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Home Reading

Dear Parents/Carers,

I want to share with you the incredible value that reading has, and how it can make a significant difference in your child's life.

Reading is more than just a skill—it's a gateway to understanding the world, sparking imagination, and building connections. When children read, or are read to, they not only strengthen their language abilities but also develop emotional intelligence, empathy, understanding of different cultures and beliefs, and a lifelong love of learning. Reading truly is the key to academic and emotional success.

The ultimate goal is for a child to actively want to pick up a book and engage in book-talk, without being directed to do so – this is called reading for pleasure. We work very hard at Springwell Park to increase your child's attitude towards reading. Within this letter, you will find some guidance that will hopefully help you instil the same attitude at home.

The Power of Daily Home Reading

As you will already know, your child has a home reading book which is linked to their current book-band reading level. Your child reading their book would, ideally, be part of your daily routine. Reading at home goes beyond fulfilling homework assignments – please refrain from seeing it as a chore, and instead see it as an opportunity for lovely and enjoyable quality time with your child. A chance to make memories, whilst simultaneously increasing their progress.

A Shared Journey – Storytime

Home reading does not have to just be your child reading to you. In fact, I strongly suggest it isn't. Storytime – with the adult reading to the child – is an invaluable activity that has lasting benefits. Latest figures from The Book Trust show that only 28% of children at primary age have a bedtime story. Just 10 minutes a day of you reading to your child would improve their vocabulary, comprehension, love of storytelling, and empathy. Research also shows that a consistent routine, such as a bedtime story, significantly helps with healthy sleeping patterns.

Reading Role Models

We all know and understand that leading by example is important in the general sense, but particularly with reading. It is important that we, as teachers and parents, are seen to be a lover of reading and storytelling. If the children see us reading and getting excited over books, more often than not, they also mirror that passion. It normalises and promotes the activity of reading, and reduces the chances of the children seeing it as a chore.

Generally, reading is categorised into two groups – reading for pleasure and reading to inform. As adults, we tend to 'read to inform' numerous times throughout the day, with things such as magazines;



newspapers; leaflets'; and even apps on our phones such as Facebook, Twitter, and the news. Take the time to tell your child what you are reading, and why you are reading it.

Please do utilise our Springwell Community Library during drop-off and pick up time and help yourself to texts of your choice. You will find high quality texts of all different genres. Use these books to enable your child to see you reading. Engage in book talk with your child and discuss the content – where has the book taken you? What world are you in? Who are you with?

Book Talk

Book-talk is absolutely essential – it is not only part of the reading for pleasure process, but also to develop strong reading abilities. Please find below some tips for book talk at home:

- Making connections – Do the characters/settings remind you of anyone/anywhere? Have you been in a similar situation before? Have you learnt about this event in school?
- Making predictions – Can you predict what the story/chapter is going to be about? How did you come up with that prediction?
- Vocabulary – If there is a tricky word, could you spend some time exploring it? Could you look at synonyms of the word to help? Can your child use the word in another context other than what the author has?
- Emotions – How does the character / plot make you feel? How do you think the character feels here, and why?
- Summarising – What did you think of that chapter / story? Why? What would have made it better? What would you have done differently?

Your Child's Reading Identity

A key element of reading for pleasure is ensuring that the children have the opportunity to develop their own reading identity. It is important that the children are able to explore different genres of books and develop their own preferences and opinions. We need to be seen to be letting them make their own choices. It is easy for parents/carers to fall into the trap of saying a book is too easy or the author isn't good enough, but the bottom line is this – reading in any form is still reading. Comics, poetry and graphic novels are still valid reading materials and should not be looked down upon, nor should certain authors because they are not classed as classic. We work hard to ensure our reading curriculum in school is full of diverse, high-quality texts – what your child chooses to read in their own time is entirely up to them! A good analogy for this is as follows: image that books are food. The 'comfort' foods/books aren't the healthiest, but we still love and need them in moderation. Healthier/challenging foods/books are undoubtedly delicious, but too many too quick can leave you feeling overwhelmed – it is all about balance.

You, as your child's parent/carer, and us, as your child's teacher, both want the same thing. We want your child to fall in love with reading, and as a result, have many opportunities open up for them. Please do work with your child's Class Teacher to increase your child's reading ability and to eradicate any potential barriers.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your support,

Mr Hanlon
Assistant Headteacher.



Children should learn that reading is pleasure, not just something that teachers make you do in school.

— Beverly Cleary —