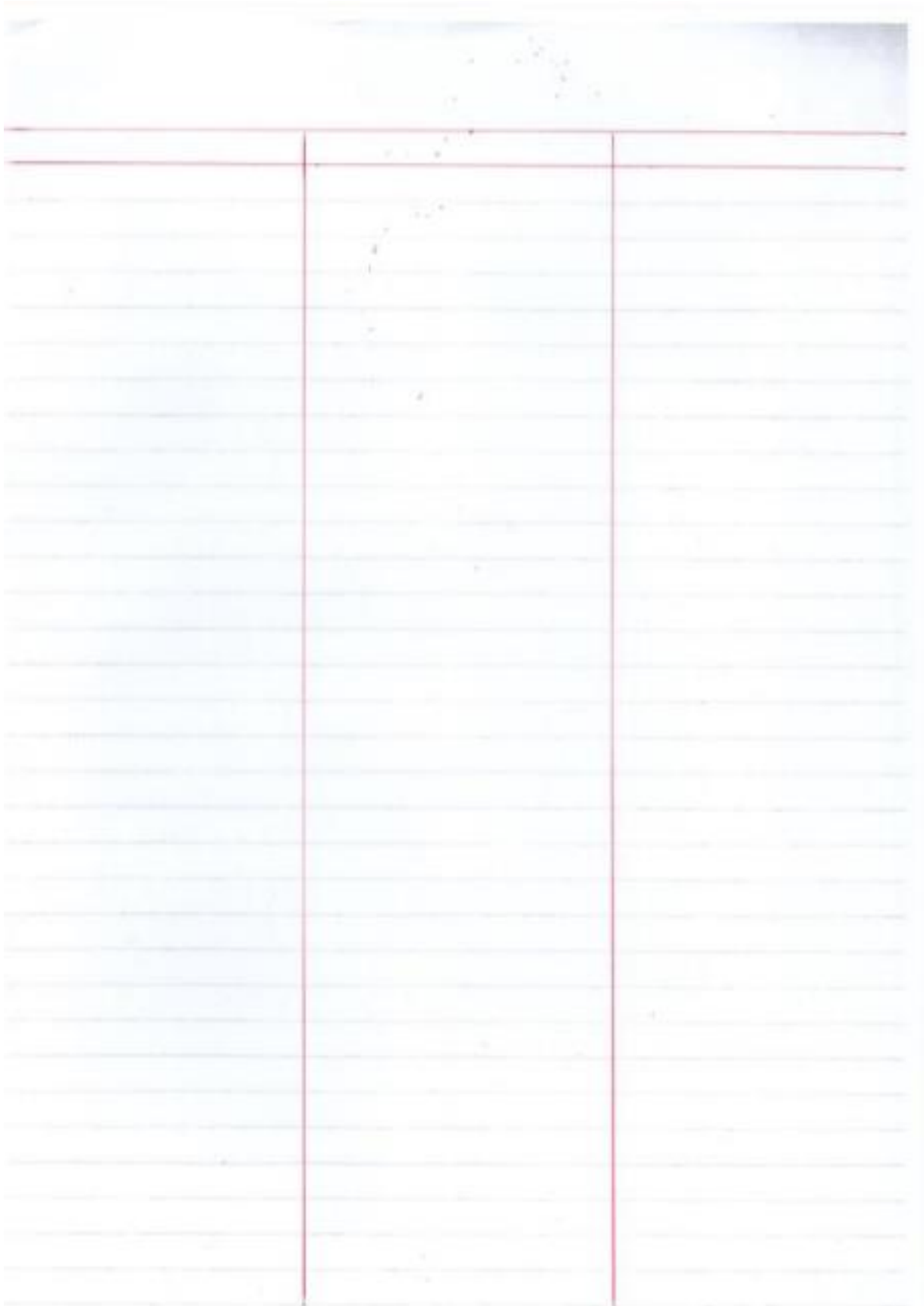
Student Workbook Presentation Standards PP – Year 3 - Maths

Rule up in red pencil with a wooden ruler two make two columns.



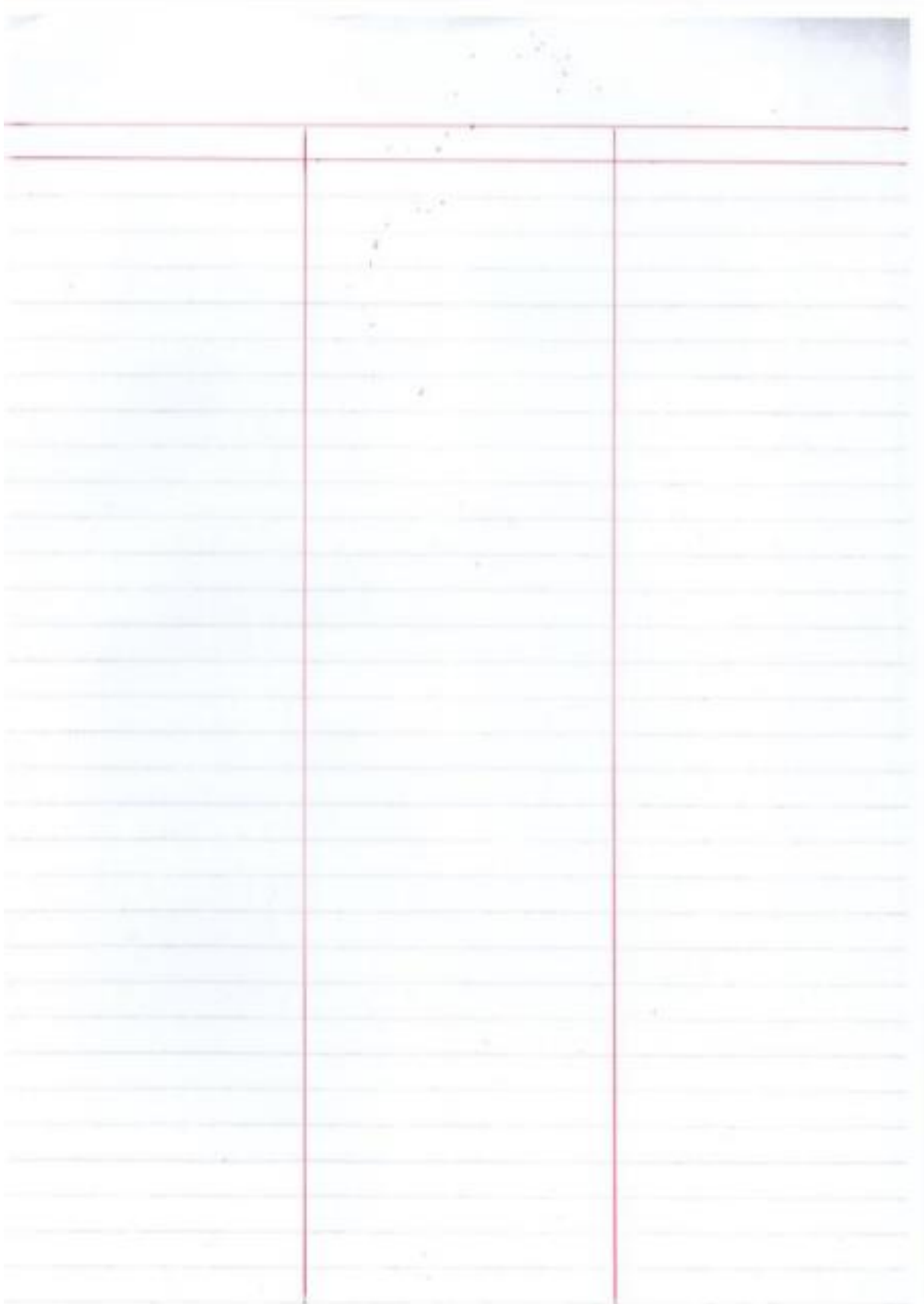
Student Workbook Presentation Standards Year 4 - Year 6

Rule up in red pencil with a wooden ruler width margin



Student Workbook Standards Year 4 - 6 Maths

Rule up in red pencil with a wooden ruler two make three columns.





Handwriting Policy Overview

Year	Australian Curriculum	Paper	Line size	Writing Tool	Corrections	Ruling up	Time Allocation	Other Considerations
PP	Produce some lower case and upper case letters using learned letter formations (ACELY1653)	Plain paper Lines as a scaffold to support writing	X	Thick triangular lead pencil.	A small neat cross. Eraser optional.	X	Combined with fine motor rotations, mat sessions and demonstrated activities.	South Australia Beginners Font
Year 1	Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters (ACELY1663)	Dotted thirds	14mm	Thick triangular lead pencil.	A small neat cross. Eraser optional.	Red pencil margin with one line at the top.	3x20 minutes	South Australia Beginners Font
Year 2	Write legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper case and lower case letters (ACELY1673)	Dotted thirds	14mm	Standard sized lead pencil and red pencil.	A small neat cross. Eraser optional.	Red pencil margin with one line at the top.	3x20 minutes	Introduction of South Australian Pre-Cursive Font
Year 3	Write using joined letters that are clearly formed and consistent in size (ACELY1684)	Dotted thirds	14mm	Standard sized lead pencil Red pen for ruling up and marking. Transition to blue pen by end of Term 4.	A small neat cross at the end of the error with brackets. Eraser optional.	Red pen One line on top and one on bottom for margin.	3x20 minutes	South Australian Modern Cursive
Year 4	Write using clearly- formed joined letters, and develop increased fluency and automaticity (ACELY1696)	Standard lines	12mm	Blue pen. Pencil for labelling maps and diagrams. Red pen for ruling up and marking.	A small neat cross at the end of the error with brackets. Eraser optional.	Red pen One line on top and one on bottom for margin. Columns of 7cm (2cm width for Mental Maths)	2x20 minutes	South Australian Modern Cursive
Year 5	Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic (ACELY1706)	Standard lines	9mm	Blue pen. Pencil for labelling maps and diagrams. Red pen for ruling up and marking.	A small neat cross at the end of the error with brackets. Eraser optional.	Red pen One line on top and one on bottom for margin. Columns of 7cm (2cm width for Mental Maths)	2x20 minutes	South Australian Modern Cursive
Year 6	Develop a handwriting style that is legible, fluent and automatic and varies according to audience and purpose (ACELY1716)	Standard lines	7mm	Blue pen. Pencil for labelling maps and diagrams. Red pen for ruling up and marking.	A small neat cross at the end of the error with brackets. Eraser optional.	Red pen One line on top and one on bottom for margin. Columns of 7cm (2cm width for Mental Maths)	2x20 minutes	South Australian Modern Cursive