

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope that you and your family are all keeping well during this worrying time.

Class teachers have given work pupils to be completed at home while the schools are closed. Please do not feel under pressure to complete every piece of work. Families are experiencing various levels of stress these days so just do the amount of work that suits you and your family at the moment. That could be all of the class work, some of it or none of it. While doing a little work would be beneficial, as parents, you decide what works for you and your family.

We, the Special Education teachers in Rathduff have put our heads together to find ways to support you if your child sees one of us for some extra help at school. In this document, you'll find ideas to help your child with reading, maths, speech and language etc, etc. We can't emphasise enough – all of this is optional! You might do a little bit of the class teacher's work and a little from our ideas in this document – feel free to mix and match! Concentrate on what you think your child needs the most, keep it short, simple and light-hearted.

Hopefully, soon enough, we'll be welcoming children back to school and life will return to 'normal'! In the meantime, we wish you and your family the very best of good health.

With warm wishes from,

Kate O' Callaghan, Triona O' Connor, Catherine Kavanagh, Niamh Daly, Donna Stokes and Caitriona O' Connor.

Reading



Epic! is an online library which offers over 35000 resources including audiobooks and texts such as National Geographic Kids and Guinness Book of Records. Suitable for children from ages 4-12. <https://www.getepic.com/>

VOOKS

Like epic above, **Vooks** is an online library but here the books are 'brought to life' through their illustrations and are read aloud for you and your child to enjoy... <https://www.vooks.com/>



Oxford Owl has an ebook library with over 250 books in it and offers free access to teachers and parents once you create an account at www.oxfordowl.co.uk They also have some vocabulary and comprehension activities for most of the books.

Note to Parents, part of becoming a better reader is developing a broader range of vocabulary. Audiobooks are great for this....here are 2 websites for audiobooks if you want to take a little break from the reading sites above.



Borrow Box

If you or your child are a member of the local library you can access audiobooks on this handy app. <https://www.borrowbox.com/>



If you are not a member of the library, not to worry. You can sign up for a 30 day free trial of audible here <https://www.audible.co.uk/>. Audible has all the kids' favourite books available as audiobooks...David Walliams, Harry Potter, Roald Dahl, etc.

Maths



This link is from NCSE website with some great Special Ed numeracy resources.

<https://www.sess.ie/resources/curricular/special-education-support-services-resources-maths>



This next link is the IXL website which is an interactive website that allows children practice various mathematical skills and concepts at their own level.

https://ie.ixl.com/promo?partner=google&campaign=1248&adGroup=special+needs&gclid=Cj0KCQjwpfHzBRCiARIsAHHzyZo2tMfCSFVImIvt4rA1z9_OcCDgOY186qo2v2g98IP3StUhxCjxA04aAtWCEALw_wcB



This website has loads of free printables for those with a printer....(there's an option to subscribe but not necessary).

<https://www.senteacher.org/printables/mathematics/>



Scoilnet has a whole bank of maths resources and sorted according to each class level...you can also refine to a specific topic/skill. Make sure you're in the Primary section and select class.

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/>



Twinkl is always an old reliable when it comes to numeracy.

<https://www.twinkl.ie/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen/specialeducationalneeds-sen-curriculumsupport/sen-numeracy-maths>

If you'd like to create a maths trail, try these:

https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/MathsTrailsOverview_0.pdf

<https://www.twinkl.ie/resource/amp/t-n-213-outdoor-maths-trail-cards> (Be mindful of social distancing!)

Handwriting

While your child is working at home, you can keep an eye out for a couple of things that can affect their handwriting.

- *Holding the pencil correctly; the pencil should be held in place with the thumb, index and middle fingers.*
- *Maintaining good posture with feet flat on the ground will help increase stability and better handwriting output.*
- *Using their 'free hand' to keep the copy/ page steady while they write!*



The following have handwriting tips that your child can work on to further improve their penmanship, legibility and pencil grasp.

irishprimaryteacher.ie/fine-motor-skills

<https://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/improve-handwriting-older-kids.html>

<https://thekindergartenconnection.com/21-fun-handwriting-activities-for-kids/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/activities-for-kids/readingand-writing-ideas/5-ways-to-improve-your-childs-handwriting.html>

*Please have a look at our **Fine Motor Skills section (next)**, which also links with handwriting.*

Fine Motor Skills

We use fine motor skills to make small movements. These movements come so naturally to most people that we usually don't think about them. Fine motor skills are complex, however. They involve the coordinated efforts of the brain and muscles, and they're built on the gross motor skills that allow us to make bigger movements which involve actions such as running, crawling and swimming. Fine motor skills are involved in smaller movements that occur in the wrists, hands, fingers, feet and toes. They involve smaller actions such as picking up objects between the thumb and finger, writing carefully, and even blinking.

What are examples of fine motor skills and activities? Holding a pencil, manoeuvring a pencil, scissor skills, pushing Lego blocks together (and pulling them apart), manipulating play dough, getting dressed with belts, buttons, zippers and snaps, using silverware while eating, opening and closing latches, containers, placing pegs on a piece of paper / washing line, moving objects with tweezers from one container to another, threading, bead work etc.

Lots of these activities can be done using materials at home.

Below is a list of useful resources and websites for some extra ideas...



Gross Motor Skills/ Occupational Therapy



This is an excellent resource for OT ideas: lots of information about gross and fine motor skills, sensory processing, visual perception as well as handwriting. Links to free printables and activities, ideas for brain breaks and activity bingo. Huge variety of paid resources on the above areas too. <https://www.yourtherapysource.com/freestuff.html>



Fantastic resource for helping with sensory regulation. Clearly explains the importance of proprioceptive exercises for addressing sensory needs. Wide variety of easy exercises that can be done at home. <https://sensory-processing.middletonautism.com/sensory-strategies/strategiesaccording-to-sense/proprioceptive/>



Peace Out is a series of guided relaxations and visualizations for kids, written and voiced by Jaime from Cosmic Kids. Click this link: [Peace Out Guided Relaxation for Kids | 1. Ballooning](#)



A lovely website for younger children with ideas for setting up sensory play at home, along with ideas for building up hand strength and fine motor skills. <http://therapystreetforkids.com/>



Easy, no prep suggestions for fun activities and games to develop gross motor skills. <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/gross-motor-activities-for-teens/>

Exercise/ Meditation

GoNoodle

GoNoodle offers free movement, yoga and mindfulness videos as well as recommended offscreen home activities. <https://www.gonoodle.com>



Cosmic Kids Yoga is fun and great for balance, strength and confidence. It also includes some mindfulness.

www.cosmickids.com



PE with Joe on YouTube:

Free workout aimed at kids! The workouts are fun and suitable for all ages, just search for Joe Wicks YouTube channel at 9.00am each morning (Monday- Friday).



Children's Fitness Classes:

Their Facebook page offers a live workout at 9.00am each morning. <https://rinka.ie>



This offers short (10 min) mindfulness activities and may be more suitable for boys in the senior end of the school. <https://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/>

Speech & Language

Free speech therapy materials/ games.

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/category/free-materials/games/>

Library full of great activities for you to explore online stories, activities, videos, rhymes, poems.

<http://www.storyplace.org>

Lots of fun games, great online material on different topics of your child's choice e.g:play and learn about sharks, octopuses etc, discover how sea creatures live together.

<https://www.funbrain.com/>

Provides links to excellent sites, reading, and games to develop your child's language.e.g: magic bus, I spy, Clifford the big red dog, Astroblast.

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/play/>

This is a fantastic site for speech articulation, games, language/word games, and sequencing games. It also has an abundance of activities and quizzes.

<https://www.quia.com/pages/havemorefun.html>

Practices your English pronunciation while having fun. You can listen to the tongue twister before trying it yourself. More topics on this site include: grammar chants, short stories (audio) and word games.

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/tongue.twister>

Games to learn English (excellent for language/vocabulary development-ideal for EAL pupils also). Vocabulary games, fast English, fast phrases, future tense sentences, perfect tenses, prepositions, big describer.

<https://www.gamestolearnenglish.com/>

This link suggests 10 fantastic yet simple games that we all know how to play but forget to use. They also explain how to play the game and why it's of benefit to play each game with your child.

E.g: revise vocab, listening, comprehension <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/10-best-games-eslteachers>



Twinkl is a fantastic resource, these links provide activities and knowledge of sequencing, communication cards, matching, prepositional positional language, articulation activities, Name 5 things challenge cards, on topic/off topic conversational games, audio stories, categorisation card games, sorting oddone out games and lots more.

<https://www.twinkl.ie/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen/specialeducationalneedssencommunication-and-interaction/specialeducationalneeds-sen-speech-language-therapy>

Powerpoints on idioms and their meaning, understanding and figurative language, idiom board games. Suitable for the older boys in our school <https://www.twinkl.ie/search?term=idioms>

Suggested Games

<https://www.speechbuddy.com/blog/games-and-activities/6-free-online-speech-therapy-resources/>

Hangman

Call my Bluff

Snakes and ladders

Ludo

Simple Simon Says

Charades
Head Banz
Articulate forkids
Guess Who?
I spy
Memory Games
Odd one out games



And finally....

Many pupils might be struggling a little without the regular routine which going to school provides. NEPS have provided some help for parents on creating daily routines while schools are closed. Follow the link here:

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents->

[supporting-children.pdf](#)