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Reading Policy for Parents

Policy reviewed by: Emily Rubbert and Claire Cooper

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Circulation: This policy is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils.

Please note: 'School' refers to Wetherby Kensington; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.



Wetherby Kensington

Reading Policy for Parents

Reading in School

Learning to read is one of the most important things your child will learn to do at school. In this policy we have outlined key points that will help and enhance reading done at home. These points also reflect the reading we do in school.

Routine - Reading is very much built into the school day at Wetherby Kensington and the boys are heard on a regular basis. We aim to hear the boys several times a week. In Reception the boys are heard four times each week. In Years 1 to 3 the boys are heard at least three times each week.

Quantity v Quality – We hear the boys read on a regular basis and the focus is on quality reading time. This means that, because of the time taken to allow the reading to be meaningful and beneficial, this does not happen every day. In Reception the reading reinforces letter recognition, sounds and blends with picture content to enhance the understanding. As the boys develop they are heard for slightly longer. This is to allow quality reading to take place and the boys to regard the experience as meaningful.

Reading for Meaning - The boys are not just reading words from a page for the sake of it, understanding is checked, including vocabulary, asking the boys to summarise, recount and predict what happens next, etc. The comprehension of the text is focused on and the boys are expected to become aware of inferences made in the text. Sight words, blends, text type, sequencing and the context of the text are also addressed.

Reading Schemes/Library – In school we use a variety of reading schemes. This allows the boys to practise and consolidate the specific skills at each level with text presented in different styles. This is all monitored and recorded in detail and each boy will move to the next level at the appropriate point in his development. Once they have achieved the suitable skills and confidence required to become a more independent reader, each boy will then be assessed using the Suffolk Reading Test to determine his reading age. When a boy reaches a reading age of 8 years and 4 months, if boys reach this by year 3, he will then be able to choose his own book from the classroom or school library. These will be chosen and listened to under continued supervision.

Communication – Every time a boy is heard in school the teacher records this in his reading record book. Any important information about his reading can be communicated between home and school in this book and it provides an important record of the boy's reading progress at school and at home. In addition, a full reading record is kept for every boy by his class teacher and this moves through the school each year with the child from Reception to Year 3.

Phonics

At Wetherby Kensington, the boys use the Read Write Inc programme which has been developed by Ruth Miskin. Read Write Inc provides a structured and systematic approach to teaching English. It is designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers.

Children in Reception and Year 1 take part in daily phonics sessions. These sessions focus on key reading skills such as decoding to read words and segmenting the sounds in a given word to spell. During phonics lessons your son will be taught how to read and write 'alien words' which enables them to use their phonic knowledge to decode nonsense and unfamiliar words. The boys are expected to read 'red words' which are high frequency words that cannot sound out and your son is expected to remember how to read and write them. As the boys complete the reading scheme, they use their phonic lessons to review and revise their previous phonic rules and apply them to extension work such as grammar activities, comprehensions passages and writing short stories. In Year 2 and Year 3, the boys continue to apply their phonic knowledge to learn how to spelling complex words as well as using their phonic knowledge to develop their writing, reading and speaking skills.

At Wetherby Kensington, we are also using phonics lessons to develop your son's vocabulary by ensuring words are given a context and visual aids are provided to promote understanding of new language. Additionally, as the boys progress throughout school, they will revisit sounds but the words get progressively more challenging in order to continuously expand the boys vocabulary. Phonics sessions also promote reading for meaning by including a comprehension activity where children have to answer questions after reading their book.

Routine

Reading time is allocated during the week between the class teacher and assistant teacher. These are the regular four reading times in Reception and three times from Years 1 to 3. It is vital that you help us to monitor the reading. It is the constant practice that reinforces vocabulary and enables children to accumulate banks of words that with practice become familiar and assist the process of reading. Reading regularly at home is essential. It is important that your child knows it is an everyday occurrence and if you can establish a set routine it will be easier for all concerned. Children like structure, they feel comfortable with it and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. It does not matter whether reading is practised after school, or in the morning before school. Choose a time that suits you – and stick to it. Avoid structured reading at bedtime, this is not a suitable time or place to carry out this task with your child. Choose a book at bedtime that you can either read together or have a book that you read to your child.

The reluctant reader

It is not unusual for children to lose interest in reading from time to time. Do not panic! The sure way to exacerbate the problem is to make an issue out of it. There is usually a very simple explanation for a child's reluctance to read and the most important first step is to alert your child's teacher if you are experiencing problems at home. There is a multitude of reasons why a child may be unwilling to read, ranging from plain

stubbornness (easily resolved), to a lack of confidence. There are various strategies that can be employed to encourage the reluctant reader, but remember, children learn when it is an enjoyable and meaningful process and we all have to work together to endeavour to achieve this.

Quality vs Quantity

Children do not develop their reading in a meaningful way simply by reading a whole book every night for the sake of doing so. There is a tremendous amount of competitiveness surrounding children's reading and excess quantity only serves to have a negative effect upon real progress. It is preferable to read a few pages, to check the child's understanding of the text and to raise the child's awareness of, for example, blends, sight words and the story line (See 'Reading for Meaning'). A child who is a prolific reader (but is not yet a free reader) should have a separate 'home' book which can be used for individual as well as paired reading. It is essential however, that the school reading book is used for supervised reading and to do this effectively requires a quiet environment – not whilst you are trying to feed the baby or cook the supper! In other words, to achieve quality reading you need to give your child your undivided attention, which is why two pages read correctly will be much more effective than six pages read in a less structured way.

Reading for meaning

There is absolutely no point in your child reading a book unless he understands what he is reading. Fundamental skills are acquired through over learning (jargon for practice) and through the understanding of de-coding (how words are assembled). Most children can be taught through remote learning, but there is no merit in being able to repeat information unless it is understood. This applies to reading. It is not important how many books your child manages to read in the course of a term or at what level. The only matter of any significance is whether children can understand what they read. If it is not **meaningful** it is not **successful** reading. **Comprehension** is the key word. When we hear boys read at school we will ask them to identify (according to the level of reading), sight words, magic 'e' words, blends etc. Illustrations are discussed prior to and during the reading process and stories are analysed – what has happened and what might happen next? Always ensure that there is an involvement with the storyline and words are not merely read in isolation. As a rough guide, if reading practice is correct, an average child using a reading scheme book will take ten minutes to read, discuss and analyse 2 to 3 pages. Therefore, reading at home should not be an arduous task.

Reading schemes vs the library

It is absolutely imperative that children follow a variety of reading schemes and you will be aware that we incorporate different schemes into their reading, this is quite deliberate. All schemes have their individual strengths and require different skills. Varying the schemes enables children to practise skills acquired at one level before moving up to another. Moving a child continuously up the ladder without consolidating and practising these new skills acquired at each level is not conducive to developing the fundamentals of reading that are essential for all-round literacy development.

Library access is appropriate only when your child's teacher feels that he is capable of independent reading and that such access will not jeopardise his confidence. It is important to remember that library reading is unstructured, and as such it is vital that a stage has been reached whereby such a move will not undermine or deter further progress.

We aim to provide a range of books that cater for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of our pupils. We recognise that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural, (SMSC) element of pupils' education is crucial to their development as individuals, allowing them to take their rightful place in their community as local, national and global citizens. SMSC is about the values students are encouraged to hold and their attitude towards learning, knowledge and society. Through 'SMSC' we seek to develop attitudes and values that will enable students to become responsible and active members of society. We are committed to the SMSC development of all students at Wetherby Kensington.

Paired reading

This is particularly useful when you read a 'home' book or library book with your child, or when he moves to a new level of reading. It is an extremely successful way for parents to help and encourage reading. Instead of listening to their child read, the parent actually reads along with him. The parent and child read in unison. Paired reading is known to have a high success rate, and also provides a different approach that can relieve the perception of boredom from either the child's or the parent's perspective!

Communication

Is the key word in helping children to develop their reading. It is crucial that the school and parents work together closely to ensure that the development of reading skills is assisted through mutual understanding and support. There may be occasions when a new book is sent home and it appears too difficult, or indeed, too easy. Please be patient. We need your feedback so that we can 'get it right'. Ensuring that each child has the correct reading book requires a great deal of fine-tuning. By communicating with us we can quickly rectify any problems. Remember that children are constantly changing and developing, we have no magic solution, but we do have a commitment to do our very best for everyone!

Summary

Our primary goal is to encourage a life-long love of reading in every boy at Wetherby Kensington.

Each child is an individual; they have their own strengths and weaknesses. Avoid comparisons, they are not positive; implement praise – frequently. Learning to read is a highly complex task; all progress at every stage should be valued and acknowledged.

This policy will be reviewed annually

Wetherby Kensington



Tips for reading with your child

Top tips for reading at home with your child

1. Read aloud to your child. All children enjoy the experience of a parent or loved one reading aloud to them. It's a great opportunity for you and your child to talk, to be close and share a few laughs.
2. Encourage your child to read aloud to you. Be positive and patient about your child's reading - even when they are being very slow or are struggling. The most important thing you can do to support your child's reading is to offer encouragement and patience.
3. Make sure your child has a cosy, comfortable place in which to read: somewhere with no noisy distractions – and no television.
4. Help your child to choose books that he will find really interesting. If your child loves Star Trek, choose a science fiction novel. If he is a football fanatic, find a book, poem, comic or magazine which is all about their favourite sport.
5. Do not worry if your child wants to read the same book over and over again, or if your child chooses a book which seems to be too easy or too young for him. The most important thing is that your child enjoys reading. Children will move on to more difficult books when they are ready.
6. If English is not the language your family speaks at home, enjoy sharing books written in your home language.
7. Ask your child about what he is reading at school. Encourage your child to talk about books they have enjoyed at school. Encourage him to read aloud to you and to talk to you about the characters and ideas that come up in the book.
8. Before you read aloud with your child, take a few minutes to review what you have already read together. Ask your child to summarise the plot so far, as well as to give you brief character sketches to help refresh your own memory.
9. Do not be in too much of a rush to help if your child gets stuck while reading aloud. Instead, help him to sound out words and read through sentences until they can do so fluently. If your child is unfamiliar with a word, help him look it up in a children's dictionary and understand what it means and how it is used in context.
10. As you read aloud with your child, ask him questions about what is happening and what they think will happen next. Not only do these questions allow you to quickly and easily check your child's comprehension of the story, but it helps to keep them active and involved even when they are not reading.
11. The best place to stop a reading aloud session is at a cliffhanger in the story. Leaving your child with a bit of suspense should keep them eager for the next reading session so that they can find out what happens next.

Questions to ask your child when reading fiction texts:

- Where does the story take place?
- When did the story take place?
- What did the character look like?
- Where did the character live?
- Who are the key characters in the book?
- What happened in the story?
- Explain something that happened at a specific point in the story.
- If you were going to interview this character/author, which questions would you ask?
- Which is your favourite part? Why?
- Who would you like to meet most in the story? Why?
- Who was the storyteller? How do you know?
- Predict what you think is going to happen next. Why do you think this?
- How is the main character feeling at the start/middle/end of the story? Why do they feel that way? Does this surprise you?
- Were you surprised by the ending? Is it what you expected? Why/why not?
- Can you find some examples of effective description? What makes them effective?
- Can you find examples of powerful adjectives? What do they tell you about a character or setting?
- Can you find examples of powerful verbs? What do they tell you about a character, their actions or the setting?
- Find an example of a word you do not know the meaning of. Using the text around it, what do you think it means?
- What was the least exciting part of the story? Explain your answer as fully as you can.
- Do you think this book is trying to give the reader a message? If so, what is it?

Questions to ask your child when reading non-fiction texts

- What is the text about? What is the title of the text? Who is the author of the text?
- What kind of things would you expect to see in this book?
- Find something that interests you from the text. Explain why you chose that particular part.
- Where would you look to find out what a technical word means?
- What is on the cover of the book? What does this tell you about the content inside?
- Which parts of the book could help you find the information you need?
- When would you use the contents page in the book?
- When would you use the index page in the book?
- When might someone use this book? Why?
- Can you find an example of a page you think has an interesting layout? Why did you choose it?
- Why have some of the words been written in *italics*?
- What are the subheadings for?
- Why have some of the words been written in bold?
- What is the purpose of the pictures?
- Have you found any of the illustrations, diagrams or pictures useful? Why/why not? Try to explain fully.
- Can you think of another text that is similar to this one? What are the similarities and differences between them?