

15 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Whole School Reading Initiative and Dealing with Explicit Themes

I am delighted to write to you today to update you on our approach to whole school reading that was launched in September 2022.

As you will know, literacy is a huge predictor of a students' progress at school. Evidence suggests that reading frequently, and at pace can reap significant rewards for students. National Centre for Education Statistics have said, "20 minutes of reading per day resulted in students becoming likely to score better than 90% of their peers in standardised tests."

Since September 2022, students across Year 7 and 10 have been reading for 20 minutes, two days a week. This programme has been taking place in Study Support or form time. In Year 7, form tutors have been reading aloud - with huge success - to their tutees. In subject areas, teachers have also been embedding reading aloud into their lessons.

To support this work, please see below the list of books which we are encouraging you to read with your son/ward. We have chosen texts that are both popular and challenging for all our students. We will look to broaden the diversity of the book selection as the programme develops each year - seeking feedback from both staff and students. This year, while we prefer fiction as it is proven to develop empathy, we have chosen to add a non-fiction text for each year group.

What next? It would be fantastic if parents/carers could discuss what your son/ward is reading at school and encourage them to actively take part in this programme. We hope that, as a result, whole school reading will inspire students to read more frequently. We are wholly confident that this in turn will improve their academic vocabulary and reading level.

YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10
Fiction 'Once' by Morris Gleitzman	Fiction 'After the War' by Tom Palmer	Fiction 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' by Robert Louis Stevenson	Fiction 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell
Fiction 'The Graveyard Book' by Neil Gaiman	Fiction 'Ghost Boys' by Jewell Parker Rhodes	Fiction 'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins	Fiction 'The Boxer' by Nikesh Shukla
Non-fiction Articles from The Day or Complete Issues linked to Theme of the Week	Non-fiction Articles from The Day or Complete Issues linked to Theme of the Week	Non-fiction Articles from The Day or Complete Issues linked to Theme of the Week	Non-fiction Articles from The Day or Complete Issues linked to Theme of the Week

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Dealing With Explicit Themes

Our goal is to develop our students as curious, articulate and tolerant young people who are ready to go out into the world as confident communicators. We want our students to become fluent, independent readers that develop good reading habits, enabling them to read widely outside of school.

As mentioned earlier, our aim is to give all students the opportunity to access a range of academically challenging texts. All texts are reviewed before they are shared with students - both in whole school reading initiatives and the classroom - to check that they are appropriate. This said, we are unable to guarantee that some texts will not include some “edgy” vocabulary or touch on some sensitive but important themes.

Given this, we do feel strongly about keeping texts in their original form and not cutting out expletives or challenging themes if they do appear in a text. We believe it is our responsibility as teachers to educate students about the moral lessons behind all forms of the English language. This provides our students with a better understanding and appreciation of the power that language can have and its effects.

If you would like to know more about the texts that your child will explore at Isleworth & Syon, our full curriculum journey is available to you [via the website](#). If you would like to know more about the texts we teach, please do let your child’s class teacher know.

Thank you and good luck with your collaborative reading.

Yours faithfully,



Simon Fisher
Co-Headteacher

