

Our ref: JAR/667.DLY

5th October 2022

Dear Families

'The Future our Business'

At Stowmarket High School we recognise the vital importance of literacy skills to our students' academic success, emotional wellbeing and future aspirations. Research suggests that the key to embedding these essential literacy skills is nurturing reading for pleasure, which nationally many young people lose as they progress through their secondary education. In this letter, I want to outline just some of the strategies we are employing at SHS to encourage all our students to become lifelong readers.

Reading is at the forefront of our tutor programme with twice weekly sessions dedicated to the teacher reading to his/her tutor group with each student reading along from their own copy. The titles selected for this programme are ones that many of our young people would not choose themselves. They feature characters from diverse or challenging backgrounds, female protagonists and stories from our country's rich history.

As you would expect, reading is a critical part of the English curriculum. During Year 7, students will be exposed to a wide variety of modern and classic texts through their study of gothic fiction, Anthony Horowitz's Raven Gate and our history of literature unit. Each student will also be given a copy of 'Amber Under Cover', by E M Norry this half term which they will be reading during their library lessons and completing short recall quizzes as part of their English homework.

All students will have a lesson in the Learning Resource Centre, which is where our library is located. Here students can borrow a diverse selection of titles including books that can aid their wellbeing, dyslexia friendly texts and titles which link to their English curriculum. To complement our library provision, each student in Year 7 will have the opportunity to visit Stowmarket town library and be shown how they can access literally any book in the county, free of charge.

We are also working closely with the National Literacy Trust's 'Get Stowmarket Reading' campaign which enables us to run termly book hunts, help us to populate our book swap bookcases and distribute other titles to our young people. We will be participating in their 'Take 10 to read' event on 10th October and other annual literacy events such as World Book Day in March.

This year, we are also running a Readathon between 10th October and the 11th November where students will be encouraged to 'Read for Good'. This national sponsorship scheme aims to raise money to provide books and storytellers to all of the UK's major children's hospitals. We know that this is an especially difficult time financially for many families, but if you are able to help, even in a small way then it will be very much appreciated and will help to inspire the more reluctant reader to pick up a book.

Finally, you may have heard your child mention Bedrock and wondered what it was. This digital literacy improvement tool teaches students the vital language and grammar they need to succeed at school. As your child progresses through the curriculum, they will study hundreds of words, whilst reading fiction and non-fiction texts regularly. Ideally, students should be logging on to Bedrock as part of their English homework twice a week for around 20 minutes to build up their vocabulary skills.

As their guardian, you can see their knowledge organiser, and you will receive weekly progress reports on your child's progress via email when you create your Bedrock account. Your child will have been given a letter containing the unique access code you need to set up your Bedrock account. If you have not received this or have any questions about any of the items in this letter, do email me at j.arnold@stowhigh.com.

Kind regards

J Arnold

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Director of English & Literacy Co-ordinator