



Shropshire
Gateway
Educational Trust

Lacon Childe School

...more than just a school

Head of School Mrs. Rachel Croxton-Broome
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13 November 2024

Let's Keep a Love of Reading at Lacon

Dear Parents/Carers,

As students make the move from primary to secondary education it is easy to lose a focus on the basics with so many new curriculum demands and new interests. However, we need to remember that reading is the bedrock of success and the only way to access opportunities for life. Here at Lacon, we are committed to sustaining our student's exposure to books and doing all we can to support those for whom reading is a challenge.

Concerns over young people no longer reading in their own time is hitting the national news this week, with the National Literacy Trust's latest survey described as 'shocking and dispiriting.' The report states the gender gap in reading enjoyment has widened, with only 28.2% of boys now saying they enjoy reading in their free time, compared with 40.5% of girls. The benefits of reading are proven - with twice as many children who said they enjoy reading in their spare time having above average reading skills compared with those who don't enjoy it. As well as the academic advantages research shows reading is valuable for children's mental well-being and fosters empathy for others.

As educators, parents and carers we have a joint responsibility to ensure we do all we can to continue the reading journey, from the initial decoding of words to reading with fluency and comprehension. We are now using a new software package, 'Literacy Online' to test students' reading ages to establish support needs and intervention as well as those who need to be challenged further. Students' current reading ages will be communicated in future reporting with parents.

In some cases, students at secondary level may still need a phonics-based programme to build reading confidence. Once students can decode words fluency is the next step. Fluent reading supports reading comprehension. When pupils read fluently, they can then move onto comprehending and understanding texts confidently. This is essential for independence and for accessing information in exams. The reading journey to fluency is something we need to encourage students to persevere with through active reading both in and out of school.

As a parent or carer, you can help support us by continuing to read with your children at home, particularly if they are a reluctant reader, and by modelling expressive reading and fluency. Listening to audio books while following the text or using sub-titles for films could also be simple ways to support reading at home. Please encourage a break from social media and set aside some time for independent reading.

We are doing what we can to foster good reading habits in school. All students should have a reading book as an essential part of school equipment. English lessons start with private reading and progress is recorded and monitored. We encourage engagement with the library and set aside time for more extended reading lessons. This year, the current Year 7s have reading logs, monitored by their tutors, to continue with the reading routines from primary level. In Years 7, 8 and 9, we promote shared reading in tutor time through covering class readers and short stories. Last half term, we had a book

fair from scholastic and this coming term we are planning a 'book swap' event to recycle books and pass them on. Our reading group students at Key Stage 4 who are currently reading 'Rebecca' will be supporting us with this.

Let's work together to keep our young people reading and buck the national trend!

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Hennessy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Mrs Hennessy
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The Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust

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