

# A short guide to...



## READING AT HOME

At Occold School, we love teaching children to read and nurturing their reading habits as they progress through the school. When it comes to reading, we know we are one half of a partnership between school and home. We see a direct link between children's success at school and their home reading habits and we are keen to support children and their families.

**We need your help, and we are keen to support you.**

### Did you know?

Children who enjoy reading are three times more likely to have good mental wellbeing than those who do not enjoy reading.

Learning to read is the most important thing that children will learn to do at primary school. Reading is important for every subject and in many aspects of daily life.

The adults in a child's family play a crucial role in how they become readers. The good news is that this can be pleasurable choice not a miserable chore!

Children learn how reading works and the pleasures of reading from you:

- 📖 when you read to your children
- 📖 when you enjoy books together
- 📖 when they see you reading
- 📖 when you talk to each other about what you are reading
- 📖 when you talk about stories and information
- 📖 when you choose books for them and with them
- 📖 when you go to the library together
- 📖 when you look to reading as part of other activities - holidays, crafts, visits, cooking, wildlife...
- 📖 when books are a welcome gift

*"Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes **every single day** reading aloud."*

Mem Fox, Australian children's author.



It may seem a difficult thing to do. Really, it can be one of the best bits of the day. The hardest part may be finding the time -and the energy. But it's worth it, and can be very special for both adult and child. For the child, it's a great gift -not only do they get to spend a quiet time with you, you are helping them towards a skill and a degree of well-being that they will be able to call upon throughout their lives.

Reading is a great excuse to have a quiet time, a sit down, drink at hand!

**Make it a snuggle not a struggle.**

Sharing a book is a good time to get to know each other better, or an excuse to find out what's worrying them, a time to show you love them, a time to chill out...



Sharing books, reading them aloud is the basis for successful reading. When you read to a child, they learn about story, they learn how interesting and fun reading can be. They learn how the words on the page sound and how they are filled with meaning. They learn about ways of being, other worlds, ways of thinking. You give them a head start. You show them how books work.

When you read stories and poems, fiction and non-fiction aloud to children, you are allowing them a space to imagine, to enter another world, to experience something different. For some children your voice becomes their internal reading voice. They learn from you, how different writers sound. You may have noticed that when you read something by an unfamiliar author, or where you don't know much about the subject, your reading is slower, harder. Children have much less experience of writers and of the world so almost every new text is harder for them. Your reading voice helps bridge the gap.

## Who's doing the reading?

Please don't be anxious about getting your child to read to you. Don't worry if they don't want to. They have been working hard all day and, especially when they are first learning to read, reading is exhausting. So read to them. It's great if your child wants to read to you. And if they get tired, it's great if you read to them...

-  When reading familiar texts, encourage children to join in and to fill in easily predictable words. Share the reading between you. Some books have simpler text alongside the main text - words in speech bubbles, words in bold. Children often like to read these whilst you read the main parts.
-  Accept that sometimes children like to read the same book over and over again. That is OK! It is especially important when children are learning to read. Familiar, predictable texts are not only fun, they give children a chance to become familiar with the words and the rhythms of the language. Children will be happy to enjoy these books on their own or with family and friends.
-  As children grow older and more independent, there is no need to stop reading to them. You can read books that they will enjoy but which are still just a bit difficult for them to read easily for themselves.
-  Don't discard books with pictures. Illustrations remain an important part of the reading experience. Some picture books are designed specifically for older readers. Some Key Stage 2 readers enjoy graphic novels. Most good picture books are so much more than stories illustrated by pictures. Your children will spot details and patterns that you may miss. The story is as much in the pictures as in the words. The illustrations often contain puzzles and jokes that can keep you amused as well as your child. There is a lot to talk about.
-  Share your own reading with your children –that might mean looking at a map together, seeing what route you will take and where the best motorway stop might be, or looking at a guide book or recipe or discussing a football report or using an identification book.

## Get Talking!

Young readers grow through talking about books with the adults they know.

Talk often arises easily from sharing a book, but sometimes it is handy to have some ways of starting the conversation:

- 📖 Which is your favourite page.... favourite picture... or most interesting character?
- 📖 Ask, does that remind you of....Auntie Lil/ our dog/ when we went to Aldi's?
- 📖 Ask what they think is going to happen next ... why they think a character has done this or that...
- 📖 Ask would you have done that?... what might you do? .
- 📖 Ask how they think a character is feeling.
- 📖 Wonder about things -I wonder why Piggie is sad? I wonder why the illustrator has made that page so dark.... I wonder if we would do the same thing now. This is not a test, just a chance to wonder about things together.
- 📖 Talk about the pictures – do they help to tell the story? Younger children may use pictures to tell their own version of the story. Borrow a wordless picture book (purple sticker in our school library)
- 📖 Listen to your child's questions and explore them. Neither you nor the child need have all the answers. You may have different answers to the same question. That's one of the things that makes reading interesting.
- 📖 Explore words. Enjoy words. Check sometimes whether your child understands a particular word. Play with unusual words that sound good.
- 📖 Share the emotions of a book. Be surprised. Laugh together. Be quiet and, maybe, sad together.

...and if your child is reading independently ask them ...

- 📖 Tell me about the story you are reading.
- 📖 Would I enjoy it?
- 📖 You might like to read the books that children are reading in class, especially if they are in Year 5 and 6. You may well enjoy these titles and many of them are deeply thought-provoking.

If you are worried about your child's reading or want to know more about which books to choose, make an appointment to see their teacher by contacting the school office:

[office@occoldprimaryschool.org](mailto:office@occoldprimaryschool.org)

## A Guide to Our School Library

Children may borrow up to 3 books from the library at a time.

Bug Club Phonics/Oxford Reading Tree		Decodable scheme books to support children in their phonics learning
Green sticker		EYFS learn to read core books
Blue sticker		EYFS literature core books
Yellow sticker		Year 1/2 learn to read core books
Orange sticker		Year 1/2 literature core books
Yellow sticker <b>with black dot</b>		Year 2/3 learn to read books
<b>M</b>	Letter stickers	Key Stage 2 fiction (letters refer to first letter of the author's surname)
Number and colour sticker		These books are non-fiction information and explanation texts; they are classified using the Dewey Decimal system.
Red sticker		Key Stage 2 picture books
Purple sticker		Wordless picture books

Encourage your child to start collecting books for their own home library. New books can be expensive but they make lovely gifts and can be picked up cheaply in charity shops. Research shows that children who say they have a book of their own are six times more likely to read above the level expected for their age than their peers who don't own a book (22% vs. 3.6%).

Children will read more books than is reasonable for anyone to think of buying. So join Suffolk Libraries. It's free! You can borrow as many as 20 books per child. It allows you and your child to experiment – to try out unfamiliar books – to read all the books in a series or by an author they like – to find the newest books and to choose fiction, non-fiction, poetry and picture books.