

The Gilbert School

Part of the Alpha Trust



TBA/lsc
March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: How To Help Kick-Start Reading

I wrote to you a few weeks ago regarding the most recent findings regarding young people and their reading habits.

We all know that reading confidence and ability supports attainment in all subjects; emotional wellbeing and mental health; school attendance and wider life outcomes including health and employment. But how do we get from the reluctant reader to one who prioritises a part of each day to develop this skill?

Research shows that regardless of gender, teenagers say that they are most motivated to read by **following up on a film or TV series or finding books that match hobbies or interests.**

Whilst this might not be what works for us, it can be useful to **'meet young people where they are'**.

For some students this means choosing books you may feel are 'too easy' or not of 'value'. It's important to let this go if you have a particularly reluctant teen!

Perhaps it will prompt a conversation about reading in your family setting. You could ask your child what they **are interested in knowing more about, or what they have recently watched that they would also enjoy reading or reading about.**

We have a very well stocked library and an expert Librarian. Our library catalogue, Accessit can be viewed by clicking [here](#). Here you can view details of the 10,000+ books we have available to borrow, together with links to suggested reading lists and more. Students can reserve books to be delivered to their form room and leave book reviews here too!

Over the next few weeks, we will continue to survey students regarding their reading habits, the books they would like to read, and what might help them read more often.

It has been heartening to see that so many of them report reading at home as "mum or dad make me!" (Well done) and the large numbers who are keen to read more but are just "not sure how to get started."

We have now also completed assessing all students in Years 7 – 8 for their most up to date reading age. From this, we will look at who needs a little extra help at school or at home and will be in touch with this information if relevant.

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Our aim is to see more of our already wonderful young people turning to all types of books as a source of knowledge, entertainment and connection. It doesn't matter if reading currently feels hard – it is a difficult skill and one that only gets better through practise.

A few easy wins:

- Commit to just 10 - 15 minutes a day where family members may sit and read quietly in the same room or read together.
- Listening to a young person read to you will show you how confident they really are. Regular reading will help increase confidence and expression.
- Colchester is the main local library, but there are others in the surrounding area. If that is too far, borrowbox.com is an online **free** library service that can be downloaded as an app onto phones to provide access to thousands of audiobooks.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully

Miss T Bates
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Teacher of English

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