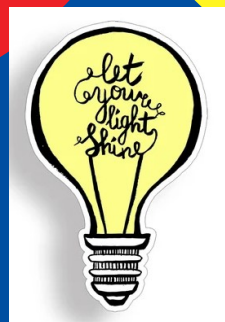




**ST MARY'S CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

**PARENT'S GUIDE
SUPPORTING
YOUR CHILD
WITH
READING**



Welcome,

One of the most important gifts we can give our children is to help them learn to read and write so that they can succeed in school and beyond. Confident, active readers are able to use their reading skills to follow their passions and curiosity about the world. We all read for a purpose: to be entertained, to take a journey of the imagination, to connect with others, to figure out how to do something, and to learn about history, science, the arts, and everything else.



Learning to read is complex. In key stage one children don't learn one reading-related skill and then move on to the next in a step-by-step process. Instead, they are learning to do many things at the same time: decoding, reading with comfortable fluency, absorbing new vocabulary, understanding what the text says, and discovering that reading is pleasurable and builds knowledge about the world. Historically after year two readers who have not 'got' phonics do not continue with this journey. This often leads to pupils who have not grasped the skills needed to decode effectively which means they struggle with reading for understanding in key stage two and beyond.



Phonics is an adult skill that we use without even thinking about it, like riding a bike or driving a car. It is essential that these pupils are identified as soon as possible and supported here at St Mary's. Whilst

those pupils who can read are allowed the opportunities to continue to develop their skill in order to read and understand complex academic texts.

We hope this guide will give you a better understanding of what you as parents and guardians can do to help your children grow as confident proficient readers, writers, and learners!

The 6 steps to becoming a strong reader?

1. Print Awareness

This is something children often do before even beginning school. It is the understanding that letters have a meaning and English is read from left to right.

2. Recognising the sounds in spoken words

Phonological and phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify and play with sounds in in spoken language—including rhymes, syllables and the smallest units of sound (phonemes)

3. Connecting the sounds of speech with letters

Phonics is a systematic way to teach the alphabetic principles—the ideas that letters represent the sounds of spoken language—and that there is a predictable relationship between letters and sounds. Historically it was thought that certain pupils would not be able to learn reading this was e.g. if they have dyslexia etc, however that has since been disproven and phonics is the government method of choice for reading at all ages.



4. Reading with accuracy and expression

Fluency is a child's ability to read a book or other text with accuracy, at a reasonable rate, and with expression. A fluent reader doesn't have to stop to decode every word.

5. Knowing what each word means

Vocabulary is word knowledge and word learning is an ongoing process. We are all adding to our word banks every time we come across a word we don't recognise or understand. At St Mary's pupils are explicitly taught the meaning of subject specific vocabulary.

6. Understanding what you read

Comprehension is the goal of reading! It is the thinking process readers use to understand what they read. Strong vocabulary, background, and an understanding of how language works are keys to comprehension.

At St Mary's we have found that sometimes there is a gap between decoding a text (reading it out loud) and actually understanding the text. A good method to use when reading to help improve understanding is known as ***Reciprocal Reading***.



What is reciprocal reading?

Reciprocal Reading is a way of reading which breaks down into four steps:

- **Predict** – What is the text about? What will happen next?
- **Question** – Why did that happen? What do you think about....?
- **Clarify** – Talk about what you've read. Do we understand all the words and what is going on?
- **Summarise** – Can we recap what we have read?

Why use Reciprocal Reading?

By using parts of Reciprocal Reading, you can help to boost the readers understanding of the text.

Reciprocal Reading creates good reading habits which will improve understanding and support the learning.

Ensure you have a range of literature at home to encourage your young person to read, books (both fiction and non-fiction), newspapers (digital ones work well), magazines as well as blogs on topics they are interested in.

Reciprocal reading is a great strategy for use at home.



Reading at home

At St Mary's, we understand how powerful and important reading is for empowering pupils. It can bring them enormous joy, love and inspiration.

Why should you encourage your young person to read?

Data tells us that 14 year olds who read often and independently know 26% more words than those who don't read.

We want our pupils to have the greatest life chances available to them and daily reading of a wide variety of texts can help support this.

If you read with your child daily then they will hear around 1.4 million more words than their peers.

Your child was used to reading for 20 minutes every day at primary school continue with that routine in high school.

Ideas to support you:

- **Read yourself!** It doesn't matter what it is – pick up a newspaper or magazine, take a look at a cookery book, read a computer manual, enjoy some poetry or dive into a romance or detective novel. Get your children to join in – if you're cooking, could they read the recipe? If you're watching TV, can they read out the listings?
- **Give books as presents.** Encourage your children and their friends to swap books with each other – it'll give them a chance to read new stories, and get them all talking about what they're reading.
- **Visit the local library together.** It's always fun choosing new books to read, and keep an eye out for special author events at the library or local bookshops – children love meeting their favourite authors. Jacqueline Wilson and Anthony Horowitz always have signing queues that are miles long!
- **Encourage children to carry a book at all times.** That way, they'll never be bored (this is something you can do, too!)
- **Have a family bookshelf.** If you can, have bookshelves in your children's bedrooms, too.
- **Keep reading together.** Your child was used to reading for 20 minutes every day at primary school continue with that routine in high school—perhaps you could try the Harry Potter series or *A Series of Unfortunate Events*.

So please, oh please, we beg, we pray, go throw your TV set away, and in its place, you can install a lovely bookshelf on the wall." - Roald Dahl

The teenage years

As your child moves into secondary school, reading can be seen by them more as work than fun, and teenagers may stop reading for pleasure or stop reading at all. Here is some advice to support your teenager through these years:

- Young Adult (YA) novels tackle the edgy issues teenagers struggle with, from romantic longing to peer pressure to grief and trouble at home or school. Teenagers will gravitate toward relatable subject matter whether they are personally grappling with these issues or are seeking vicarious thrills.
- Merge movies with books. Hollywood is turning to teen literature for ideas more than ever. Offer your teenager the print version to read before or after a big film comes out and discuss with them the similarities and the differences between the two. Which was better? The book or movie? Why?
- Graphic novels, once dismissed as comic books, are now recognised as literature. These books may be the key to getting some teenagers hooked on books and are available in a wide range of genres, from adventure and fantasy to historical fiction, memoir, and biography, so certainly, there is a graphic novel out there to suit your teenager's taste.
- Encourage your teenager with appropriate adult-level books. Find non-fiction titles on subjects your teen's curious about, such as climate change, race, political corruption, or true crime. Check adult non-fiction bestseller lists to see what is going viral.
- Try some poetry. Novels in verse and performance poetry are an increasingly popular trend. Poems are easy to read as they have all that white space on the page. The spare and lyrical approach to poetry can pack a punch.
- Let your teenager get an audiobook to listen to on the way to school or on long drives. They can download audiobooks to their smartphones to not risk looking uncool because they will be under headphones or have their earbuds in.

Don't panic if your child reads the same book over and over again. Let's be honest - we've all done it!

If you have any questions or want to talk about reading with your child please feel free to contact:

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