Early Years, Year 1 and 2
Parents’ Guide to Reading Homework
Dear Parents / Carers,
This guide will hopefully answer all your questions about how you can support your child at home with their reading but, if we have missed out anything please don’t hesitate to ask! We will also be running some parents workshops in phonics, early reading & early writing, keep checking the newsletter for dates.

As parents you are your child’s most influential teacher with an important part to play in helping your child to learn to read. We really notice the difference in the progress of children who have support at home! It doesn’t take a lot of time, little and often is best! Let them see you as a reader too. Young children always like to copy their parents.

Reading Books
- We listen to children read at least twice a week
- Your child will bring at least one book home each week
- Please ensure reading folders including reading books are returned to school every day
- Parent/teacher communication is important to us, please write a short comment in your child’s reading record and we will also comment.

High Frequency Words
- These are the words most frequently used in books for e.g. ‘the’ ‘said’ ‘you’.
- Many words can’t be sounded out but are ‘tricky words’ and have to be learnt from memory.
- Starting from the reception class we will initially send 3 words home and when your child can read and spell the words we will highlight our records to show their progress
- When your child is confident with the 3 words they will receive the next 3 (This may increase to 6 words depending on the child’s confidence during the year).

How you can support your child with their reading

1. **Choose a quiet time**
   Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Turn off the TV! Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough.

2. **Make reading enjoyable**
   Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. Take turns reading a page each. Or let them say a ‘silly word’ if they want you to if your child loses interest then do something else.

3. **Be positive**
   If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don’t say ‘No. That’s wrong,’ but ‘let’s read it together’ and point to the sounds as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

4. **Talk about the books**
   There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Just as important is being able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end and their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills.

5. **Variety is important**
   Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials e.g. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books.
Blending sounds to read words

- Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word. For instance sounding out *d-o-g* and making *dog*.

- It is a technique every child will need to learn, and it improves with practice.

- To start with you should sound out the word and see if a child can hear it, giving the answer if necessary.

- Some children take longer than others to hear this.

- The sounds must be said quickly to hear the word. It is easier if the first sound is said slightly louder. Try little and often with words like *b-u-s, t-o-p, c-a-t* and *h-e-n*.

- Remember that some sounds (digraphs) are represented by two letters, such as *sh*. Children should sound out the digraph (*sh*), not the individual letters (*s-h*). With practice they will be able to blend the digraph as one sound in a word. So, a word like *rain* should be sounded out *r-a-i-n*, and *feet* as *f-e-e-t*.

- Some words in English have an irregular spelling and cannot be read by blending, such as *said, was* and *one*. Unfortunately, many of these are common high frequency words. The irregular parts have to be remembered. These are called the 'tricky words'.

To help your child to blend to read, don’t waste your money on expensive Phonic Workbooks, but buy a cheap set of magnetic letters and play with your child on the fridge door or a tin baking tray and make words- even silly nonsense words!!

Learning the Letter Sounds with Actions!

- **s**: Weave hand in an s shape, like a snake, and say ssssss.
- **a**: Wiggle fingers above elbow as if ants crawling on you and say a, a, a.
- **t**: Turn head from side to side as if watching tennis and say t, t, t.
- **i**: Pretend to be a mouse by wriggling fingers at end of nose and squeak i, i, i.
- **p**: Pretend to puff out candles and say p, p, p.
- **n**: Make a noise, as if you are a plane - hold arms out and say nnnnnn.

- **ck**: Raise hands and snap fingers as if playing castanets and say ck, ck, ck.
- **e**: Pretend to tap an egg on the side of a pan and crack it into the pan, saying eh, eh, eh.
- **h**: Hold hand in front of mouth panting as if you are out of breath and say h, h, h.
- **r**: Pretend to be a puppy holding a piece of rag, shaking head from side to side, and say rrrrr.
- **m**: Rub tummy as if seeing tasty food and say mmmmmm.
- **d**: Beat hands up and down as if playing a drum and say d, d, d.

- **g**: Spiral hand down, as if water going down the drain, and say g, g, g.
- **o**: Pretend to turn light switch on and off and say o; o; o
- **u**: Pretend to be putting up an umbrella and say u, u, u.
- **l**: Pretend to lick a lollipop and say l l l l l l.
- **f**: Let hands gently come together as if toy fish deflating, and say f f f f f f.
- **b**: Pretend to hit a ball with a bat and say b, b, b.

- **ai**: Cup hand over ear and say ai, ai, ai.
- **j**: Pretend to wobble on a plate and say j, j, j.
- **oa**: Bring hand over mouth as if you have done something wrong and say oh!
- **ie**: Stand to attention and salute, saying ie ie.

- **ee** or **oe**: Put hands on head as if ears on a donkey and say eeyore, eeyore.

- **z**: Put arms out at sides and pretend to be a bee, saying zzzzzz.
- **w**: Blow on to open hand, as if you are the wind, and say wh, wh, wh.
- **ng**: Imagine you are a weightlifter, and pretend to lift a heavy weight above your head, saying ng...
- **v**: Pretend to be holding the steering wheel of a van and say vvvvv.

- **oo oo**: Move head back and forth as if it is the cuckoo in a cuckoo clock, saying u, oo; u, oo. (Little and long oo.)

- **y**: Pretend to be eating a yogurt and say y, y, y.
- **x**: Pretend to take an x-ray of someone with an x-ray gun and say ks, ks, ks.
- **ch**: Move arms at sides as if you are a train and say ch, ch, ch.
- **sh**: Place index finger over lips and say shshsh.

- **th th**: Pretend to be naughty clowns and stick out tongue a little for the th, and further for the th sound (this and thumb).

- **qu**: Make a duck’s beak with your hands and say qu, qu, qu.
- **ou**: Pretend your finger is a needle and prick thumb saying ou, ou, ou.
- **oi**: Cup hands around mouth and shout to another boat saying oi! ship ahoy!
- **ue**: Point to people around you and say you, you, you.
- **er**: Roll hands over each other like a mixer and say rererer.
- **ar**: Open mouth wide and say ah.

http://www.communication4all.co.uk/http/PhonicsWeb.htm Phonic activities
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCjYB07aSU Jolly phonics songs
Most importantly of all, reading should be enjoyable.

There are many games you can play to help your children develop a love for reading.

- **Snap**: this can be played with 2 – 4 players
  Use two sets of cards with the same letters or words on (this can become as challenging as you want it to be e.g. a mixture of nouns, verbs, adverbs and to win you have to say the word and what it is or say the word and put it in a sentence e.g ‘train’ “I went on a train to St. Petersburg.”)
  Shuffle the cards and deal them out equally.
  Players take turns to place a card face up on one pile.
  If two cards are turned (one immediately after the other) then the first person to shout ‘snap’ takes all of the cards on the table if they can say the letter or word on the matching cards.
  The person, who wins all of the cards, wins the game.

- **Letter and word or character pelmanism**: make matching word or letter cards or even pictures of characters from the Oxford Reading Tree books etc.
  Shuffle them all up and place them face down in rows on the table.
  Take it in turns to turn over 2 cards. Say out loud what is on the card.
  If the cards match pick them up and keep them. If they do not, turn them back over.
  The person with the most sets at the end of the game wins.

- **The shopping game**: What to do:
  Have your child choose a magazine or catalog. Invite your child to go on a make-believe shopping trip. Tell your child you will make believe you are shopping for things in the magazine.
  Have your child close his or her eyes and point to an object on the page. Then have your child open his or her eyes. Ask “What are you going to buy?” If your child says, “A hat,” ask, “What sound does hat start with?” Then say, “Good. Hat starts with the sound h.”
  Repeat the steps, with each of you taking a turn shopping for something and then naming the first sound of the word that describes it.

- **Reading and writing can enable family members to share important life stories.**
  What you'll need: *Letters from grandparents or other family members.*
  What to do:
  Select a family member whom your child knows well and likes. Ask the family member to write a letter to your child. The letter should tell a story, funny event, or something about your child.
  When your child receives the letter, have the child read the letter. Ask your child to write a return letter to the family member, telling a story or something about the family member that the family has told the child.
  Repeat the letter with another family member.

- **Research new words:**
  I wonder where the word comes from?
  I wonder where this word was first used?
  I wonder when this word was first used?
  Let's Google the word/let's look it up on wikepedia/let's research it at the library.

We hope this guide will be helpful. There are many more fun activities you can do. Please ask your teacher for advice and suggestions for other things to do at home or for links to sites that can be helpful too. Have fun reading!