



# Mrs Wilks' Seasonal Newsletter



Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's difficult to believe that nine weeks have passed since my last Newsletter and that Christmas is almost upon us. The first term on The Bridge has been a huge success and I have been so impressed with both the excellent work Lower School are producing as well as their superb attitudes towards their learning and the school community. It was wonderful to meet so many of Year 7's Parents and Carers on our first Week 9 Showcase a couple of weeks ago. This will be a regular feature of our seasons so please do join us next time to see some examples of incredible work as well as meeting key staff over a cuppa and a cake.

## Target Setting Day

As I write, I can hear the hustle and bustle of families moving to and from meetings with Form Tutors and workshops. It is an incredibly important day for us all, being able to share the many positives and identifying areas in which we can improve. My workshop today has been about the importance of reading and I would like to share with you some of my key messages.

## Why is reading so important?

As GCSE exams become more challenging, students must be able to read, and understand, what's being asked of them. To be able to access the new GCSE English paper, you need a reading age of 17. Many young people sitting these papers have a reading age three or four years below that. We need to reduce those gaps by promoting reading in school and at home. Our Bridge Curriculum enables us to put Literacy and Reading at the heart of all we do.

At home you could:

- ✓ Ask about their current book; who's their favourite character? What's happened? What might happen next?
- ✓ Listen to them read; share the experience, read a page each
- ✓ Promote the reading of all kinds of texts: Newspapers, magazines, online articles, biographies
- ✓ Talk about what you're reading or what you remember reading at school

**R** – Rewarding, Restorative and Remarkable. A chance to...

**E** – Explore new worlds, Enrich people's experiences, Educate children in life, and Enthuse young readers with Enchanting and Exciting stories that are...

**A** – Action-packed, Awesome or Accomplish an emotional connection. The ability to gain an aptitude for spelling, writing or learning new words are just a few of the numerous benefits that reading...

**D** – Develops in young people. As they are Dazzled and Delighted by an author's story, they Discover new concepts, opinions, emotions and thoughts. They learn to Dream. For...

**I** - Imagination is the key not only to storytelling but to creativity and Intellectual development in all walks of life. Being Inventive or having an Idea can help a person overcome a problem, find a solution to an argument or maybe even write a...

**N** - Novel for themselves and inspire a whole New generation. So that's why it's so important to Nurture a love of reading in children. To make the act of picking up a book as Natural as breathing.

So if you have a...

**G** - Genuine desire to Get kids reading for pleasure, Give someone you love or respect a book today.



### Winter is here!

With the temperature plummeting and set to get even colder, it's time to dig out the winter coats and woolly hats. I was amazed at just how many students were coming into school this week, in the rain and a low of 2 degrees, without so much as a jacket! Please ensure that pupils are prepared for the cold and that all coats are labelled with pupils' names in case they are left behind anywhere. As always, if you need any financial support with getting winter coats, or any other items of uniform, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or Mrs Wilcox.

### Lost Property

One of the biggest adjustments when moving from Primary to Secondary is the sudden expectation to carry all your belongings with you throughout the day. This becomes even more difficult on days when PE or Sports Enrichment appears on the timetable. Many pupils, especially in Year 7, are leaving items of uniform and equipment behind and then jumping to the unpleasant conclusion that these have been 'stolen'. When we investigate, we find these items in the PE changing rooms or in a corner of the playground where they had simply been forgotten.

### Weekend Talking Point

Here at Colmers, we are always trying to raise the profile of oracy – giving our children something to say and teaching them to say it well. You could support this at home by following our ABC rules; try to **add to**, **build on** or **challenge** what someone else has said.

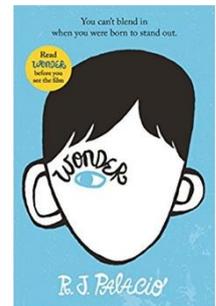
I know that finding time together as a family is difficult, especially during the week. In my newsletters I shall be posing a question, something for you to all get talking about together at home. So here's this weekend's question...

#### ***What's the best Christmas movie of all time?***

Encourage your children to come and ask me what my favourite Christmas film is and share their own opinions, and yours, with me and their teachers.

### Book Club

In my last Newsletter, I recommended *We Are All Made of Molecules* by Susin Neilson; I hope some of you managed to read it with your children. My recommended read this time is *Wonder* by R J Palacio. You may recognise it as it's about to be released as a film starring Owen Wilson and Julia Roberts. It's a beautifully moving book which affects adults just as much (if not more) than children. Watch this space for more recommendations!



### Keep in touch!

Please remember that we are here for you, as parents, as well as our pupils. Mr Doherty, Mr Morris or I are out on the gate every morning from 8.15am. If there's ever a question or a worry, we will do our best to help out.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Mrs E. Wilks

Deputy Headteacher and Head of Lower School.

