

Dear Parents,

We have all had a busy few weeks settling into the new school year and getting to know all the routines for different times of the day. There have been lots of new things to take on board and the children have been fantastic!

We would like to take this opportunity to share some information about reading and phonic work in our classes so you have a clear picture on what your child is doing in school and how you can support them at home. This partnership between home and school is vital in helping your child reach their potential.

### Daily Groups

Each day we will be running short, small group sessions for phonics and reading skills (as well as number work and handwriting). The children are taught in smaller groups, working at their own ability, being closely supported as well as challenged.

These sessions will focus on elements such as: the reading and spelling of key words, sound work (phonics) to support reading and spelling, reading comprehension and discussion skills.

### Reading at Home

Book bags (containing 2 books) will be sent home weekly and need to be returned by the following **Monday**. A box will be placed in the classroom, near the door, where your child can place their book bag as they come into school.



### Reading Diary



A reading diary will be sent home with the books where we will record some notes about our reading session with your child. This may include a specific skill we focussed on that you can then work on together at home. If your child is working on learning initial sounds or key words these will be recorded on a separate sheet or book. If they have learnt all the sets of key words, then 'new' words to learn from the text will be recorded in the diary.

**This is a partnership between home and school, and we would be grateful if you could write a short note each week in your child's diary letting us know how they got on at home. *If there is no note, we will assume the books are unread, and send them home again the following week. Thank you for your support with this.***

## Initial Sounds

If your child is learning initial sounds these will be included on small flashcards. There is a fantastic video online which you may find useful if you are helping your child at home with learning sounds. It is a useful tool on the correct pronunciation of each sound. The YouTube video can be found by typing, 'Jolly Phonics Letter Sounds, British English' into Google. Once your child is confident with recalling all initial sounds, they will move onto the first set of key words.

## Key Words

Keywords are everyday words that come up continually when reading. In school we have sets of key words which each child focuses on as they progress with their reading. The key words start with list 1 to 5, moving on to rocket words (named because the words are written on little pictures of rockets) and then planet words (similarly named because the words are on planets). The aim is for your child to learn the key words off by heart so that they can instantly read the word every time they see it.



Unfortunately, there isn't a magic wand for learning the key words other than going over and over them daily in school and at home. The constant repetition helps your child memorise them. Additional things you could do at home to help your child is:

- ✚ Play a matching game to see if they can pair up the key words,
- ✚ Write the week's key words on little cards and place them around the house and go on a hunt to find and read them,
- ✚ Use different voices to read the words e.g. happy, sad, low pitched, whispering...
- ✚ Have fun learning them each week with a family member/friend over Facetime/Zoom...
- ✚ Spend time going back over previous key words so they are fresh in their mind.

Once your child can read all the sets of key words, we focus on spelling the key words and learning 'new' words from the current book your child is reading. These may sometimes be topic based.

*It would be beneficial to make a separate note of the sounds/key words/new words that your child is learning each week so once the book bag is returned to school you can continue to work on them daily at home.*

**Talking about the Books**



Alongside the reading of the words on the page is the understanding and discussion side of reading. In school we encourage the children to talk lots about what they can see in the pictures, what they've read, what they think is happening/going to happen, describing the characters and how they are feeling...

It is always so special to see children enjoying books and their reading. Children love being read to as well, and it gives us adults a chance to use our amateur dramatics as we bring the story to life. At Peterston we aim to foster a life-long love of reading and this journey starts at the early stage of your child's reading development.

We encourage the children to read (and be read to) as much as they can, and this certainly does not just have to be their 'school reading books'. There are so many fantastic things out there to read in the form of books as well as online reading material. Atlases, magazines, fact books, story books, poems are some examples of reading material we have in class that the children enjoy reading.

We are very much looking forward to the busy term ahead and we thank you again for your continued support.

Kind Regards,

The Willow Class and Apple Class Team