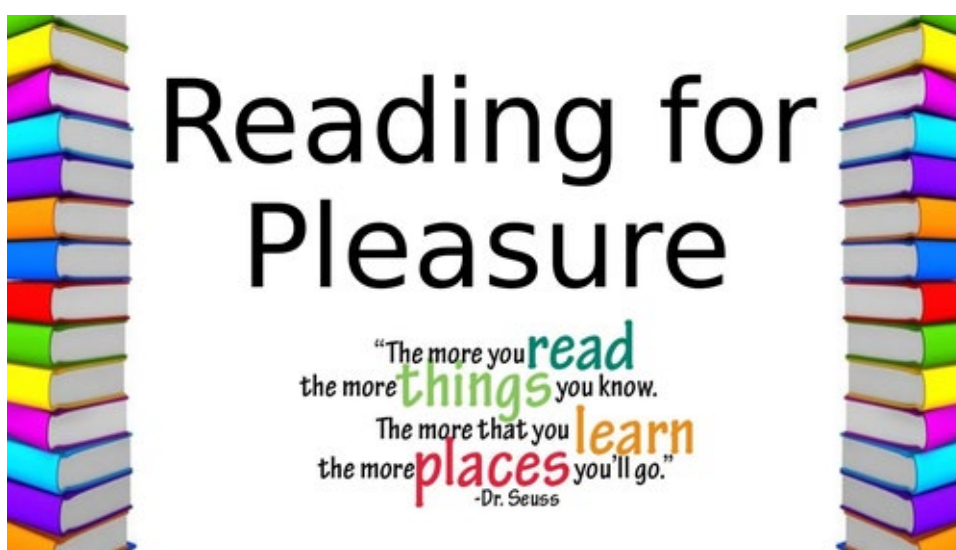


NORTHUMBERLAND PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT



A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING LEARNING
FOR PARENTS OF
KS3 & KS4 PUPILS AT
NORTHUMBERLAND PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT



Northumberland's P.R.U.

INDEX

Frequently Asked Questions	3
Preparing for reading at secondary school	6
Supporting reading at Key Stage 3	9
Supporting GCSE level reading across a range of subjects	11
Supporting GCSE level reading in English and English Literature	13
Can read, won't read. Help! What can I do?	15
Further Questions	16
Help – useful organisations and websites	22

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

You will find the answers to these questions at the end of the booklet.

What do I need to know about reading at Key Stages 3 and 4? I am really busy and don't have time to read with my child.

What can I do?

My CHILD doesn't like reading. What can I do?

My child has problems with reading. How do I help?

I have/my partner has problems with reading. Can I still help my child?

My child is not getting enough support at school to help them with reading. What should I do?

I am worried that my child is not being challenged enough to improve their reading at school. What can I do?

My child keeps reading the same books over and over again. Is this normal?

My child will only read their phone, tablet or magazines, not books.

I think my child is dyslexic. What should I do?

What sort of books should I choose for my child?

About this booklet

The move from mainstream to a Pupil Referral Unit in some instances can be a challenging time for parents/carers and pupils. Your child is growing up and becoming more independent. However, you may be worrying about the extra demands of the Pupil Referral Unit curriculum and wondering what you can do to help. Many parents feel like this, and it is very natural.

This booklet offers you ideas from other parents that you can choose from, to help your child as they move into and through Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit.

One of the best ways you can help your child do well at school is by helping them to enjoy ***reading for pleasure*** – whether they like magazines, newspapers, novels or comics. Research shows that children who enjoy reading achieve better at school, and that parents/carers play a key role in helping to develop this love of reading.

Research findings: reading means achieving

Recent research into the reading skills of 15 year olds across the world found that children who are more interested in reading achieve better at school than those who do not read for pleasure.

The study also found that parents/carers who talk to their children about books, TV programmes and films help to keep their children interested in reading.

Having books, newspapers and magazines around at home also made a difference to how interested children were in reading.

Instant ideas for helping your child to love reading – suggestions from parents/carers

- Let your child choose what to read, rather than choosing what you think they should read.
- Encourage your child to read magazines, comics, newspapers and the internet as well as books.
- Talk to your child about books or magazines you haven't enjoyed, as well as things you love.
- Make time to read together if you can.
- Buy books as presents. Don't forget TV tie-ins and books about interests such as computer games or bands.
- Remember that your child is reading when they are looking at bus timetables, menus, instructions, TV guides, Tele-text and the internet.

"I got my son to teach me how to use the computer. I was hopeless, but he knew exactly what to do. It has helped both of us, because I can do much more now and he lets me take more of an interest in what he does at school."

Father of Year 9 student

Preparing for reading at Northumberland PRU

Your child may be looking forward to the challenges of a new educational setting, or may feel worried about the work.

You can help support your child's reading by making them the 'expert' and getting them to tell about all the things they already know and can do.

Instant ideas

- Help your child to find books they will enjoy by joining the local public library, if you are not already members. It is free to join and many libraries have CDs and DVDs that can be borrowed very cheaply, as well as many different types of books that can be borrowed for free.
- Read together at home. Try picking reading material about interests or hobbies you share, like your football team or a place you have visited together. 10 minutes a few times a week will make a difference.
- Talk to your child about the types of reading they think they will be asked to do as part of the PRU curriculum; get them to explain to you what they already know about types of non-fiction (factual writing), and try to match them to the subjects your child does at school.

- Chat about which books or magazines your child might read, to learn more about the subjects they will be doing at Northumberland PRU. There is lots of information on the PRU website

- Buy a book, book token or magazine as a present/reward.

Try making time to:

- Borrow picture books from the library in Spanish (taught at Northumberland PRU, or ask a librarian or bookseller about the Horrible Histories series and other funny books about school topics.

- Go online to research sites that might be useful for different subjects. All libraries have free internet access which can be booked. For information about safe websites for children, visit the **Parents Information Network** at **www.pin.org.uk** or **Parents Online** at **www.parentsonline.gov.uk**

- Go along to an event at the library together. Most libraries run the Summer Reading Challenge, a fun scheme that encourages children to read by giving them rewards like stickers, bookmarks and medals. You could encourage your child to take part.



20 Book



Challenge

A book that became a movie	A book of poetry	Mystery	A book set in space
A book with food in the title	A graphic novel or comic book	A book with a place in the title	A book that teaches you something new
A book with a person's name in the title	Realistic fiction	Chapter book	Fairy Tale
Science Fiction	A popular author's first book	A book you own but haven't read	Biography
A book about an animal	Historical Fiction	A book that makes you laugh	A book that won an award

Support reading at KS3 & KS4

Your child will be studying more and different subjects at Northumberland PRU and will be working with many different types of reading materials, from newspaper articles and adverts to scientific explanations and instructions. Parents/carers who support their children's education make a real difference to how well their child does, and there are lots of quick things you can do to help.

Instant ideas

- Try some skimming and scanning together. Skimming is when you read through a piece of text quickly to find out what the main idea is; scanning is glancing through a piece of text to find a specific piece of information. You can do this with a newspaper – perhaps ask your child to find something out for you. Why not ask them to scan a newspaper for news about a favourite person from history or a celebrity or to find out the weekend weather, or get them to skim read a recipe to tell you the basic steps?
- Help your child to work out what an unfamiliar word means by getting them to read the rest of the sentence and look for clues.
- Help by testing your child when they have spellings to learn, and by encouraging them to look up words they don't know in a dictionary.

Try making time to:

- Build up the number of words your child knows – their **vocabulary**. As they go through secondary school, your child will need to know specialist words and recognise them when they are reading. To help them learn these words, you could ask your child to explain to you what they mean.

- Read books or plays that your child needs to study for school – in Year 9 English your child will study two scenes from a Shakespeare play. It can really help them if you read these together, and talk about the language and characters. Why not learn a few short quotations together as a competition?

- Borrow the video of the Shakespeare play from your local library or video rental shop and watch the scenes together. Parent/Carer power: Parents/Carers make the difference, say experts.

A recent study has found that children who were reading to their parents improved their reading skills a great deal, even if the parents/carers could not read English or read at all in any language.

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Supporting GCSE level reading across a range of subjects

During GCSE courses, Year 10 and Year 11 students have to produce longer classwork or vocational coursework which counts towards their final grade, as well as reading many different things to help them pass the course.

You will find that your child may have increased levels of homework and you can make a difference by helping your child to manage their time. Reading for pleasure can get squeezed out as the amount of homework grows and parents can help by encouraging rest, relaxation and reading as well as school work!

Instant ideas

- Cut out newspaper articles about topics your child is studying.
- Read together if your child is having problems with reading in a particular subject.
- Encourage your child to go to a study support group or stay after the end of the school day for a revision session. Many libraries run free after-school groups – find out if there is one near you and suggest to your child they go along. They could meet new people, and will get help with their homework as well.

- Text message a good read to your child's mobile phone, if they have one, or send them an email with some recommendations from friends' children or from a newspaper.

Try making time to:

- Speak to your child's subject teacher to see if there is anything that they could read that would help their studies or that would help them enjoy a topic.
- Talk about everyday topics, encouraging your child to be the 'expert' and use the technical terms they are learning at GCSE. For example, your child could tell you about tomorrow's weather using words such as precipitation, humidity and isobars, or they could explain how a circuit works when you switch on the light.
- Look up technical words you or your child don't recognise from their work in a dictionary or on the internet and make it your word of the day. When you have a list of new words you could test your child on them.
- Talk to your child about reading. Often GCSE students feel they have little time for reading for pleasure. You can help by talking about what they enjoy reading and helping to make time for it.

Supporting GCSE level reading in English and English Literature

In GCSE English and English Literature students need to read plays, some poems, one or two novels and sometimes short stories as well. Your child's English teacher will be working with the class to study all these texts, but as a parent you can help your child by making sure they have access to many different types of text at home.

Instant ideas

- Borrow audio recordings of the texts your child is reading for their exams from the library and listen to them together, or share them as a family, perhaps while doing the washing up?
- Visit your local library or video store to borrow the film version of a GCSE text. Many have been made into films.
- Encourage your child to read more by helping them to find books, magazines, websites and comics that interest them or tie into the work they have been doing for GCSEs. Wider reading is part of GCSE English Literature.

Try making time to:

- Talk about the adverts and think about what messages they are trying to get across when you are watching TV or reading a newspaper. Why not ask the 'expert' (your child) – to 'read' the advert; encourage them to use the technical terms to talk about the language and style of the advert?
- Use the internet to help your child. Websites often give reading tips for GCSE texts as well as explaining the key ideas and characters. Use the search engine www.google.co.uk to help you find suitable sites.

Don't forget reading for pleasure – it is good to read for fun. Reading a magazine, comic or book is a good way to take a break.

"I was really worried about my son as he used to tell me that he hated reading. One way I could get him to read was by buying car magazines as a treat. I found out you could borrow magazines for free from the library so now he goes down there as well."

Year 9 parent

Can read, won't read. Help!

What can I do?

Lots of children and teenagers don't read – here are some hints and tips from parents with reluctant readers:

- Talk to your child to find out what they do and don't like reading.
- Go to the library together and encourage your child to borrow something that interests them. Many libraries lend magazines as well as books for free. Don't forget graphic novels (novels that are like comics), cartoons and comics.
- Don't force your child to read something they are not interested in, even if you are worried about their reading.
- Set your homepage to a website your child might enjoy, if you have internet access. For example, you could try a skateboarding site or the homepage of a favourite TV programme. It is a good idea to check sites first to see that you are happy for your child to visit them.
- Encourage your child to read by finding reading material about their interests. Any reading that your child does is a good thing.

What do I need to know about reading at Key Stages 3 and 4?

In English, students are expected to read many different kinds of text, including plays, poems, and non-fiction (for example, diaries, travel writing, and science writing). As well as this, other subjects provide the chance for students to read for pleasure and study.

I am really busy and don't have time to read with my child. What can I do?

10 minutes a day or even a few times a week will make a real difference to your child's reading. Why not have a look at the 'instant ideas' at the beginning of each section for quick things you can do to help.

My child doesn't like reading. What can I do?

Try to find things for them to read that are about his interests and let them choose what they want to read as much as you can.

Magazines, comics and non-fiction (fact) books might be more interesting to them than stories. Other reading activities, like tuning the video using the instructions can also develop reading. Don't forget that using the internet requires reading skills too and there is free access at your local library. If they are interested in computer games, there are lots of books on how to play the games and 'cheats' (short cuts). Praise them for any reading that they do and make sure they see you reading too. Keep any reading you do together short and fun. Even though it is worrying, pushing your child too hard or making reading a chore will put them off even more.

My child has problems with reading. How do I help?

If you are worried that your child is struggling with reading, it is best to make an appointment to see your child's form tutor. You can do this by calling Northumberland PRU and asking to speak to them by name or if you don't know this, give the name of your child to a member of staff on main reception. It is best to call either before or after the school day – be prepared to leave a message. When you do speak to the form tutor, outline your worries (it may be helpful to write some notes to remind you before making the call) and ask

to make an appointment to see them to discuss what can be done for your child.

I have/my partner has problems with reading. Can I still help my child?

Research has shown that talking to children about what they are reading, and having books and magazines at home make a difference to children's progress even if parents have problems with reading themselves. If you want help with reading or have a friend you think needs help, check your local library for information on local classes and support.

My child is not getting enough support at school to help them with reading. What should I do?

If you think your child needs more support, please telephone or email Northumberland PRU and ask to speak to Miss Bidmade (English Lead). You can talk about your worries over the phone/email, or set up a meeting to discuss the matter further.

I am worried that my child is not being challenged enough to improve their reading at school. What can I do?

It is important for teachers and parents to have high but realistic expectations. Make sure that your child is not being put off reading by finding the books which they are reading too easy or uninteresting. Don't force your child to read a book you think they should read. It is much better to talk to them about what they like reading and help them to choose books they will enjoy. Booksellers, librarians and teachers can help with book choices.

If you are still worried, speak to your child's English teacher. You can talk about your concerns over the telephone, or set up a meeting to discuss the matter further.

My child keeps reading the same books over and over again. Is this normal?

Children often re-read books they have enjoyed or will stick to a particular genre (for example, horror) or series. Reading the same books or same type of books over and over helps them to build reading confidence, and children will usually move on at their own pace. Don't stop them reading books again – interfering with what children choose to read can often put them off.

If you are worried, you could make some suggestions for other books they might enjoy based on what they are already reading. For example, a child who enjoys 'Goosebumps' might enjoy the 'Series of Unfortunate Events' books. Ask your child's teacher, a librarian or a bookseller for advice on suitable titles.

My child will only read magazines, not books.

Don't worry. Evidence shows that children who enjoy reading for pleasure perform better at school, whether they are reading magazines, newspapers or fiction. You could always try suggesting books that they might enjoy based on the magazines they read or their interests. Look at websites for advice or ask a librarian or teacher for suggestions.

I think my child is dyslexic. What should I do?

You will need to make an appointment to speak to Northumberland PRU's Special Needs Coordinator (Miss H Moore). It may be useful to write some notes about your worries before you make the call so that you don't forget any points. Arrange a meeting so that you can discuss your child's needs, and get them tested for dyslexia. You can find out more about dyslexia from the British Dyslexia Association by visiting their website or calling the helpline number. They can advise about the best ways to support your child.

What sort of books should I choose for my child?

Ideally, you should let your child choose books for themselves, as they are much more likely to want to read if they have been able to choose for themselves. If you want ideas for books, visit a website which has reviews of books for 10-15 year olds, by 10-15 year olds, or ask your child's teacher, a librarian or a bookseller.

Help – Useful organisations and websites

Below is a list of organisations and websites where you can get more information about reading with your child.

Achuka is an independent children's book site that has something for everyone.www.achuka.co.uk

Barrington Stoke is an award-winning publisher that makes books for reluctant, dyslexic, disenchanted and under-confident readers.www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

Booktrust promotes children's reading and produces a wide range of information for young readers including booklists.
www.booktrust.org.uk (website for teenagers)

British Dyslexia Association is the national organisation for specific learning difficulties. It represents over two million dyslexic children and adults. It is one of the world's leading dyslexia organisations.www.bdadyslexia.org.uk Tel: 0333 405 4567 (helpline).

Family Lives is a charity working with parents and families offering advice and information about a range of parenting issues.
www.familylives.org.uk

Contact details:

Northumberland Pupil Referral Unit, Pitt Lane, Front Street, Seghill, NE23 7EB

Email - admin@pru.northumberland.sch.uk)

Telephone 01670 719529

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