

LITERACY

in

Edmund Rice College



**Information for
Parents/Guardians**

"Literacy underpins all educational achievement... At the heart of its importance is the ability to develop human potential and raise self-esteem. Every person in the country should be able to experience that sense of being able to soar to a vantage point that being literate can bring."

These words, from Neil McClelland, Director of the National Literacy Trust, encapsulate the importance of Literacy at Edmund Rice College. Far from the misconception of being literate as a series of dreary and repetitive reading and writing exercises, we strive to bring literacy to life, giving it place and purpose for each pupil. Literacy is fundamental to Communication (through reading, writing and speaking) and Communication, to life.

Here at ERC, we focus on promoting Literacy in a variety of ways:

- Timetabled Literacy classes for every pupil;
- Afterschool Literacy classes to target specific Literacy needs;
- Use of ICT to stimulate and encourage learning;
- Celebrating World Book Day in March;
- Accelerated Reader Programme, allowing children to compete and celebrate success;
- Paired Reading Scheme;
- Public Speaking Competitions;
- 'SALAD' days;
- Cross curricular emphasis;
- '*Recommended Reads*' list regularly updated on our website;
- The potential for Adult Literacy, Literacy Support or Evening Book Clubs for the community where interest allows.

It is also extremely important that we have **your** support. Your child can only succeed fully when the work started in school is developed at **home**.

The following information has been put together to offer you advise on how to support your child's literacy development at home, whatever stage they are at.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions regarding your child's progress in literacy.

Jennifer Kennedy (*Literacy Coordinator*)

How you can help your child at home

Reading

Encourage your child to read for enjoyment – regardless of age, they should be reading for at least 20 minutes, every night, in addition to homework set. You will remember the daily reading homework set in Primary schools. That daily reading shouldn't stop because your child is at Secondary School, it should by now be a routine that they continue with independently.

One of the best ways to encourage this is to let your child see you reading (check out our school website for book recommendations).

FACT: Reading for enjoyment not only helps to improve literacy skills, it has been proven to raise attainment in GCSE Maths!



Speaking and Listening

Speaking and Listening is also a key communication skill that you can easily promote at home by encouraging your child to express themselves clearly, asking their opinions on certain topics and discussing popular culture.

Encourage correct pronunciation of words and grammar to help ensure accuracy in spelling and written tasks.

Writing

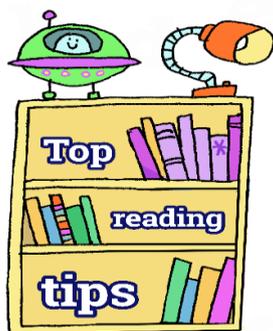
We also ask that you encourage high standards of written Literacy from your child – encourage them to present work neatly and take care that spelling and punctuation is accurate. These small things all contribute to their success.

If your child enjoys writing, encourage them to develop this hobby by writing you a story, a poem or review of a film they have seen. They could also join with others in a creative writing club.



In all these endeavours, ensure that you **praise** achievements and progress, however small.

The bonus is, not only are you developing your child's literacy skills, you are developing your own!



Now your child is moving towards **independence** as a reader. They may be trying to read much longer and more challenging texts or they may have lost some of the enthusiasm they used to have.

- Continue to **take an interest** in what they are reading. You could offer to take it in turns to read a page each, or read one character in the story. **Celebrate their success** as they complete longer chapters and texts.
- Get your child interested in **activities you can do together** that involve reading. You could follow instructions for building a model or try out a new recipe together.
- **Don't panic** if your child doesn't want to read. Offer a wide range of reading material – information books, comics and magazines. Use a kindle or download audio story books.
- Carry on **reading aloud**. You can introduce your child to some great adventure and fantasy stories and have fun exploring them together. Children will often re-read a book they have first heard aloud.
- Suggest reading the book format of a film they have enjoyed, for example, *The Hunger Games* trilogy or *Twilight* saga. Reading can be more accessible when they know they will enjoy the story.
- Likewise, you may wish to return to a favourite, easier book from time to time, to allow your child to really **enjoy** and **relax** with their reading.

Common Concerns

It isn't always easy to support your child's reading. Here are some common concerns and tips to help overcome them:



“My child doesn't want to read their school reading book!”

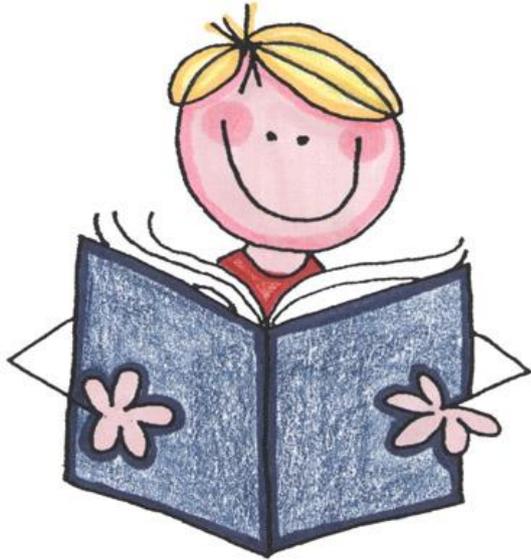
Offer to share the reading with your child or read it to them. Sometimes a particular book is too hard or just gets too frustrating for the child. Older children can find it hard to choose something they will enjoy or a challenge to 'get into' a harder book. You could remind them of books they have enjoyed before so they can look for similar ones, or read the beginning together to get them started.

“My child can read but refuses to do it!”

Many children, particularly boys, reach a stage in their reading where they know the basics but lose motivation to read independently. Try links with other interests e.g. storybooks tied in with films or TV, magazines and manuals to do with a sport or hobby. Some children's interest quickly outstrips their reading ability – they want to read longer novels but can't read quickly enough. Audio stories can be a great way to introduce longer stories and children will often feel confident to try reading the book. Try to carry on reading aloud regularly – you can read the start of a chapter and then your child may want to carry on by themselves.

“I don't know what my child is reading because they read on their own now!”

Let your child know that you respect their independence but you are still interested. Ask them to read a page aloud or tell you what is happening in the story so far. You could also ask them to recommend something you would enjoy reading, then talk about it together. They may be interested in trying books that you enjoyed at their age.



“Kids who read, succeed”

Some kids enjoy reading from an early age and this continues throughout life. Others are more reluctant and need a little bit of

persuasion to motivate them to read. Whichever camp you fall into, use our *Recommended Reads* to find a book that is suitable for you!

Reading for Pleasure: ages 11-14

- *Theodore Boom*: John Grisham
- *Northern Lights Trilogy*: Philip Pullman
- *Young Sherlock Holmes*: Andrew Land
- *Time Raiders series*: Alex Scarrow
- *Jamie Johnson series*: Dan Freedman

Reluctant Readers: ages 11-14

- *Street Corner Dad*: Alan Gibbons
- *Rugby Academy Series*: Tom Palmer
- *Anzac Boys*: Tony Bradman
- *Torrent*: Bernard Ashley
- *Dum Chocolate Eyes*: Kevin Brooks

Question Generator

It is essential that children **understand what they read** and start to develop that understanding on a deeper level – this is the progression they make through Key Stage 3 to GCSE and beyond. To help your child develop their reading skills, try asking them a variety of questions that encourage them to think about their reading. *(The words in **bold** are the key parts of the question that will help support development.)*

- Are you enjoying the story and **why**?
- **What** kind of story is it? How do you know?
- **Who** is the main character and what do they look like?
- **How** would you describe their personality?
- **Where** is the story set and what adjectives have been used to describe it?
- **When** is the story set? Now? In the past? In the future? **How** do you know?
- **What do you think will happen next** in the story? **Why**?
- **Can you think of any other story** with a similar theme?
- **Why** did he/she want to...?
- **What if** he had not...?
- **What would you have done**?



Punctuation!

It is easy to say, "Check your work for punctuation," but it is not so easy if a child doesn't know what type of punctuation they need or what it looks like. Use the table below to help you both check punctuation in written work.

Punctuation Mark	Name	What it does
.	Fullstop	Marks the end of a sentence
,	Comma	Marks a short pause in a sentence or breaks up a list
;	Semi-colon	Marks a longer pause
:	Colon	Used before a list or before giving evidence to prove a point
“ ”	Speech marks/ inverted commas	Used around direct speech or a quotation
?	Question mark	Used at the end of question
!	Exclamation mark	Shows surprise, shock, excitement
...	Ellipsis	Shows something is missing
()	Brackets	Used around an aside, or less important point
-	Dash/ hyphen	Used informally to show a pause, or to link two words
'	Apostrophe	Shows possession or a missing letter



We have a range of resources and booklets that can be provided upon request but the most accessible and free resource is the internet. Below are some websites that you may find useful. I am available in school to assist you and your child in any way I can so please contact me if you have any specific literacy concerns or if you just need a little bit of advice.

Some useful websites:

www.edmundricecollege.co.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

www.booktrust.org.uk

www.child2000.org/lit-tips

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english (*Adult Literacy*)

<https://www.nala.ie/> (*Adult Literacy*)

ERC LITERACY

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