



Reading at St Mary's College

Dear Parent/Carer,

Firstly, may I welcome you and your child to the St Mary's College community. I hope they are finding their feet and settling in well. I also hope they enjoyed the fantastic book we sent them over summer and enjoyed sharing that with you as much as we enjoyed picking them all out.

Among all the other challenges that the current circumstances have presented us, we are having to find creative and novel ways to ensure our students continue to progress in reading. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, students are not able to physically access the library. I am writing to you to highlight two of the ways we are promoting reading this year despite the challenges, as well as some of the things you can do to help.

- Book Bubbles – the Year 7 area now has access to its own mini-library, in the form of the Book Bubble: a regularly-rotated selection of books which is available to all Year 7 students to browse and borrow.
- Sora e-book platform – students now have access to the Sora app, where they will see a selection of e-books and audiobooks to read or listen to on their phones, tablets or computers. While there are e-books that are always available, many of the more popular books have wait times just like real libraries. I would encourage students and parents to explore Sora and place holds for any books they'd like to read – it will tell you when it's available.

It is hard to overstate how important reading is for the academic and emotional development of children. The ability to explore different worlds and perspectives without even leaving the house is an often underestimated but remarkable skill to nurture. Children that cultivate a passion for reading quickly become autonomous and gifted learners able to empathise with others, construct convincing arguments, and engage with new concepts.

Besides an active interest in what your child is reading (and encouraging them to read the book we sent them if they haven't done so yet), we would love for you to help by ensuring that their reading log, which can be found on page 184 of their planner, is completed regularly and signed off by you. This is an important way to maintain reading engagement and a great way for us to see your child's progress over the year.

Finally, if you have any questions or concerns, or perhaps just want a chat about your child's reading journey, I will always be happy to talk.

Kind regards and best wishes,

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