



The Neale-Wade Community College

A Mathematics & Computing Specialist College

Wimblington Road March Cambs PE15 9PX

Principal: Tim Hitch



Maths &
Computing



Cambridgeshire
County Council



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Dear Parents,

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." Dr Richard Steele

I am writing to inform you about The Neale Wade Reading Champion scheme. We are well aware that in this day and age of computer games and social networking sites, reading can be squeezed out of children's lives and can be seen as an 'uncool' activity.

However, we are keen to promote independent, private reading and to try to dispel the geeky image which it has. We believe it is a very worthwhile pastime, because competency with reading greatly impacts on other areas of the curriculum – successful readers become successful writers and then do well in examinations across the curriculum. Reading broadens the vocabulary, improves spelling and grammar, exercises the imagination and introduces people to worlds they may never experience in reality. We value all types of reading including newspapers, comics, magazines as well as web-based reading.

This year we are launching 'The Neale Wade Reading Champion' scheme in order to infuse an element of competition to the activity. Students are rewarded for their reading with bronze, silver and gold certificates and prizes are awarded to those students who manage to achieve gold. They log their reading via the link on Moodle on the College website. When they submit their entry an email will be sent to their teacher to alert them of their achievement, which can then be celebrated in class. Students are encouraged to recommend books to one another and our Librarian Lisa Bulbrooke is also keen to make recommendations. We have also set up a forum on the website to enable these discussions to take place.

We hope you will encourage your son or daughter to take part in the scheme and promote with them the benefits of reading.

Independent reading and updating of reading logs is set as a weekly homework for year 7 English. Please encourage your son or daughter to complete at least one hour of reading each week as part of their English homework. This is difficult for teachers to monitor, but we would appreciate it if you would sign in the student's logbook each week to confirm that reading has taken place.

Yours sincerely

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As a parent, you are your child's first - and most important - teacher. Here are eight ways you can help your child become a better reader.

1. Read yourself. Your actions really do speak louder than your words. When your kids see you reading the newspaper or curling up with a book, they will want to follow your example.

2. Make sure your children read every day. Reading - like playing football and playing the piano - is a skill. Like other skills, it gets better with practice. Researchers have found that children who spend at least 30 minutes a day reading for fun - whether they read books, newspapers, or magazines - develop the skills to be better readers at school.

3. Get the library habit. Make sure everyone in your family has a library card and schedule regular trips to the library. While you are there, check out a book yourself!

4. Read aloud to the children. In **The Read Aloud Handbook**, Jim Trelease reports on research showing that this is the most important thing parents can do to help their children become better readers. Here are some tips from the book:

- Start reading to your children when they are young. It is never too early to begin reading to your children, according to Trelease.
- Don't stop reading to your children as they grow older. You will both enjoy the chance to do something together.
- Set aside some time each day for reading aloud. Even 10 minutes a day can have a big impact. Bedtime is a natural reading aloud time. Other busy families read aloud at breakfast or just after dinner.
- Read books you enjoy. Your kids will know if you are faking it.

5. Here is a way to use your newspaper to encourage reading: a scavenger hunt. Give your child a list of things to find in today's newspaper. Here are some ideas:

- A map.
- A picture of your child's favourite athlete.
- The temperature in the city where a family member lives.
- Three words that begin with "w".
- A film that is playing at a nearby cinema.

6. Give books as gifts. Then find a special place for your children to keep their own library.

7. Make reading a privilege. Say, "You can stay up 15 minutes later tonight if you read in bed." Or you might say, "Because you helped with the dishes, I have time to read you an extra story."

8. If you are not a good reader, you can still encourage your children. As your children learn to read, ask them to read to you. Talk about the books your children have read. Ask a friend or relative to read aloud to your children.