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New Independent Reading Letter

Dear Parent/Carer

Reading is an important focus every year, and we would like the children to enjoy a wide variety of books. This letter is being sent to you because your child has progressed beyond the Reading Scheme and is now able to choose their own books.

Books

Your child will bring home up to 2 books each week. They will no longer be books from the Reading Scheme. This is an exciting time for the children, but the lack of structure can cause issues. They will need to learn to choose suitable books, with adult support and direction, and sometimes also learn to change a book that they don't like. The key to all this is variety. There is nothing wrong with sometimes choosing 'easier' books to enjoy, provided this is part of a wide selection over the year, and we would expect them also to pick books that challenge them. While some books can be read in one week, there will be many times when the books are not finished, so please keep them longer.

Reading Record

The Reading Record is our way of keeping in constant contact with you, and this is now even more important when your children are choosing their own books. Please fill it in every week and let us know both the successes, and problems your child has. Please still let us know how your child is dealing with the individual words, but also if they understand the story, and can explain things and answer questions. Their grasp of meaning is now even more important, and constant questioning about the plot of the story is crucial. Unlike the Reading Scheme books they will often be faced with a much longer text, so there will be many times when the books are not finished, so please let the school know that you would like them for another week.

Book Changing

The books will be changed once a week. Your teacher will let you know when. This is the chance for the school to continue your child on the present part of the scheme, or adjust things to suit their needs as they change.

Reading Stories

The following is advice for parents drawn together by the Dfe in January 2022 in a document called The Reading Framework. It sets out how you can read with your child.

Introduction

Your child will bring home different books. One book is for your child to read to you. It has been carefully chosen so that they can work out all the words. The other book may have words your child may not be able to read yet. It is for you to read with your child and talk about together. The second book may be another story book or an information book.

How to read a story to your child

If you can find the time beforehand, read the read-aloud book to yourself first, so you can think about how you're going to read it to your child.

On the first reading:

- *Make reading aloud feel like a treat. Make it a special quiet time and cuddle up so you can both see the book.*
- *Show curiosity about what you're going to read: 'This book looks interesting. It's about an angry child. I wonder how angry he gets...'*
- *Read through the whole story the first time without stopping too much. Let the story weave its own magic.*
- *Read with enjoyment. If you're not enjoying it, your child won't.*

Read favourite stories over and over again.

On later readings:

- *Let your child pause, think about and comment on the pictures.*
- *If you think your child did not understand something, try to explain: 'Oh! I think what's happening here is that...'*
- *Chat about the story and pictures: 'I wonder why she did that?'; 'Oh no, I hope she's not going to...'; 'I wouldn't have done that, would you?'*
- *Link the stories to your own family experiences: 'This reminds me of when ...'*
- *Link stories to others that your child knows: 'Ah! Do you remember the dragon in? Do you remember what happened to him?'*
- *Encourage your child to join in with the bits they know.*
- *Avoid asking questions to test what your child remembers.*
- *Avoid telling children that reading stories is good for them.*

Hopefully this guidance will be of some help.