



CB/KW

9th November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Here at Newlands, we highly value the innumerable benefits reading has on both academic progress throughout the curriculum and mental wellbeing.

If students struggle to read, then the texts they encounter at secondary school can be off-putting for them and then, understandably, result in low levels of enjoyment and demotivation. This creates a vicious cycle: as they struggle and don't enjoy it, they read less – and because they read less, they don't progress and then find that they struggle to acquire the necessary knowledge in many subjects.

It is, therefore, vital that we help students not just with their reading skill, but their perception of it as an enjoyable activity. Research suggests that reading for pleasure makes the most difference to students' progress and attainment in reading.

As a school, we currently encourage reading for pleasure through a wide variety of clubs and events. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fortnightly library lessons for students in Years 7-9
- Various competitions including: Rewarding the Form Group who logged the most books on 'Track My Read' over the summer, a poetry competition for National Poetry Day and our Classics Reading Challenge
- An annual Carnegie Shadowing Club
- Book clubs for Years 9-10 and Sixth Form
- A weekly Creative Writing and Journalism club for KS3-4
- Sixth Form reading mentors who read with small groups of students in Years 7 and 8 once a week during tutor time
- Silent reading in Form Time for Years 7-10
- A Scholastic Book Fair running in the Library from 16th – 18th November 2022.

We do appreciate how difficult it can be to get children to read at home. To support this, we have collated some useful resources and advice.

What should students be reading?

- Remember that it doesn't matter *what* they read: helping students to enjoy reading and finding texts they want to read is the important thing. This might mean finding a book, collection of short stories or even a graphic novel, but it also might mean that they find a range of online articles, websites or magazines they enjoy reading.
- You could look at fiction books related to topics they are interested in, or encourage them to read about it online.
- If they've enjoyed a book before, encourage them to read another text by the same author.
- You and your child could spend some time browsing a library or book shop shelves, speaking to the staff or reading book reviews online.

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- If you are browsing in a shop/library/online, you could read the back of the books (blurbs) and a page from the start to help decide whether this feels like something they'd like to read more of.
- Be mindful about your child's reading level so that they can access the vocabulary the text contains. You may wish to discuss this with your child's teacher or hear them read, in a supportive way, before you start choosing texts.
- Recommended reading lists from students and staff are updated on the school website: [Library - Newlands Girls' School](#)
- *Newlands News* also provides updates in relation to competitions and current popular book choices. The latest edition can be found here: [Newlands News](#)

Where can students find suitable reading material?

- School and community libraries not only offer free access to books, but they often also have audio books and e-books that your child could borrow.
- Book shops provide a chance for your child to browse and purchase books with support from staff, if they wish. Some book shops will have review cards with some of their top-picks too.
- Audio books can be purchased for devices such as phones, as well as on CDs or borrowed from a library. Alternatively, [BBC Sounds](#) has a range of free audio books.

How can a reading culture be created at home?

- On **Wednesday 7th December**, I will be running a Parents' Information Evening on the importance of reading and how to build a reading culture at home. This will run from **4.30-5.30pm** in the Main Hall. Please complete this MS Form if you would like to attend: <https://forms.office.com/r/H6CCsW1Lv4>
- For further guidance, please see the attachment.

We are always looking for further opportunities to promote reading throughout the school, and we will endeavour to keep you updated with these as we move through the school year.

Yours sincerely



Miss C. Bevan
Assistant Headteacher