

Newry High School



Supporting Learning in
KS3

A Parent/Carer Guide
Literacy

Introduction

Young people face enormous challenges and opportunities as they move through their secondary school. Good literacy skills will help them achieve their potential.

This booklet is designed to:

- Explain the term 'Literacy'
- Offer advice about how parents can support us at Newry High School to help their child achieve their potential.

Literacy Ethos

Literacy is a key life skill that imbues students with positive social, educational and economic outcomes. It enables students to gain access to the subjects studied at school, to read for information and pleasure, and to communicate effectively. Poor literacy skills will act as a barrier to learning and will therefore impact negatively on what students can do and how they see themselves.

At Newry High School we aim for a "co-ordinated and effective cross-curricular emphasis on literacy that supports all teachers in recognising and exploiting opportunities to support the development of literacy through their teaching." **All teachers are teachers of literacy.** As such, the staff of Newry High School is committed to developing literacy skills in all our students in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum.

What is Literacy?

Reading: improving your reading skills by reading a variety of literature and non-fiction texts; developing understandings of story, style and form; building vocabulary and understanding - using a dictionary and / or thesaurus.

Writing: choosing the best form, style and language for the audience; purpose and form; presentation and layout; spelling and ways to learn them; grammar and punctuation - how they too can shape meaning.

Speaking: taking part in group discussions; volunteering to answer questions; giving formal presentations; sharing ideas and supporting peers.

Listening: listening to instructions so that you can carry them out successfully; concentrating on what is being said to you.

Reading

The more your child reads, the more confident and skilful he/she will become. Reading is the key to success in English and is therefore important for achievement across the curriculum. We recommend that you encourage your child to read for at least 20 minutes every night.

To help your child achieve this, try some of the following:

- Set a good example and let your child see you reading for pleasure
- Talk to your child about what you have read
- Furnish your home with a variety of reading materials

- Give your child an opportunity to choose their own books
- Build on your child's interests. Look for books and articles that feature their favourite sports team, pop stars or hobbies
- View pleasure reading as a value in itself. Almost anything your child reads - including comics - helps build reading skills.

Reading websites

www.parentsintouch.co.uk/Reading-list-for-KS3

www.lovereadingschools.co.uk

www.everyonesreading.org.uk/booklist.php

www.comicbookresources.com

www.readingmatters.co.uk

www.bookheads.org.uk

www.teenreads.com

Writing

Children need to learn to express themselves in many different forms from stories to poems to newspapers or reports. Their understanding of what they need to do to complete these tasks will be helped if they read regularly.

There are, however, ways in which you can help us to support your child's learning:

- Try to get your child to think about the audience, purpose and form of every writing task. This will help them to improve their understanding of writing in different forms and help them to make links between the skills they need for different subjects.

- Encourage your child to take pride in the quality and presentation of their work by asking to see it and praising success.
- Help your child to check their work carefully. You could help them recognise ways to improve their work and point out any errors you spot.

Spelling

Accurate and consistent spelling is important for the communication of meaning in writing. Most children will not learn to spell by reading alone so they need to improve by recognising, correcting and recording errors.

Students in year 8 will be provided with a **Spelling/Keywords** booklet which contains lists of words that will appear in all their different subjects throughout key stage 3. There is a spelling strategies/rules section at the back of the booklet to help students learn and retain the spelling lists from each subject area. Students will be encouraged to add to the booklet a record of words they come across for the first time. Using the strategies/prompts at the back of the booklet, they should experiment with different ways of learning and remembering difficult words.

It's never too late to learn to spell and there is no reason why a weak speller at primary school shouldn't become a proficient and confident speller at secondary school.

Spelling websites

www.parentsintouch.co.uk/Spelling.worksheets

www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/interactive/literacy.html

www.kidspell.com

Homework

Homework is a vital part of the learning process as it encourages students to become independent and take responsibility for their own learning. Your child's planner is crucial as it is the first link between parents and teachers.

Here are a few tips which focus on the literacy skills involved in homework:

- Reading may be set for homework, so you can help your child to read accurately and with understanding.
- Encourage your child to proof-read their written skills.
- Sometimes a speaking homework is set. Your child may be asked to prepare a talk to give to the class. Being an audience offering advice can really build your child's confidence.

School Marking Code

Every pupil will be made aware of the school marking code at the beginning of the school year. Teachers will indicate inaccuracies or corrections that need to be made in any given subject across the curriculum using the marking code. Pupils can check the marking code and identify the areas that they need to address in the next piece of written work. This will encourage pupils to take ownership of their work and empower them as they are able to take control of their own literacy needs.