**St Bernadette Catholic Primary School**

**Special Educational Needs and Emotional Wellbeing Support for Home Learning**

**Handwriting ideas**

**Developing handwriting skills**

**Pre-handwriting patterns**

If children practise the movements and patterns which are the basis of good handwriting before they are taught real letters, they will have started to establish a firm foundation on which to build.

Pre-handwriting patterns help children to learn the shapes and directional pushes and pulls required to form letters.  They need to be able to draw horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines, curves and tunnels and make joins in order to form letters correctly.  All letters are a combination of these shapes and lines.

[http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk](http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/) has sets of pre-handwriting sheets which you can download for free.

**Letter formation**

* Teach similar letter shapes in families, for example: a, c, d, g, o, q, s and l, t, i, u, y, j and r, p, n, m, h, k, b and x, z and v, w plus e and f,  Look at [www.theschoolrun.com/english/handwriting](http://www.theschoolrun.com/english/handwriting) for video clips on letter formation.  There are free practice sheets which you can download at [http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk](http://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/).
* Encourage children to practise letter shapes in lots of different media - paint, crayon, shaving foam, sand, glitter, mud, draw with their fingers on another pupil's back, squirt on the playground in water
* Make the letter shapes from play-doh, trace over the letter shapes, cut out of sandpaper.
* Practise tracing the shapes of printed letters on an iPad using apps such as Wet, Dry, Try or School Writing.  For joined up handwriting letters, try Crazy Cursive, abcJoined Up or Hairy Letters.

Once letter shapes have been roughly established, give pupils daily practice for 5-10 minutes, tracing and then copying letters then words.  Start big and once the shapes have been mastered, start encouraging pupils to reduce the size little by little until an acceptable size is achieved.  Then start to improve fluency by giving timed exercises, asking them to write a word or a letter as many times as they can in 30 seconds or a minute.  See if they can beat their time the following day.

Ensure pupils have:

* The correct posture
* Correct chair and desk height, so that their feet are flat on the floor
* Good lighting
* Their paper angled 30 degrees to the left if right handed and 30 degrees to the right if left handed
* The correct dynamic tripod grip (try a Twist 'n' Write pencil or a pencil grip, if not).  The pencil should be held between thumb and index finger just above the point on the painted part with the middle finger behind the pencil and supporting it
* Their non-writing hand holding down the paper to stop it slipping.

**Tips**

* They may find it useful to use tiny blobs of bluetack to stick their paper down and stop it sliding.
* See if giving them a writing slope/large A4 ring binder to lean on improves their handwriting.
* If they fidget in their seat all the time when they are writing, try a Move 'n' Sit cushion (available from Amazon or Back in Action).
* Look at [www.theschoolrun.com/english/handwriting](http://www.theschoolrun.com/english/handwriting) for video clips on the correct posture, pencil grip, paper grip etc.

**Handwriting** [**https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/**](https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/) **is a really useful website**

[Parents](https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-parents.html)

“[Whether you are just helping your child with their handwriting, or need support because they are struggling, our age related resources, information and advice will guide you through the handwriting process.](https://www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-parents.html)”