



## Parent and Carer's Guide to Supporting Literacy at Home

When we speak about literacy, we are talking about reading, writing and oracy (speaking and listening skills). It is essential that every pupil has the necessary literacy skills to both access the curriculum and excel in their examinations.

This booklet outlines the ways in which you can support your child to develop these skills, alongside the work that we do at Newman Catholic College through emphasising reading, building writing skills and providing opportunities for discussion and debate.

### Literacy Top Tips

<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote good reading behaviours by reading often and discussing books with your child.</li><li>• Have a wide range of reading materials at home, including books, magazines, websites, reference books and newspapers.</li><li>• Listen to audio books and discuss the events of the story.</li><li>• Encourage older brothers and sisters to read with younger ones.</li><li>• Check your child's Sparx Reader homework and progress using the online reading programme.</li></ul>
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage your child to write diary entries.</li><li>• Encourage your child to start online blogging about a hobby or interest, with your supervision.</li><li>• Encourage your child to research and write a biography about a person of interest.</li><li>• Practice your child's spellings with them.</li><li>• Praise the writing your child does before making any suggestions for improvement.</li><li>• Remember, the key to being a successful writer is to be a successful reader!</li></ul>
<b>Oracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk to your child about what they are learning at school</li><li>• Encourage discussion and debate, ask them about their interests.</li><li>• Talk about the books they are reading and their favourite authors.</li><li>• Encourage your child to speak clearly, using expression.</li></ul>

## Why is reading important?

Reading is the key to successful learning and a crucial skill that impacts on all elements of a person's life and learning. Pupils need to be able to read a wide range of books, articles and information across the curriculum. Being able to read fluently is essential to effective communication.

### Reading Ages

Your child's reading age should be in line with their chronological age. For example, if your child is 13, it is important that their reading age is at least 13 years. This means that they will be able to access the information and learning in their curriculum confidently and effectively. Reading ages are assessed each term to assess progress and identify whether your child requires additional support for reading.

### Reading benefits

- Reading enhances your child's critical thinking and inference skills. When you read a book you make predictions about the characters and what is going to happen next. This challenges your child's brain to think about other possibilities based on their knowledge and understanding of the story so far.
- Recounting key events and remembering what has happened previously in a book boosts your child's memory skills.
- Reading is a great way to discover and make sense of the world around us. Children are exposed to ideas and beliefs from different cultures and countries. It opens their minds to realities other than their own.
- Reading at home prepares your child for further education and life beyond the classroom.

### Using Sparx Reader at home

All pupils have access to Sparx Reader, an online reading platform. Sparx Reader is a reading, comprehension and vocabulary programme that encourages young people to read regularly to help improve their literacy and motivates them to read for pleasure. Pupils complete an initial reading assessment and are then offered a range of books aimed specifically at just above their reading age. This helps the pupils make progress in their reading while also ensuring that they can access the content of the book.

Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 have compulsory homework set on Sparx Reader, which is monitored by teachers to help encourage reading. Parents and carers can also monitor their child's homework and will receive a reminder email as homework is due. At Newman Catholic College, we also offer a rewards programme to celebrate the reading of those who are making excellent progress, with certificates and prizes.

## Talk about books

- Before reading, discuss the cover (author, pictures, title) and try to predict what the book will be about.
- During reading, make connections with previous events or ideas and think about why the writer has organised the book in this way or make predictions about what comes next.
- After reading, rate the book and think about whether it met expectations. Which parts were successful? Was the ending as you expected? Would you recommend this book?

### Questions to ask your child when they are reading?

Are you enjoying this book?

Can you tell me what has happened so far?

Where is the story set?

Is this a fiction or non-fiction book? How do you know?

Who is your favourite/least favourite character?

What is your impression of \_\_\_\_ (character's name)?

How did you feel about \_\_\_\_?

Can you imagine if that happened to you? What would you do?

Why did that happen?

Why did \_\_\_\_ behave/react like that?

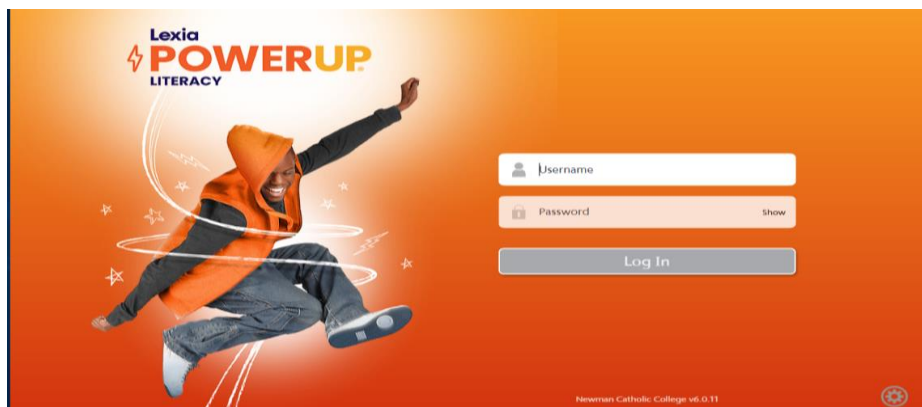
What do you think will happen next?

Who is the author of the book?

Can you undertake some research about the author?



## Using Lexia at home



Lexia is an online learning programme that aims to build skills in reading. It focuses on helping pupils learn new vocabulary, improve their understanding of what they read and develop their knowledge of English grammar. There are two different programmes: Lexia Core 5 for pupils developing their English skills and Power Up for pupils who are building on their existing literacy skills.

**Lexia Core 5** is a blended learning program that accelerates the development of literacy skills for pupils of all abilities, helping them make that critical shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

**Lexia Power Up** accelerates literacy knowledge for secondary-age pupils, building on their existing literacy skills so that they can access the curriculum and maximise their potential. Pupils work online in three different instructional strands that are based on the Simple View of Reading. The three strands—Word Study, Grammar, and Comprehension— support independent reading and help pupils understand complex, authentic texts.

### Who has access to Lexia?

At Newman Catholic College, Lexia is used to support pupils who are developing their Literacy skills or are learning English for the first time. If your child is using Lexia, you will be notified and the log in details will be provided.

### Access at home:

Lexia is accessible at home and can be used on most home devices e.g. tablets/phones. You can support your child with Lexia by encouraging them to complete one hour of Lexia each week on their home devices.

<https://www.lexiacore5.com/register>

<https://www.lexiapowerup.com/>

## Newman Catholic College Library

The Library plays an important part in the daily lives of all Newman Catholic College's students. Reading for pleasure and independent learning are both important parts of school life and the Library is the focus of both. Students can borrow two books for two weeks, which allows them to broaden their reading beyond the prescribed texts.

A library is not just a place for books but also an access point for information and resources. Information is an essential part of our daily lives. We access information in a multitude of ways through books, the internet, radio, TV, podcasts, pamphlets, advertisements and newspapers. This is the way we navigate through the world and expand our horizons. Part of the crucial role of our Library is to ensure that the students can navigate information systems, assess its suitability and apply it to their learning. Developing research and study skills will not just assist students throughout their time at Newman, but support them for their whole lives.

The Library is not just a place for learning, but to also be inspired. The Library at Newman has access to fantastic fiction, awe-inspiring stories of courage, daring and hope, which is regularly updated to both reflect our diverse school community and provide newness and excitement.

### Opening hours

The library is open for students between 7.30am and 4.00pm. Students can access the library before school, during break and lunchtime and after school (except Thursdays).

## How can I help my child with their writing?

Much of your child's ability throughout their school journey is assessed through what they can write. Pupils who find reading difficult, may also find writing difficult. It is important that your child feels confident when writing for a variety of purposes.

### Writing encourages your child to:

- Determine how to communicate effectively and successfully.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop creativity and imagination.
- Develop a strong sense of self.
- Develop organisational skills.
- Practise spellings.
- Increase vocabulary.
- Proofread and check that sentences make sense.
- Prepare for exams.
- Prepare for life beyond school, in further education or a work setting.



### How you can help your child at home

- Encourage your child to communicate with people using written communication such as emails, with your supervision.
- Encourage your child to write diary entries.
- Encourage your child to start online blogging about a hobby or interest, with your supervision.
- Encourage your child to research and write a biography about a person of interest.
- Start a scrap book and ask your child to write little descriptions of places they have been.
- Use images from magazines/leaflets/articles and ask your child to write about what is happening in the image.
- Create storyboards and short stories - pay attention to describing key characters and events.
- Praise the writing your child does before making any suggestions for improvement.

***Remember, the key to being a successful writer is to be a successful reader!***

## How can I help my child with their homework?

Literacy underpins all aspects of communication, reading, writing and oracy. This applies to all subjects across the curriculum, as well as homework. Homework helps pupils consolidate their learning and extend their knowledge of a topic.

Have regular discussions about your child's homework and encourage them to learn key vocabulary at home, this will help to secure their knowledge and understanding of a topic. Ensure your child is checking Google classroom and their planner to ensure they know which homework they have been given and so that they do not miss any deadlines.

### Developing a homework routine

- Choose a suitable homework time that fits with both you and your child.
- Choose a suitable place for your child to complete homework, somewhere quiet and comfortable.
- Make sure homework is not left until the last minute.
- Make sure your child is clear about the homework they have been set – you can check this on Google classroom or in their planner.
- Ensure your child has suitable equipment, e.g. pen, pencil and paper.
- Encourage your child to do their homework themselves, offering suggestions and support where needed.
- Praise your child's efforts where appropriate.
- If you have any concerns, contact your child's teacher and discuss your concerns further.