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A place to
SMILE

Y4-Y6 READING AMBASSADOR AWARDS



Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the success of the reading challenge for Y1-3, we have launched our 'Reading Ambassador' Awards for Y4, 5 and 6 to encourage regular reading at home. Although similar to the reading challenge for younger pupils, there are some key differences.

How the awards work

Each child in Y4-Y6 brings home a Reading Ambassador Award card. They are challenged to read at home on a daily basis for at least 10 minutes, and each day that they read, they should record the date, what they have read, and tick whether they read independently or with an adult. They must then get an adult to sign. At least once a week, **all** children are asked to **read aloud** or to discuss the book they are reading **with an adult** – they might read a few pages of their book to you, or you could ask them some questions about what they have read. This is to help ensure that as independent readers, they are showing understanding of what they are reading and to help them express their opinions about a text. Further guidance about developing children's comprehension skills is available from the schools' website (parent guidance section).

Children who are not yet confident in reading independently (i.e. those who are reading colour-banded books or the caterpillar/butterfly labelled library books) should still be reading aloud to an adult **at least 3 times per week** and preferably daily, so that they can be supported with tricky words, encouraged to apply their decoding skills and to help them develop their fluency and expression by hearing how sentences sound out loud.

Alongside regular home reading, for each award the children are set 4 or 5 reading challenges that must be completed as well – for example, to read for a purpose at home, to read a poetry book, or to read a non-fiction book linked to a subject they are interested in. These challenges are noted on the back of the reading award card and are designed to encourage our older pupils to read a range of text types.

Once they have read at home 50 times and completed the first set of challenges, they will receive their Reading Ambassador House Award - this is a specially designed pin badge in their house colour which can be worn on their uniform, if they wish. They can then work towards their Onyx Award (another 50 times), the Topaz Award (another 100 times) and finally the Amethyst Award (a further 120 times). Each award badge is a different colour. The award scheme is designed to take more than one academic year to complete, but if they read regularly, even our Y6 pupils could earn up to the Topaz Award this coming year. Children in Y4/5 will be able to continue to work on the award over the summer holidays and into the next academic year. We hope that the awards will help to motivate your child to read regularly at home, and also reward those who already read regularly for pleasure. Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any



questions, please speak to your child's class teacher – below are the answers to some possible questions which we hope will help answer your queries.

My child has read twice today – can they count both times on the challenge card?

No – we are obviously delighted if your child is keen to read more than once a day, but for the awards, they should only record once per day as the idea is to sustain the regular reading over time.

My child only wants to read independently – can they still earn the award?

*No – to earn the award, children need to be either reading aloud a section of a book or discussing their reading with an adult **at least once per week** (more frequently for less confident readers).*

I usually listen to my child read more than once a week – is this still to be encouraged?

Absolutely! Once a week is the minimum set for reading aloud or discussing a book, but it is still a really useful strategy to help them develop their reading skills and vocabulary. For confident readers, it is the discussion around the text which may be most useful – checking they are understanding the text, asking their opinion and helping them to extend their vocabulary. With newly independent readers, it is very important that they continue to practice their decoding skills, which is why we ask for children on colour bands or caterpillar/butterfly books to read aloud a minimum of 3 x per week. However, we also want children to experience the enjoyment of immersing themselves in a book which is why we want to recognise the importance of independent reading, too.

Can my child count books they record on the daily chart for the challenges at the bottom, too?

Yes – the challenges can work alongside the regular reading challenge, as they are designed to help the children broaden their reading.

My child isn't interested in the awards and is reluctant to read– what should I do?

Have a chat to your child's class teacher. At the start of the year, teachers are going to be raising the profile of the awards and setting this as part of the weekly homework, but they may have other ideas to encourage them to read. You could encourage them to consider different text types – if they don't like stories, perhaps non-fiction books, a newspaper or web page might be a way to engage them? Do they ever see adults in the house reading for a purpose or pleasure? Helping your child to see that reading is for more than just for school may help! For more ideas, come along to the reading information meeting for parents later this term.

Why can't children just practise their reading at school?

Children read frequently at school, across the curriculum. They have opportunities to read as a class, in a group, on their own or as part of topic work. However, just as a musician needs to practice their instrument outside of their lesson, and a footballer needs to spend time playing and refining their skills, we know that your child is more likely to become a proficient reader if they have additional time out of school to practise – that's why we have invested in the Reading Ambassador Awards. We hope that your child will enjoy taking part this year.

Where can I get ideas to help my child widen their reading?

Our library manager is always happy to suggest ideas, or you might like to come along to the reading information meeting for parents in November. There are also some great websites – try www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk which provides lots of ideas and can even let you know similar authors to the ones your child may be 'stuck' on which is great to help them diversify.

Yours sincerely,



Lesley Pennington – Headteacher