



A Phonics Guide for Parents

What is phonics?

Your child may have come home from school talking about their “phonics” lessons, but what actually is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children how to read and write. Your child will be taught two crucial things when they are learning to read using phonics:

⚓ **How letters represent sounds.** For example, they will be taught that the letter S represents a “ssss” sound. This means when they see a word, they can work out the sounds in it. Each sound is known as a “phoneme”. Having “decoded” the letters into sounds, they can then “sound out” the word.

⚓ **How sounds can be blended together to make words.** For example, they will be taught that the sounds of the letters S, A, T blend together to make the word “sat”. You can practice this crucial skill with your children by getting them to pick a word, break it into sounds, and then put those sounds back together into the word.

What is All Aboard Phonics?

Your child is using a programme called All Aboard Phonics (AAP). This is the phonics programme that we have chosen to use across the school because it is based on a neurological understanding of how a child learns to read. So we recommend you follow their advice overleaf, even when it seems unnatural to you!

How do I get the app?

You have free access to the All Aboard home reading app, available on the app stores. Just wait for the email from your school to invite you to join your child’s class team. Click the links there to get all set up. If you have siblings who would like to have an account, you can create a family team from within the app. Just head to the admin area in the app and follow the instructions there.

In the app, you will see the All Aboard pictophones floating above some words. These pictophones work like magic to help children find the correct sound when trying to decode. English is very tricky, as you know, and we use the pictophones like training wheels in the early years to accelerate progress.





A Guide for Parents on Daily Reading Practice

Supporting your child with their reading development can be challenging, especially when you lead a busy life, have other children to look after and work to complete! The key thing to know is that your input is going to be vital to your child, because the classroom team cannot do individual reading sessions each day. A ten-minute session with 30 children takes 5 hours!

The good news is that if you really implement these tips, you will see less stress and better progress each week.

Tips for Reading Practice Success

1. Short, Regular Lessons

- ⚓ Keep reading practice sessions to no more than 10-15 minutes for better focus.
- ⚓ Try to do a short session every day, to build momentum.
- ⚓ Try a morning reading routine if your child finds it hard later in the day.

2. Affirm Frequently

- ⚓ Say something positive every time your child gets something right. That means every word or even each sound in a word!
- ⚓ Avoid all negative comments or tones to your voice. If a mistake is made empathise with the difficulty. Imagine trying to read Greek text and you will know what your child is dealing with.
- ⚓ Try measuring your positive to negative comment ratio. Our “Rule of Five” is that you must get five positive comments in for every correction. Someone listening to you should hear “Yes! Good, that’s right. Yup. Nearly... You got it!”

3. Help With Any Difficulties

- ⚓ Stress is the great enemy, because it shuts down the thinking processes. So help if a word is proving difficult and keep praising progress!

4. Ask For a Reread

- ⚓ If a phrase has tricky words in it, always ask your child to do a quick reread of the phrase before going on to the next one, so that they can read it fluently. They may not be keen, but this will double progress.

5. Encourage Decoding

- ⚓ Guide your child towards working out the sounds in a word rather than trying to guess it.

6. Keep the Text Big Enough

- ⚓ Only ask your child to read text that is big enough. If small text is a challenge, help your child do the eye exercises that the school recommends to you.