



# Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School

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*Success with Care*

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RBE/

September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Reading for Pleasure at DHFS: strategy update

We love books at DHFS. We like a good story, yes – but, more than this, we understand the tremendous power of books. Books teach, inspire and comfort as well as entertain; they help young people to understand themselves and the world around them. Research consistently shows a positive correlation between reading for pleasure, strong mental health and academic success. Books are important.

At DHFS, we are extremely proud of our reading for pleasure culture – and we understand that we must not become complacent. This year, the National Literacy Trust's Annual Literacy Survey found that **just 2 in 5 (43.4%) of 8 – to 18-year-olds** surveyed said they enjoyed reading in their free time, the lowest reading enjoyment recorded since 2005. Overall, the percentage of children and young people who read daily in their free time has decreased from **38% in 2005 to 28% in 2023**.

We understand that young people need advice, support and motivation to make this vital life skill a habit for life, and, as a school community, we have a strategic focus on reading. Today, I am writing to you to discuss the initiatives that we have in place at DHFS.

### Reading Week 1: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> -Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October

During reading week, our students are expected to read independently for the first ten minutes of every lesson. They may bring in any reading material that they choose, as long as it is suitable for the school context, as the focus is on **reading for pleasure**.

It is a normal school expectation that students bring a reading book to school, and during 'Reading Week' this is especially important. Mentors have reinforced this message and students have been encouraged to use the LRC (Learning Resource Centre) to ensure that they have plenty of engaging reading material. **Please speak to your child to check that they have a book and are ready.**

### Reading Together

This Reading Week we are excited to unveil a new strategy! Reading Together will encourage student engagement with books and allow access to the vast array of benefits associated with regular reading – regardless of their reading ability. Mentors from a range of specialist areas – not just English – will read aloud in mentor time for one morning every week. Book Trust research tells us that, when students have a range of 'reading influencers' in their lives, they are more likely to read for pleasure

themselves. Reading aloud will ensure that all students – irrespective of their reading age – will be able to access thought-provoking and enjoyable texts.

The carefully curated selection of books are all well-written and stimulating; they are suitable for 11-18 year olds and all link to DHFS SMSC themes. Should you like to join your child on their reading journey, the titles are as follows: Buxton and Baggaley are reading *The Blue Book of Nebo* by Manon Steffan Ros; Millican and Fanshawe have *Angel of Gasmere* by Tom Palmer; Spaven and Gosforth are designated *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes.

### **Staff Reading Profiles**

Role models are a powerful way to inspire students to read. You are a role model to your child, and your reading habits, support and encouragement hold great influence. In school, we aim to continue your good work. With this in mind, all staff at DHFS – support staff and the site team, as well as teachers - have been invited to complete a Reading Profile for display around the school.

A Reading Profile contains information about a staff member's favourite book, details about their reading habits – when and where they read, for example - and also provides valuable tips and 'ways in' for less experienced readers. This invaluable resource makes visible a wide range of reading habits and means that students see a vast array of book titles that they may not have otherwise encountered.

One of the best things about Reading Profiles is that they start conversations about books; this can present parents and carers with an opportunity to become involved in the discussion, guide their child and champion reading.

Books do not have age ratings in the same way that films do, and book recommendations must always be part of a multi-stage, supportive process that is tailored to the individual needs and context of each student. In school, our teaching staff and librarians are able to provide this bespoke advice, as well as enable access to appropriate reading material. Should you have any questions about the suitability of reading material, please do not hesitate to contact us in school.

Please continue to support your child in their reading journey; even ten minutes of reading a day can have positive impact on everything from attainment in school to more robust mental health.

Yours faithfully,



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