

creating a reading culture in your school

twenty ways to encourage reading for pleasure



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every child a reader



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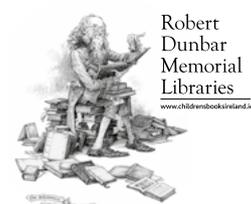
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Creating a Reading Culture in Your School:

Twenty ways to encourage reading for pleasure

1: Drop Everything and Read!

For fifteen minutes, everyone in the school – pupils, teachers, Special Needs Assistants, the principal, everyone! – simply drops whatever they are doing and reads a book of their choosing. This can be done as part of a dedicated DEAR week or month or at a set time on a particular day each week throughout the school year (every Friday for fifteen minutes before lunchtime, for example). Follow [@dear_Ireland](#) and [#DEARirl](#) on Twitter for updates and further information.

2: Facilitate book clubs for pupils

Book clubs can be held once a month during lunch time or after school and are an excellent way to encourage reader development, promote creative and critical thinking, and nurture reading enjoyment and confidence. Children's Books Ireland provides guidelines on setting up and running a book club, which can be found in the resources section of our website: www.childrensbooksireland.ie/resources/

3: The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards

The Junior Juries is a unique programme for schools, libraries and book clubs, designed to encourage awareness and enjoyment of the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. Participating classes and junior book clubs make their own selection of suitable titles from the books shortlisted for these awards in March, using a specially devised activity pack to guide them in their reading. At the end of this process each group is asked to collectively vote for their favourite book and the Junior Juries Award is given based on the cumulative scores from groups island-wide. www.childrensbooksireland.ie/kpmg-childrens-books-ireland-awards/

4: Participate in national reading celebrations and challenges

Get involved with national initiatives such as World Book Day and the MS Readathon. World Book Day takes place in March each year and its main aim is to promote the enjoyment of reading by providing children with the opportunity to have a book of their own. World Book Day tokens are distributed to primary schools via the Department of Education and secondary schools are required to register to participate via the World Book Day website for a fee of €25 (<https://www.worldbookday.com/about-us/ireland/>). The MS Readathon is a month-long campaign that takes place from October to November each year, which encourages children of all ages and abilities to read for a good cause (www.msreadathon.ie). Both initiatives provide resources designed specifically for schools on their websites.

5: Devise a reading challenge for the whole school

This can be a general challenge for pupils to read a certain number of books in a set period of time or a more specific challenge to read, for example, books set in different countries around the world or from a variety of genres (mystery, humour, adventure, science fiction, historical, etc.). Pupils can write a short review of each book they've read, to be displayed in the school library, and receive a stamp on individual cards or on a wall chart for every book completed. On completion of the challenge, each pupil can be awarded a prize and/or a certificate to both incentivise participation and recognise and reward their achievement.

6: Get pupils involved in the school library

Involve pupils in the development of the library collection and the planning of library activities and reading initiatives. Provide a suggestion box where pupils can submit their ideas for activities and requests for specific titles, or form a student reading/library committee. This fosters pupil engagement and a sense of ownership of their school library.

7: Create attractive displays

Use display spaces on walls in the library and around the school to post reading-relevant materials, such as the top ten most borrowed books, recommended reading lists created by pupils and book reviews written by pupils and staff. Ask your local bookshop if they have children's books posters they'd be willing to part with and use these to liven up the library space. Create themed book displays by gathering a selection of books on a topic relevant to the curriculum or related to a current event and displaying them prominently in the school library or in classrooms. Change displays regularly to keep them fresh, interesting and relevant.

8: Arrange a visit from an author or storyteller

The Writers in Schools scheme part-funds visits by writers and storytellers to primary and post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland (funded by the Arts Council) and Northern Ireland (funded by Arts Council Northern Ireland). The scheme is run by Poetry Ireland and 'the creative energy sparked by these first-hand encounters with writers can trigger an appreciation of the emotional and intellectual power of language that lasts a lifetime'. www.poetryireland.ie/education/writers-in-schools/

9: Read aloud to your class

Pupils of all ages benefit from hearing stories read aloud and research indicates that reading aloud develops literacy and comprehension skills and motivates pupils to read themselves. Set aside some time each day to read aloud a short story, some poetry or a chapter from a class novel. Ask students for suggestions on what they'd like to hear or allow them to vote on stories you've preselected by a show of hands.

10: Invite guest readers into classrooms

Invite interested parents/guardians, relatives, and community members in to read to classes or to participate in intergenerational storytelling with the pupils. This introduces pupils to different voices and new stories and strengthens the relationship between the school and the local community.

11: Be a reading role model

It's important for children and young people to see adults reading and enjoying books. As well as participating in DEAR time, create a 'caught reading' campaign featuring teachers as readers. Make posters that feature pictures of teachers 'caught reading' and a few words about the book they're pictured with, their reading habits and their favourite books. Follow this link for inspiration:

www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/feb/17/1

12: Appoint a patron of reading for your school

'A Patron of Reading is a school's special children's author, poet, storyteller or illustrator. The school and their patron develop a relationship over a period of time. Everything the patron does is related to helping encourage and develop a reading for pleasure culture in the school: book quizzes, blogs, book recommendations, discussions, plays, poetry bashes, blogs, book trailers and visits. The possibilities are virtually endless.' Visit the Patron of Reading website for more information.

www.patronofreading.co.uk

13: Organise a book week

Pick a suitable week in the school calendar to celebrate and promote books and reading. Activities can include a book swap, a 'book seeks reader' campaign (lonely hearts ads on books selected by teachers/staff/parents /guardians), a read-a-thon to raise funds for the school library, author visits, dressing up as favourite characters, book crafts and bookmark making, and a book scavenger hunt in the school library.

14: Timetable library visits for each class

Ensure that every pupil in the school encounters the library by timetabling weekly visits for every class. Allow students to browse the shelves and choose their own books, as research has shown that this motivates children to read more and be more engaged with what they are reading.

15: Encourage shared reading between older and younger pupils

Shared reading allows younger pupils to experience the joy of discovering new books while increasing the confidence and reading skills of older readers. Scottish BookTrust have put together this handy document that introduces the concept of shared reading and gives some suggested approaches:

https://highlandliteracy.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/running_a_shared_reading_project.pdf

<https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning-resources>

16: Set pupils up on a blind date with a book

Wrap library books in brown paper with a brief description of what they are about (no spoilers!) and ask pupils to check out one that appeals to them. The aim is to get pupils to be more adventurous in their reading and to perhaps stumble on a new author or try a genre they've never read before, thereby expanding their reading horizons. It also serves as a reminder to not judge a book solely on the cover.

17: Link in with whole school events

Curate collections of books that tie in with festivals or events celebrated by the whole school and create attractive book displays in the school library. Ensure that the selection includes relevant books for all ages and contains fiction, non-fiction and a variety of formats where possible.

18: Build relationships with local booksellers and librarians

Make information on storytelling sessions, reading groups, and events available to parents and pupils to encourage a reading culture that extends beyond the classroom. Consider including book news in the school newsletter to keep parents in the loop on what's happening in their local bookshop and library. Libraries offer block loan cards to teachers that can be used to borrow class materials, and some libraries can provide classroom sets of varying size, from ten to thirty copies, which can be borrowed for up to three months. Contact your local library branch for more information.

19: Engage families in reading

Get parents/guardians involved in the school library by inviting them to participate in library activities or hosting book clubs for parents. Children of readers read, so having reading role models at home is vital. This article from the *Guardian* provides practical advice on how families can create a reading culture at home:

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/dec/16/reading-for-pleasure-reluctant-readers-schools-resources>

20: Create a summer reading campaign

Encourage reading for pleasure beyond the school walls and outside the academic year. Ask pupils to write postcard reviews or to take pictures with the books they read during the summer holidays and display these on the walls of classrooms or halls or in the school library when they return in September. Also encourage pupils to participate in the Summer Stars Reading Adventure in public libraries:

www.librariesireland.ie/summer-stars/

For more information and additional resources, visit our website: www.childrensbooksireland.ie