

December 2019

Dear Parent / Carer

As a department, we always appreciate how supportive the parents and carers of our pupils are in terms of wanting to help their children achieve their potential and transform their lives and their communities. To this end, we get a lot of queries as a department regarding homework, as you are all really keen to help support your children at home.

We have researched, and reviewed our homework policy as a department, and it has been proven time and time again that the biggest impact on pupils' attainment across the board can be seen in pupils who regularly read a range of texts for pleasure.

It is also important that we continue to strive for excellence in all that we do, and a key feature of the new GCSE specification is the ability to read, understand and analyse 19<sup>th</sup> Century (or earlier) texts.

In order to address these issues, from the start of the next half term, all year 7, 8, 9 and 10 pupils will be given a printed copy of a text to read at home over the term for homework. They will then be given a weekly task in lesson to do, to consolidate their learning and check their understanding of the text.

These texts have been chosen according to your child's current reading and chronological age; because they are classic stories that have engaged children and young adults for centuries; and because they are freely available to distribute for your reading pleasure, due to their age.

We as a department are really excited about the prospect of developing an academy and home culture of purposeful, wider reading. I have attached a help sheet from [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) with some suggested strategies for reading with older children. If you have any further questions or need any support with this, please contact your child's English teacher in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

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## Encouraging older children to read

As children get older, there's no need to stop enjoying sharing books and reading together.

Research has shown that children who enjoy reading and spend more time reading for pleasure have better reading and writing skills, a broader vocabulary, and an increased general knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

But with so many other activities competing for children's time as they get older, how can you continue to encourage your child to read for pleasure?

Here are some tips for promoting reading in your home with older children:

- **Ensure that your children see you reading.** It doesn't matter if it's the newspaper, a cookery book, romantic novel, detective mystery, short stories, computer manual, magazine - anything!
- **Encourage children to join in** - ask a child to read out a recipe for you as you cook, or the TV listings when you are watching TV.
- **Give books or book tokens as presents** (and encourage others to do so!)
- **Visit the local library together** on a regular basis, and enjoy spending time choosing new books.
- **Encourage children to carry a book at all times** so they can read on journeys or in spare moments – you can do this, too!
- **Keep reading together.** There are lots of books that both adults and young people can enjoy. Try *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon, the *Harry Potter* series, or *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. Read books you can all talk about but make the
- **Go to libraries or bookshops when authors are visiting.** Children and teenagers love meeting their favourite writers - Jacqueline Wilson and Anthony Horowitz always have signing queues that are miles long!
- **Make sure your home is a reading home** - have a family bookshelf and make sure there are shelves in your children's bedrooms as well.
- **Don't panic if your child reads the same book over** and over again - let's be honest, we've probably all done it!
- **Encourage your children and their friends to swap books** with each other. This will encourage them to talk and think about the books they are reading together.

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