

14 October 2016

Dear Parents

Reading for Pleasure



Inspiring a love of reading in our pupils has always been an important aim of the school. All pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are expected to read at least two core texts and two books of their own choosing during this school year: we hope to see pupils reading many more books. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be given a *Reading Passport* by their English teachers next week. This document lists *core texts* that your child will be expected to have read by the end of the school year in July 2017. Each core text presents something new and interesting and will capture the imagination. At times pupils may find elements of the text challenging: this will help them improve their reading ability. Core texts are differentiated and suitable for each child's reading ability. We believe that the level of challenge within these texts will enhance reading, literacy, writing, imagination and critical thinking skills.

All core texts and very many other suitable books may be borrowed from our newly expanded and refurbished school library. We suggest that local public libraries are used too. Parents may, of course, wish to buy copies of the recommended texts. They are widely available.

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 will have a designated *Reading for Pleasure* lesson in the school library, once a fortnight, as part of the English curriculum. During this lesson pupils will read a chosen book and will be set challenges and tasks in order to engage with characters, themes and structure and to think critically about author's craft. As your child completes a book, there will be a place in the reading passport for you to sign and date, as proof that the recommended reading is taking place.

In addition to dedicated time in English lessons, pupils in **all** year groups will be reading during registration time every Monday and Wednesday. It is expected that all pupils at Cardinal Heenan will have the selected *Reading for Pleasure* book with them at all times during the school day. As part of promoting a love of reading across the school, pupils will occasionally be asked to read in other subjects. They will also take part in dedicated *Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)* times. One of these sessions took place yesterday.

All pupils working in school are engaged in an entirely new curriculum which demands high levels of reading skills. Success at GCSE depends upon the ability to read, evaluate and analyse texts effectively. By encouraging your child to read, you will be enabling him or her to access a range of complex texts and supporting progress across the curriculum. I know that we can rely on the support of parents in promoting the love of reading.

Information Evening for Year 9 Parents and Pupils: 7.00pm on Wednesday 19 October

Parents of pupils in Year 9 are invited to a meeting next Wednesday which will advise on how parents can provide support for pupils following courses which lead to the new GCSEs and other examinations. Curriculum Leaders for English and Mathematics will speak briefly about the demands of new GCSE specifications in these key subjects. Parents receive a *Guide to Courses at KS4*. This will give details of the main topics to be covered in each specification, tips for parents and useful websites for research and revision etc. Please note that Year 9 Pupils are also invited to come to



this meeting. If parents are unable to attend, the written information distributed at the meeting will be sent home to you in the days following the Information Evening.

School Open Day: Thanks for Your Support

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents of the many pupils who supported our Open Day last Saturday. The event was attended by more than 1,000 visitors. Feedback was very good, with parents commenting positively on our articulate pupils, enthusiastic members of staff and the strong community feeling within the school. Thank you for your support.

Year 11 Skills Building Day

All our Year 11 pupils will take part a day of skills building activities next Tuesday, 18 October. This will include a focus on study skills and revision strategies in preparation for mock examinations, assistance in making post-16 education applications, writing personal statements and interview preparation. Pupils will also participate in *Restart a Heart Day* and receive training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). *Restart a Heart Day* is a Europe-wide initiative developed by the European Resuscitation Council. It was launched in 2013 to teach members of the public how to help restart the heart of someone who has suffered a cardiac arrest. Every year, around 350,000 Europeans suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. This may occur anywhere: in the street, at work, or while exercising or doing other strenuous activity. Unfortunately the vast majority of cardiac arrests happen at home, where family members are the only witnesses and the only ones with the chance to save their loved ones. It adds to the tragedy of the situation that we would lose a loved one just because we did not know what to do in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. Bystander CPR by lay people increases survival by two to three times. However, today it is delivered in only one in five OCHA cases. That is why fewer than one in 10 of these patients survive. Increasing this rate may save 100,000 lives in Europe per year.

Year 11 Information Evening

Thank you to all the parents of Year 11 pupils who attended the Information Evening last night. The evening gave parents important information about mock examinations, revision preparation and controlled assessment deadlines. Advice was offered about how to support pupils at home as well as the provision in place in school. Parental support is vital in this challenging final year and by working together we can ensure that your son or daughter is in the best possible position to achieve success.

Any finally...

The school closes for half term at 3.15pm next Friday, 21 October, and re-opens to pupils at 8.55am on Monday 31 October.

Yours sincerely



E A Cox
Headteacher