



The best way to get children excited about reading is to read to them from the beginning of their lives.

— J. K. Rowling —

AZ QUOTES



## Abbots Farm Junior School

### Developing Reading at Abbots Farm Juniors Parent Handbook



Reading for Pleasure,  
Achievement for Life!

CHILDREN ARE MADE READERS  
ON THE LAPS OF THEIR PARENTS.

— EMILIE BUCHWALD



## Reading at Abbots Farm Juniors

The teaching of reading is seen as a huge priority in our curriculum provision and there are many ways that we support every child in their journey to be coming a competent and enthusiastic reader:

- ◆ Each class has weekly guided reading sessions
- ◆ Each class has a weekly visit to our well-stocked library
- ◆ All children have opportunities to read independently in class throughout the week
- ◆ Teachers plan opportunities for children to apply their reading skills across other subject areas
- ◆ Our school library is open daily after school for children to visit with their families
- ◆ Our school library is open throughout the week at lunchtimes for different year groups
- ◆ Reading is part of our weekly homework expectation
- ◆ We have lots of reading interventions, run by our trained Teaching Assistants, for those children who may need further support.
- ◆ We welcome parent helpers who volunteer to come and listen to our pupils read

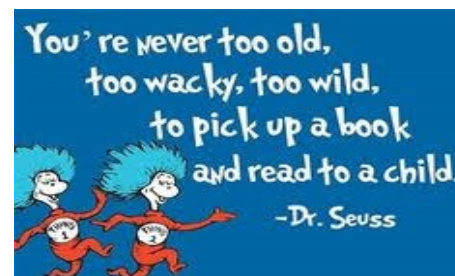
However, knowing just how important reading is as a life-long skill that enables children to access so much more of the curriculum, we are always looking at ways that we can provide additional opportunities for our pupils and this is where you come in! There are many ways that as parents you can work with us to support your child in becoming a reader:

- ◆ Encourage your child to read regularly at home (whether that is out loud to you or younger/older siblings, independently as part of their bedtime routine, or just as a relaxing activity to do when they have free time). We aim for children to read at least 4 times a week and then have this recorded and signed in their diary so that they can be entered into their weekly class raffle.
- ◆ Read regularly **to** your child. Many parents find that once their child is able to read with greater independence that they don't continue to read books **to** them. However, enclosed in this booklet is some interesting research which highlights just how important this is to both your child's academic performance but also to their general well-being. We also see in school on a daily basis just how much our pupils, including the most reluctant of readers, actually love being read to by an adult! If you don't believe me, try it – you'll probably discover how much you enjoy it, too!
- ◆ Discuss books with your child. Encourage your child to give opinions about books that they have read and share some of yours too, even if that includes those that you/they dislike. All of this helps children to find their place as a reader. Children who don't like reading are simply just children who haven't find the right type of book yet. So, help them to discover what they like. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, newspapers, online texts such as match reports for their favourite football team or celebrity gossip? There is something out there for everyone. Some children just need more support to discover what they like.
- ◆ Support your child to become an Active Reader (see the information attached). Whether that is when you are listening to them read or they are choosing to read alone, remind your child to see reading as an active process where their brain is engaged in many different ways, thinking and feeling, rather than just saying the words aloud or in their head.
- ◆ When listening to your child read at home, refer to the provided grid of ideas for what to remind a child before they start reading, and ideas for how to support your child with any particular common difficulties they may experience whilst reading
- ◆ Liaise with your child's teacher or speak to the office to arrange an appointment with Mrs Seneschall-Jones (English Lead) if you have any particular concerns or questions regarding supporting your child with their reading

## Research about the benefits of Reading To Your Child

Reading to your child is one of the most effective ways to build the “language” neural connections in their growing brain, supporting brain development. A recent scientific study, by The Academy of Pediatrics, was compiled to compare two groups of children. One group was read to often by an adult, while the other was not. It was found that those who were read to had had their “receptive” vocabularies (number of words they understand) increased by 40 per cent, while the non-reading group had increased by only 16 per cent over the same time period. Reading to your child does not only benefit their language development. It is only one among other very important benefits:

- ◆ Reading to your child helps you bond with him, and this gives your child a sense of intimacy and well-being. This feeling of intimacy will not only make your child feel close to you, the feeling of being loved and getting attention also helps them to develop good emotional well-being.
- ◆ The intimacy of reading to your child is a pleasurable experience to them and it will more likely result in them having a positive attitude towards reading as they grow up.
- ◆ It can calm your child, especially when they are fretful and restless.
- ◆ It promotes increased communication between you and your child.
- ◆ Children who are exposed to language by hearing words that are read to them and in conversation do better in school.
- ◆ Many studies show that students who love learning and do well in school were exposed to reading outside of the school environment.
- ◆ It promotes a longer attention span, which is an important skill for your child to be able to concentrate.
- ◆ It builds listening skills and imagination.
- ◆ Books teach your child about relationships, situations, personalities, and what is good and what is bad in the world they live in.
- ◆ When your child reaches a new stage in their growth, or experiences a new and unfamiliar situation, reading to your child about a story relevant to this new experience can relieve anxiety and help them to cope. For example, if your child is stressed about a first day in school, or about moving to a new location, you can read a book to them that shows that these should not be painful experiences.



Our school library is open after school every day. Each child may take two books at a time so please feel free to choose a book to read [to](#) them as well as a book for them to read by themselves

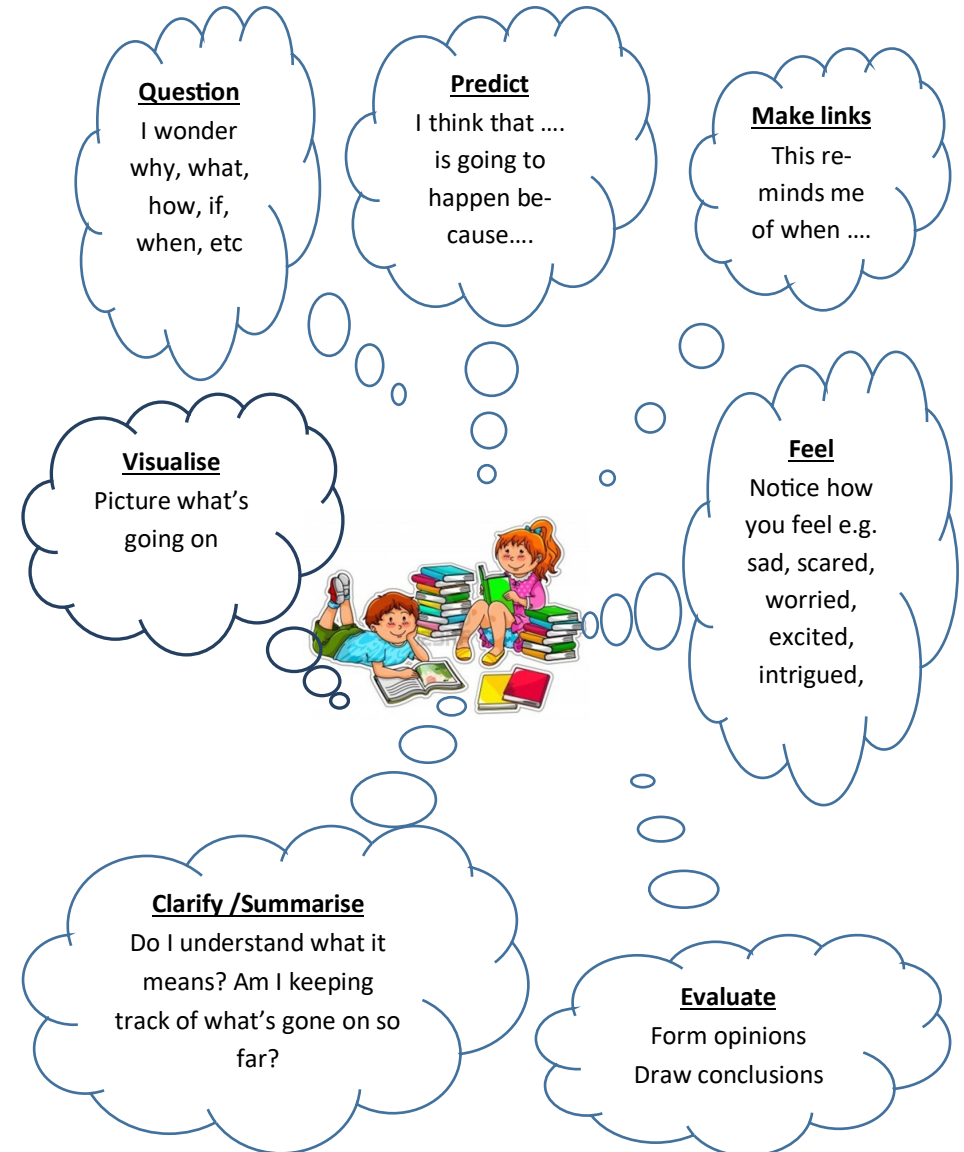
## Things to praise children for when reading to you:

- ◆ If they stop and sound a word out - “Good sounding out,” “Good use of your Phonics skills,” “Well done for working that one out rather than guessing,”
- ◆ If they ask you what a word means – “Well done for checking; you’ve learnt a new word now,” “Well done for noticing that you didn’t understand that bit,”
- ◆ If they self-correct as they (re-read a bit that they have read wrong or re-read a bit with the correct expression) – “Well done for correcting that bit – it shows you’re really thinking about what you read,” “Well done for noticing that what you read didn’t quite make sense,”
- ◆ If they use their ‘performance voice’ and read with appropriate expression, paying attention to punctuation and phrasing etc – “Well done for reading it with expression; it helps me to hear that you’ve understood what you read,” “Well done for using expression - you must have been an Active Reader and were thinking about what you read,”
- ◆ If they can summarise what they have read correctly – “Well done for being an Active Reader – you were obviously reading and thinking at the same time,”
- ◆ If they stop reading and make predictions – “Well done for thinking about it as you read,”
- ◆ If they stop reading and tell you what they are thinking/wondering about the plot/characters etc – “Well done for being an Active Reader – you’re remembering to read and think at the same time,”

# Active Reading

*It’s not just about reading the words; it’s about reading for meaning and reading for enjoyment.*

*Is your child an Active Reader?*



### Things to remind children before they start to read:

- Track your reading with a finger/book mark
- If you can't read a word, sound it out/break it up into sounds/syllables or read the rest of the sentence to help you work it out
- If you aren't sure what a word means, ask an adult to explain it or look it up together
- Remember to be an 'Active Reader'
- If you read a sentence and it doesn't seem to make sense as you read, self-correct (re-read the sentence/phrase again)
- If you feel that you are reading and not understanding the book or not gaining any enjoyment from it, it's OK to choose another book

Possible Difficulties	Suggested prompts from parents
Child is unable to decode the words on the page to read them	Encourage your child to sound out/break words up Model how to sound a word out. Say the sounds and ask them to blend them together and say the word. e.g w..e..n..t = went or sh..ou..t = shout Practise with some Phonics flash cards if your child is struggling to know the sounds (ask your child's teacher about these) Choose an easier book band Choose a fully decodable book (see specific section in the library)
Child is reading very slowly and having to sound out every single word/most words that they read	Remind your child that if they recognise the whole word by sight without sounding out then to read it straight away if they can. If they are unable to do this, choose an easier book band. Children who have to sound out every word will be using too much of their effort on the mechanics of reading aloud so that they will struggle to have the 'brain space' left to comprehend what they are reading, too

Child is missing out words/whole lines as they read	Encourage them to track with a finger/book mark Pick up on mistakes by simply asking them to re-read the incorrect phrase/sentence until they read it correctly. If they continue to miss whole lines out and don't notice, remind them that they need to try and be an 'Active Reader' as well as reading the words. If they still struggle, choose a book that is easier to understand in terms of content.
Child is not pausing at punctuation and carries on reading	Model how to pause at full stops, commas etc. and get child to echo it back to you. Remind your child to be an 'Active Reader' so that they are thinking as they read. If they still struggle, choose a book that is easier to understand in terms of content.
Child is reading word by word and therefore expression is either incorrect or reading is monotone (no expression used)	Remind your child to use their best 'Performance Voice' so that the expression they use should show that they are understanding what they read. If this does not make any difference and expression continues to be monotone or incorrect, Echo Read with your child. This means, read sentences phrase by phrase to your child with overt expression so that they copy these back to you with their 'Performance Voice'. Continue with this for a paragraph or two. After this, ask the child to summarise what is happening in the text so far. If they can tell you correctly, continue with a mixture of the Echo Reading and then your child reading sections in their best 'Performance Voice'. If, even after the first Echo Reading, your child is unable to accurately summarise the text back, encourage them to choose an easier book from the library (easier in terms of language and content).
Child is coming across lots of vocabulary that they do not know the meaning of and it is preventing them from understanding	Encourage your child to choose a different book
Child is not engaged with the book that they are reading	Encourage your child to choose a different book. Discuss their interests. What kinds of books do they like to read?