

## **The Collective Reading Strategy at Baysgarth School**

### ***What is the Collective Reading Strategy?***

The Collective Reading Strategy is a whole school initiative launched in September 2020 with the intention of running for years to come. The idea is to engage every child in reading modern novels which will interest, intrigue, excite and develop them as young people. During two sessions of Form Time a week your child will be read to by their Form Tutor, and will follow along with their own copy of the text, alongside their peers in their Form Group. Over the course of the year the aim is to read two different novels and over the coming years the novels will be rotated around the houses. By the time your child/children leave Baysgarth they would have had the opportunity to immerse themselves in novels they may never have chosen to read before.

### ***Why does the Form Tutor read to them?***

We have chosen the model of the Form Tutor reading to our students, with the students following, for a number of reasons:

- the teacher will have the ability to model fluent, expert reading;
- it can help to build fluency skills including proper phrasing and expression;
- it has the potential to help students improve sight word recognition;
- it helps to build comprehension;
- it allows students to hear the tone and pace of a skilful reader.

This approach has the potential to really help develop the reading skills of our students.

### ***What books will my child be reading and how were they selected?***

With such a huge selection of books available, the process of choosing the novels was a lengthy and thorough process. A combination of Best Seller lists, award winners, Teachers' favourites, issues explored, level of challenge, genre, length, narrative voice, representation in authors and suitability for our school all contributed to the titles chosen. Depending on which house your child is in, will depend on the book they are currently reading. However, the eight titles selected overall are:

- *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *One of Us Is Lying* by Karen McManus
- *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Seabold
- *No Fixed Address* by Susan Nielson
- *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* by Annabel Pitcher
- *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon

Most importantly, every title selected has the potential to transport your child to a different world and put them in the shoes of someone else. All the books explore important themes and issues which will affect them in the world we live in today. Hopefully the books will

provide them with different perspectives and give them opportunities to develop empathy and their understanding of others as well as developing their reading skills.

### ***What does my child do during the Collective Reading sessions?***

The sessions are intended to be a collective experience where every child will follow along with the reading. They will all have their own copy of the book and their own bookmark provided by the school. They will be encouraged to use the bookmark to help them follow along as the teacher reads aloud to them.

### ***My child has been affected by the issues explored in the book they are reading in Collective Reading time and they would like to discuss it with someone at school- who do they go to?***

These books have the potential to create lots of discussion and questions being asked. Should your child wish to speak to someone they have many supportive staff members to turn to: their form tutor, their pastoral manager or their Head of House would be the primary people to speak to.

## **How you can encourage and support reading at home**

**Take an interest in your child's Collective Reading Book, which they will be reading in Form time every week with their Form and Form Tutor.**

Ask open-ended questions (questions that require your child to explain their ideas and views) about:

- the plot;
- the characters: what are their opinions on them? Can they relate to them? If not, why not?
- the issues explored: do they have any strong opinions or views on them? How are the issues relevant to the world we live in?
- their predictions for the remainder of the novel.
- what they have liked or disliked about the book.

Just by asking questions you are showing that you value reading and their views on it and this acts as an encourager of it in their lives.

### **Be a reading role model.**

'The best reading role models are in the home: brothers, fathers, grandfathers; mothers, sisters, grandmothers, so make sure your kids see you reading,' says author and Words for Life supporter James Patterson. 'It doesn't have to be books: reading the newspaper is good too.'

### **Share your favourite books with your child.**

Talk to them about any books or apps which you gain enjoyment from by reading. You can even challenge and develop their reading skills by sharing your favourite books with them by reading to them (providing you feel the content is appropriate for them).

### **Have a book swap party to provide greater variety for your children without the cost.**

Sharing books with friends is a great way to keep your child topped up with new reading material, and to encourage them to read texts that they might not otherwise have discovered, so use peer pressure positively and invite a few of your child's friends round for a book swap.

### **Support your child in finding a book which will intrigue and interest them!**

Below is a list of Reading List links and Reading Apps, super helpful for finding the next book that will thrill your child.

- 'School Reading List' Organised into year groups, covering a range of genres:

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/category/secondary-ks3-ks4-reading-lists/>

- 'Book finder' organised by age and genres of interest, providing synopses, author information and reviews:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/bookfinder/>

- ReadingRockets 'Book finder'. Apply filters based on your age, interests and location in the world!

<https://www.readingrockets.org/bookfinder>

- Reading Rockets booklist recommendations based on specific themes of interest.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/books/booksbytheme>

- **BookZilla**- FREE app for Apple and Android users.

Aimed at children age nine plus, the BookZilla app will help your child choose new books to read, based on their interests and books they've enjoyed. They can set up a profile and select which categories they're interested in, from heartbreakers to graphic novels. The app will then suggest other titles that they might enjoy, as well as 'out of the box' ideas that they might not have considered, with a synopsis of each, so they can buy them in print or on another book app.

When your child finds a book they like the look of, they can add it to their reading list. They can also log books that they've read, review them and share their thoughts with other app users, and set themselves challenges, for example to read five books by a certain date.

- **BorrowBox**- FREE app for Apple and Android users.

BorrowBox allows your child (and you!) to borrow e-books and audiobooks from your local library and read them on a phone or tablet.

You'll need to register for a library card first, then use your login details to browse titles from every section of the library, including young adult fiction, graphic novels and more. Your library will specify how many books you can have on loan at any one time, and remind you when it's time to virtually return them. Books are easy for your child to navigate by swiping to turn the pages.

## **FAQs**

***“My child used to love reading at primary school but they just don’t seem to be interested in it anymore. At best they read the same books they’ve read before- have you any recommendations?”***

Our English Team get asked this all the time, usually at Parents’ Evenings, when they may not have the time they would like to suggest some perfect books for your child. Disinterest often comes from not knowing what to read next, or how to choose books which reflect their age or new interests. Encourage your child to visit the links listed above as the websites have an abundance of brilliant books categorised by age, interest and theme. There is bound to be something that will engage and inspire them!

***“My child becomes disinterested in a book quickly. I think maybe they are not quite sure what their book tastes are, can you help?”***

Often children would really benefit from a ‘try before you buy’ arrangement. You can select the option of ‘Read an extract’ on 1000s of titles on the website linked below, all organised into age range. This way your child can get a taster for what the book is like and what could fire their interest, before they decide to borrow or purchase a copy.

<https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/browse-by-age>

***“I’m trying to balance my older and younger children’s interests and would love to support both in their reading- any ideas?”***

Encourage older siblings to read to younger ones. Not only does this provide some valuable time off for mums, dads and carers, but younger children will follow their example in practising their reading later. It’s also brilliant for older children to still read aloud to their parents/carers/extended family as it helps to develop their fluency and intonation.

***“My child prefers non-fiction- what can they read?”***

Does your son or daughter enjoy discussing topical issues or do they have an interest in the world around them? Guide them to the first newspaper aimed at engaging children and young people in current affairs in an accessible way. (Contains a subscription fee from £1).

<https://www.firstnews.co.uk/>

***“My child won’t touch a book but they love comics- is this still supporting their literacy needs?”***

A fantastic page on the benefits of comic books on a child’s literacy with lots of links to supporting information, comics and graphic novels.

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/comics-boost-literacy>

***“I think my child may be experiencing some barriers to reading- how can I support this at home?”***

Alex Quigley offers some accessible information and helpful solutions to the 4 main barriers to reading here:

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/overcome-reading-barriers>

If you wish to discuss this further then contact the school and we will be happy to support you and your child.

***“We try our best at home but we have another child/children and along with work, homework, revision, after school clubs and downtime it’s hard to fit everything in!”***

It’s completely normal to feel the pressures of feeling like you have to juggle everything, the most important thing is to never make reading feel like a chore or ‘forced’ upon your children. Sometimes life gets really busy! The best thing is to encourage and support it when and where you can. Genuine interest in conversations about reading with your children can foster an interest in it which can be built upon over time. Reading just 15 minutes to 30 minutes a day can be hugely beneficial but even this can be built up to over time, especially if your child has previously fallen out of love with reading. It’s also about developing your children to be independent in their choices too so never feel that it is solely down to you! Finding the perfect book that interests your child can be the most powerful incentive for them to prioritise reading independently and reach for it when they have time.