

Glenlola Collegiate School

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3rd September 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At the start of this new academic year, we are writing to keep you informed about some changes with regards to the library and the Accelerated Reader programme.

Borrowing Books

Unfortunately, the normal use of the School library will not be possible while there is a risk of transmission of COVID -19. We propose to operate a click and collect service to allow pupils to continue to borrow books. Pupils will receive instructions on how to avail of this service from their English teacher, and via Google Classroom.

Pupils must take appropriate care of Library books whilst on loan. We regret that **the cost of replacing books** returned with significant damage, including water damage, **must be reimbursed to the School.**

Returning Books

Normal loans will still be for **2 weeks** and must be returned promptly to the returns box outside the Library. A reminder that **e-book access** is available **for free through the Libraries NI service.**

We would also ask that any class novels, plays or books which were lent to pupils last year are returned to their English teachers as soon as possible.

The Accelerated Reader Programme and Targets

As you may be aware, all Junior School pupils at Glenlola participate in the Accelerated Reader programme. Through this programme, each pupil is set **four personalised targets** across the year. These targets are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based, and pupils should work towards achieving these targets as part of their extended learning in English.

This means that, **as part of their weekly homework for English**, they are expected to read for at least **30 minutes every day**, and to take quizzes on the books they have read in order to achieve their targets. Pupils' engagement with this process also gives teachers the information they need to monitor their progress and make informed decisions to guide their future learning.

Most importantly, however, the programme is designed to be enjoyable. When pupils participate enthusiastically, it is easy to see the benefits not just in English, but across all their subjects.

[Continued overleaf]

Star Testing

In a necessary change to our procedures, for the foreseeable future, we will be asking pupils to complete Star Testing at home. The Star Test is an online reading test and no prior knowledge is required. This defines your child's reading level and Accelerated Reader target. Every pupil's reading level is a personal matter and pupils should not feel under pressure to share or compare this result.

We would greatly appreciate if parents could ensure this test is completed promptly when instructed by your child's English teacher. We would also ask that you further ensure that the test is carried out without any assistance from other household members, and ideally, ensure that a minimum of 20 minutes is spent completing the test. The test consists of approximately 34 questions and should be worked through with care.

Pupils should only ever take a Star test when instructed to do so by their class teacher.

Accelerated Reader Home Connect

The programme also enables teachers, parents/guardians and pupils to share information about pupil progress in Accelerated Reader, through a feature called Renaissance Home Connect. We invite all parents/guardians to make use of this system to support further your child's progress in English. Please see the attached document, demonstrating how to set up Home Connect in five simple steps.

Finally, we would like to thank you, in advance, for your support with regards to helping extend pupils' learning and enjoyment of reading beyond the English classroom.

Yours sincerely,

Mr B McMillan
School Librarian

Mrs E Graham
Head of English