

Rivacre Valley Primary School

Parent Handbook

Learning to read:

Reading is a vital skill that we must teach the children at a young age. At Rivacre Valley we promote reading for enjoyment, therefore when you hear your child read at home, it must be a pleasurable experience rather than a chore!

Listening to stories is an important part of childhood. A bedtime story is always a great way of spending time with your child, build an enjoyment of books and the most beneficial – it gets them off to sleep quicker!



Choosing a book:

Your child will bring home a reading book which is colour banded according to their reading level. In KS2 they may also bring home a book chosen from the library. These books are for you to share with your child, reading to or with them. Your child may also have books at home that they might want to read with you. It is through choosing books that your child will develop their own preferences.

Reading the same book time and time again is a good thing. We want the children to really know the stories well. This helps them build language and storytelling skills. When a child knows what a book “says” they then have the confidence to read it without fear of getting it wrong.

Libraries are fantastic places to view a range of books. The internet is a good way of finding out what new books have been released.

What else can your child read?

- Comics
- Magazines
- Travel brochures
- Recipes
- Instructions for games
- Letters from you, family or friends
- Newspapers
- Sports reports
- Shopping lists

Creating the perfect reading environment

Here is a list of the things you can do to create the perfect reading environment for you and your child:

- Choose somewhere calm and quiet
- Sound excited and enthusiastic when talking about reading
- Have somewhere comfortable to sit next to each other. You will need to see what they are reading and they need to see what you are reading. This could be on the bed, sofa ...
- Talk about the book before, during and after reading it.

Be a good role model for reading

To be a good role model you must

1. Handle books with care
2. Let your child see you reading for pleasure
3. Always stay positive and encouraging, even when frustrated with your child. Instead praise them, then help them.
4. Continually use praise – “well done, that was brilliant sounding out ...”
5. Always value time for reading.



Strategies to help read a book

There are many ways we can help read a book. These are the main strategies we use in school. We may not use all of them every time; it depends on the text and the need of your child.

Making sense of a sentence:

If a child can't read a word, it sometimes helps to leave the word out and carry on reading to the end of the sentence. You can then go back and read it again, often the child will then be able to guess what the word is, especially if they look at the initial sound of the word. They could also look at the pictures to help.

Use of phonics:

Use the pure sounds the children are taught at school and blend together the letters / sounds they can see. Don't forget it is not always one sound for every letter. Sometimes two or more letters make one sound. If you are unsure of this ask your child's class teacher.

Word recognition:

Some words you just can't sound out, these are called "tricky words". Groups of these words are sent home for your child to learn. Each year group has a list of high frequency words they must learn. If you know the word is one they have learnt, ask your child to try and remember. If they can't, don't worry or get frustrated, tell them the word and see if they can remember it next time.

Rehearsing reading:

Rehearsing a page can help build a child's confidence in reading. Particularly in a more challenging book, try reading a page to them first, stressing any difficult words. When modelling the reading, use expression and different voices for different characters. Then give them a few minutes to read it to themselves, then they can read the page to you. The more you do this, the more words they will be able to recognise.



Questions to ask when reading

Before reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What does the picture on the front tell you?
- Where is the title? What does it say?
- Discuss the author and talk about other books they have read written by the same author

During reading

- What is happening in the picture?
- Why did the character behave that way?
- Have you ever ...?
- Why did ...?
- Where did ...?
- Who did ...?

After reading

- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- Did you like the book? Why?
- What was the most exciting part of the book?
- Would you choose that book again?
- Recall the main events in the story?



Questions for non-fiction books

- What fact(s) did you enjoy learning about the most?
- Of the information you learned, which would you like to share with someone else?
- Would you like to read more books on this topic? Why?
- What else would you like to learn about this topic?
- What pictures or illustrations did you find interesting? Why?

- Is this book like any other book that you have read? If so, how are they alike? How are they different?
- Which did you like better? Why?
- What kind of research do you think the author had to do to write this book?
- What questions would you ask the author if you ever had the opportunity to meet him / her?
- How can you learn more about this topic?
- Would the book be different if it had been written 10 years ago?
- Did you discover anything that might help you outside of school?

Reading records

What to write in my child's reading record:

It is important that reading records are completed at home as it gives the teacher an idea of how often they read and how well they are doing at home. Here are some ideas of what to write – try and keep your comments factual and positive.

- How enthusiastic was your child about the choice of the book?
- How well were they able to retell the story, showing their understanding?
- What strategies did they use to read unfamiliar words?
- Which interesting words did you discuss?
- Which high frequency words did they recognise in the text?
- How confident were they when reading new words?
- Did they answer questions well?
- Was there a common mistake that the teacher needs to know about?
- Did your child recognise when they had made a mistake? Did they correct themselves?
- How fluently did they read?
- Did they use expression?

Useful reading websites:

www.oxfordowl.co.uk – free online Oxford Reading Tree resources

www.jollylearning.co.uk – jolly phonics

www.bbc.co.uk – their school section contains words and pictures phonic activities

www.phonicsplay.co.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/stories

www.familylearning.org.uk

www.speedteach.co.uk

www.topmarks.co.uk

www.readingforlife.org.uk/parents www.bookstart.org.uk

Fabulous apps:

- Read Me Stories – Children's books – free
- Sentence Reading Magic – free
- abc Pocket Phonics lite – free
- Word Magic – pay fee
- The Story Mouse Talking Books – free
- ABC Animals – pay fee
- Reading for kids – I like reading – free
- Word domino – free
- Read with Biff, Chip & Kipper ... Free



In a nutshell

Reading is one of the most important skills a child needs to learn. To help them at home:

- Try to read as often as possible with your child
- Create the right environment for reading
- Model a positive attitude and enthusiasm for reading
- Let your child choose a book they enjoy – they don't always have to read it to you!
- Don't forget, memorising a book isn't cheating, it builds confidence, helps them know the structure of a story and makes reading fun!
- Let the child hold the book
- Talk about the book as you read

- Support them in reading new words, don't jump in too quickly and don't get cross when they can't do it
- If your child is too tired to read to you – it is ok to read to them
- A bed time story is the best way to get your child ready for sleep
- Most importantly – ENJOY TIME READING TOGETHER!!!

“A child who reads well is more likely to be successful in later life”

