SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS · IN PERSON · MELBOURNE

Handwriting and *DASH assessments.*

A guide for families and schools

For some students, handwriting makes it much harder to show what they know. Our occupational therapists assess handwriting in person and write a report with practical recommendations for school and home.

No referral or diagnosis is needed. We reply to enquiries within two days.



In person, Melbourne	Standardised DASH	Written report
At home, or at school where the school agrees	Where clinically appropriate	Findings and practical recommendations

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IS HANDWRITING GETTING IN THE WAY OF SCHOOL?

When handwriting *gets in the way.*



Some students know far more than their writing shows. The gap between what they can say out loud and what reaches the page is often the clearest sign.

Speed and stamina

Unfinished work

Class tasks and tests end before the ideas do.

Tiredness or discomfort

The hand aches or the grip tightens during longer writing.

Legibility and output

Hard to read

Letters, spacing and size drift, so teachers mark what they can read.

Says more than they write

A full answer out loud becomes a fragment on paper.

Assessments and exams

Longer, timed tasks

Difficulties that were manageable in primary school can show up in Years 9 to 12.

Leaning on typing

The student types more and more, and the school needs clearer evidence of why.

> Not every student with one of these signs needs a DASH. The assessment starts with the whole picture and includes the standardised part where it adds something useful.

Who the assessment is for

- Upper-primary students
- Secondary students, Years 7 to 12
- Years 9 to 11, where earlier evidence helps planning

You don't need a referral or a diagnosis. If the student has a diagnosis or supports already in place, tell us in your enquiry so the assessment can build on them.

WHAT WE ASSESS

What happens *in the assessment.*



We look at handwriting and the effect it is having on schoolwork. A standardised result is read alongside what we observe and what the family and school tell us.

THE FIVE PARTS AT A GLANCE

01 Background
02 Observation
03 DASH, where appropriate
04 Interpretation
05 Written report

01	**Background and history**	What you and the school have noticed, when it started, what has been tried, and any diagnoses or supports already in place.
02	**Handwriting in context** AT HOME, OR AT SCHOOL WHERE SUITABLE	Where it is appropriate, we watch the student write in class or another everyday setting, to see how handwriting works in a real lesson as well as a quiet room.
03	**The DASH, where appropriate**	We administer, score and check the DASH when a standardised measure will add something useful.
04	**Occupational therapy interpretation**	The OT brings the history, observation and any standardised results together into a clear account of what is happening and why it matters at school.
05	**A written report**	Findings in plain language, with practical recommendations for school and home. See page 4.

THE DASH, AND WHAT YOU RECEIVE

The DASH and *your report.*



The DASH measures handwriting speed. The report puts the results in context.

What is the DASH?

The Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting is a standardised test of speed across different kinds of writing tasks. We use the current edition, the DASH-2, normed for ages 8 to 25.

How we use it

Its results sit beside the OT's observation and the student's experience at school. Where it won't add anything useful, we say so.

What you receive

Included in the $550 private fee

A written occupational therapy report that:

- explains the findings and why they matter at school
- gives practical recommendations for school and home
- where the findings support it, recommends adjustments the school may wish to consider, such as additional writing time, a computer, rest breaks or a scribe

Payment must be received before Alvin attends the assessment visit. The school receives a copy of the report only with your permission.



Alvin Tsang

Alvin is the occupational therapist who carries out our handwriting and DASH assessments, and he writes every report himself. He works closely with students, families and teachers, and his calm, encouraging approach helps students feel proud of their effort.

SECONDARY SCHOOL & VCE

Evidence for *the school to use.*

Difficulties often show up with longer, timed written assessments. The report gives objective clinical information about handwriting and its functional impact.

We assess
We see the student in person and give clinical evidence and recommendations.

→

The school applies
The school manages the application. Our report may be part of its evidence.

→

VCAA decides
VCAA makes decisions about VCE special provisions.

> We do not determine eligibility, and an assessment does not guarantee a particular outcome.

You don't have to wait until Year 12

For students who already have significant handwriting difficulties, assessment in Years 9 to 11 gives time to understand the difficulty, trial strategies and plan supports before the demands of senior secondary school increase. The school also understands the student's needs well before they matter most.

FOR A STUDENT IN YEAR 11 NOW

Term 4 2026
A good time for the assessment

27 January 2027
Schools can start lodging 2027 applications with VCAA

Early 2027
Closing dates not yet published. In 2026 it was 6 March.

26 October 2027
VCE written exams begin

Dates: VCAA Notices to Schools 92 and 104 and future examination periods, as at 1 October 2026.

FOR LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF, TEACHERS AND VCE COORDINATORS

For schools.
How you can be involved.

The family books the assessment. With their permission, the school can take part and receive a report it can use when planning support.

WHO Upper-primary and secondary students	**WHERE** In person in Melbourne, home or school	**FEE** $550 private, or NDIS as OT time
WHAT History, observation, DASH where appropriate	**WHO ASSESSES** Alvin Tsang, one of our AHPRA-registered OTs	**BOOKING** By the family. No referral needed.

Observation in class

Where it is appropriate and the school agrees, the OT observes the student writing in a classroom or another functional setting.

What helps the OT

- What staff have noticed, and since when
- Adjustments tried or already in place
- Evidence the school has asked for
- Any application deadline

What the report gives you

Objective information about handwriting and its functional impact, practical recommendations, and where findings support them, adjustments to consider.

Consent comes first

We contact the school only if the family says we may. Without that permission, the report goes to the family only. Naming a teacher or coordinator in the intake helps.

Suggesting it to a family

Pass this guide on. The family can enquire at seedsoccupationaltherapy.com.au/handwriting-enquiry/ and say the school would like to be involved.

THE PRACTICAL DETAILS · AUD

Where we see students. *What it costs.*

Standardised handwriting evidence needs proper conditions and direct observation, so this assessment happens in person rather than by telehealth.

Visits across Melbourne

We see students at home, or at school where that is suitable and the school agrees. Our AHPRA-registered OTs are based in West Footscray.

Before you book

Tell us in your enquiry if you would like the school involved, and mention any diagnoses, supports or earlier assessments so we can build on them.

PRIVATE FEE

$550 flat fee

Assessment, interpretation and written report

Covers the background and history, observation where appropriate, the DASH where clinically appropriate, OT interpretation, a written report and practical recommendations for school and home.

Travel within our Melbourne service area is included.

NDIS participants

The assessment is billed as occupational therapy time at the current NDIS rate, rather than the flat fee. We confirm the expected hours with you before you book. We work with self-managed and plan-managed participants, and can't take agency-managed bookings.

Paying

Our office emails the invoice when we arrange the appointment, with a button to pay by card. Payment must be received before Alvin attends the assessment visit.

BOOK AN ASSESSMENT

Tell us about *the student.*



Booking starts online, and we arrange the visit with you.

01

Enquire, then complete the intake

Enquire at seedsoccupationaltherapy.com.au/handwriting-enquiry/, then complete the intake and agreement at seedsoccupationaltherapy.com.au/handwriting-intake/.

02

We review the requirements and availability

Usually within two days.

03

We arrange the appointment and send the invoice

We agree a day and time with you, then email the invoice with a button to pay by card.

04

Payment is received before the visit

Payment must be received before Alvin attends the assessment visit.

05

The assessment and report

Alvin Tsang sees the student at home or at school. The written report follows within two weeks.

Send an enquiry ↗

OR EMAIL admin@seedsoccupationaltherapy.com.au

MORE ONLINE seedsoccupationaltherapy.com.au/handwriting-assessment/

Original illustrations by Rumi Khaira-Bal, age 11

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