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Dear Parents/Careers

Reading is one of the most valuable and precious skills that we can give a child. It will open a world of knowledge and opportunity to them, and we know that children who have good reading skills do well across all areas of the curriculum. Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting children to learn to read - thank you for your time and dedication to this.

Phonics

We teach children to read or decode words using phonics and we use Sounds-Write as our phonics programme here at Holway Park. Phonics is a way of teaching reading, writing and spelling based on hearing and identifying sounds and matching them to spellings. It is the most effective way of teaching most children to read. There are two key skills within phonics:

Blending: Blending letter sounds together enables pupils to decode/read words e.g., h-a-t = hat. Pupils need to practise this, so it becomes an automatic skill.

Segmenting: Segmenting is the opposite of blending. Segmenting letters means to break the word into its sounds e.g., hat = h-a-t. This will enable pupils to break down words they are trying to spell.

What books will my child bring home?

In Springlets, children will bring home a 'love for reading' book that is intended to be read by you, to your child. From Christmas, they will also bring a 'decodable' Sounds-Write book that matches the sounds that they have been taught and are comfortable blending within a word. Books will be changed once a week. Word lists of units currently being taught can be found in the back of this reading journal, alongside sound mats and important common exception words (words not taught through phonics and just need to be learnt from sight). Staff will carefully monitor when your child is ready to move onto the next set of books.

In Key Stage 1, children will only bring home a decodable Sounds-Write book that matches the sounds that they have been taught and are comfortable blending within a word. These books will be changed once a week, unless we have seen in the reading journal that there has already been lots of re-reading the whole book. Staff will carefully monitor when your child is ready to



move onto the next set of books. If your child has reached a reading ability where they do not need a phonics focused reading book, they will move onto our colour banded books that will continue throughout the school.

Though your KS1 child will not come home with a book for you to read to them, we still encourage this to allow you both to enjoy stories together.

In Key Stage 2, there should not be the need for phonics books so your child should be bringing home a coloured book. However, if phonics is still needed than they should still be being sent home with a Sounds-Write book that matches their phonetical ability.

Should my child have a new book every day?

There is no need for your child to have a new book everyday as they should re-read their books **several times** to help develop their comprehension, fluency and prosody (storyteller voice). This also means your child might be sent home the same book again a few weeks after already having it. This all helps with the fluency of reading.

How often should I listen to my child read at home?

Practising reading at home is the only 'homework' we expect at Holway Park, because it is the most important. We encourage you to try and fit in 5-10 minutes of reading every day - this doesn't always need to be a whole book and may just be a few pages. The more often children do this, the quicker their reading skills will develop and the more automatic and fluent they will become. If your child reads 5 times in a week (and this is written in the reading journal), then they will get a raffle ticket put in a pot to win a book each half-term. If your child struggles to read a word, ask them to break it down by asking them to "say the sounds" and then blend them together. If they aren't able to do this, you can model it for them and ask them to copy you.

What should I write in this reading journal?

You don't need to write lots - just a few words praising your child of letting us know what they struggled with will be fantastic. Examples might include:

"Monday 11.03.24 - Joe blended his sounds really well and recognised the 'sh' in word."

"23/09/24 - Amar is really enjoying this book and read with great expression after reading it a few times."

"Friday 15.06.24 - Lilly read pages 1-6 but struggled with the 'ph' sound. Will read again tomorrow."

If you have any concerns about your child's reading, please contact their teacher to discuss.