



## DARELL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

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### **Promoting Reading for Pleasure at home**

One of our three big goals across the school is 'For every child at Darell Nursery and Primary School to love reading.'



As a school, it is our belief that reading is integral to children's development, their love of learning and their understanding of the curriculum. We believe that reading should be at the heart of what we do as a school and that all children - no matter what their starting points are – deserve access to a reading rich school which nurtures their love for and enjoyment of reading. We believe that reading is 'the master skill of school, unlocking the academic curriculum for our pupils.' (Quigley, A. 2020, Closing the Reading Gap). It is our goal to develop a school that places reading at the heart of what it does.

- School Development Plan, 2020/2021

A lot of work has gone into achieving this goal already:

- Raising money through the completion of a 20km walk undertaken by Mr Porter, Mr Gilbert and Mrs Claridge so that we could buy high-quality texts
- Adapting the 'Reading Challenge' initiative whereby every child has the opportunity to earn 'dots' for every signature they receive at home which will result in a certificate (after 50 dots) and a new book (after 100 dots)
- Running book sales, again to raise money to buy new high-quality texts
- Asking the children to complete a questionnaire to gauge their current opinion on reading
- Promoting and celebrating 'teachers as readers' through displaying around the school what all the adults in school are reading



### **Darell's Recommended Reads**



We have created (and attached) our own 'Darell Recommended Reads' lists which outline some of our favourite books for each age group. Please do have a look at these lists as they include classic fiction, modern fiction and also texts that reflect our wonderfully diverse community. This would be a fantastic starting place if you were considering buying your child a new book as a Christmas present (we personally think it is the best present idea!).

These books can also be enjoyed by adults! Mr Gilbert's favourite series from the Year 5 and 6 list is 'Cogheart' by Peter Bunzl and Mrs James is currently reading, and thoroughly enjoying, 'The Infinite' by Patience Agbabi!

At parent meetings, we are often asked the question, 'How can we encourage reading at home?' so we have put together the following information to support you and your child's reading journey.

## **Reading role models**

As parents, we read all the time but not necessarily books. We read the news, whether on social media, apps or in print. We read magazines that match our interests. We read instructions and manuals. However, children often don't see us doing this, or are unaware that we are actually reading.



We need to make sure that the children see that we are reading and why we are doing it. Many children see their parent on their phone and just assume that they are playing a game as that is what they would use the phone for. Not understanding that we may be reading. Similarly, with kindles, children may think it is just a tablet.

Our reading comes under two headings:

- Reading to inform
- Reading for pleasure

Reading to inform is where we are reading to find out something. Whether this is the news, weather or more information that will help us in our day to day lives.

Reading for pleasure is what we choose to read because we want to: funny stories, anecdotes, fiction books, biographies.

Take the time to tell your children what you are reading and why you are reading it. Where possible, it is great for them to actually see you reading, whether it is a book, a magazine or a blog. This then normalises the behaviour in the house and the children will see it as an option of something to do – rather than a chore or something they have to do in school!

## **Bedtime stories**



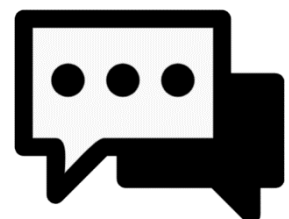
This seems an easy solution but latest figures from the Book Trust suggest that only 28% of primary school aged children get a bedtime story every night. Often this is because of time restraints but the benefits are huge. Reading to your child for just ten minutes a day/night can improve their vocabulary, encourage them to read independently and can also improve parent/child relationships. This is not just a KS1 issue. Older children love a bedtime story too (even if they won't always admit it!). In school, teachers read a story (or a

chapter of a story) to their class every day, from Nursery up to Year 6, and it is a treasured part of the school day, enjoyed by all!

Bedtime stories can be a picture book, comic, poetry, non-fiction or a chapter book. Whatever you and your child want to read. If you don't already do this, give it a go! We're confident that it will quickly become an unmissable part of your day! An extra tip would be to do the voices! You can have a good giggle together at your brilliant/miserable attempts at doing various accents!

## **Book talk**

Sometimes, children will just want to sit and listen to a book because they are so engrossed in the story. This is completely fine and there is no need to quiz them after every chapter that you/they read. But sometimes informal book talk can be a fantastic way to discuss what has been read. If the child is reading, they may show confidence in decoding the words. However, it is important to check that they are understanding what they are reading. Making connections between the story and real life or another story is a



great idea. 'Ooh, that character reminds me a bit of granny because...' or 'Can you remember when we got lost in the woods and had to carefully follow the muddy trail...' Talking about a book with your child can make them see things that they might not have spotted or connections that they might not have made previously.

To help support you with book talk, there are reading questions in the school newsletter every week. We have also created a list of questions that you can ask your child as you/they are reading. Please find these attached to the email.

Finally, we have created a few videos of Darell staff reading with children in school and using the questions to facilitate meaningful book talk. These are saved on the Reading area of the school's website.

<https://www.darell.richmond.sch.uk/page/?title=Reading&pid=315>

### **Allow their choices**



This can be a tricky one because we would like our children to be reading high-quality texts. However, if we belittle their choices, they may feel that their choices are unworthy. It is all about balance! Sometimes they may choose to read a comic or graphic novel. Sometimes they may want to read a non-fiction text about the topic they are learning at school. Sometimes they may choose to enjoy a familiar picture book. Sometimes they may choose to read, or listen to you read, a chapter book.

As mentioned earlier, we have created our own 'Darell's Recommended Reads' for fiction texts that are suitable for all. There are many reviews online, as well as videos of professionals reading the stories aloud (we will soon have some videos of Darell staff reading too!) so you can decide whether the book is suitable for you and your child before you commit to spending any money. Hopefully, our libraries and charity shops will re-open soon, so that you can readily borrow books or buy books for a fraction of the price. You can access 'pre-owned' books online which makes book buying more affordable. As we've said, books make the best presents! For her thirtieth birthday, the school bought Mrs James 'The Way Past Winter' by Kiran Millwood Hargrave (another fantastic book on the Year 5 and 6 list)!

We are excited about the idea of working as a whole community to achieve our big goal: 'For every child at Darell Primary and Nursery School to love reading'!

Please let us know if there are additional ways in which we can support you.

'Everyone is a reader. Some just haven't found their favourite book yet!'

Kind regards,

The Darell staff