



Dear Parents/Carers,

For the new academic year, we have purchased some new, phonically decodable reading books from Big Cat Phonics for children in EYFS and KS1. We will also be introducing some changes to the way that we use our reading books both in school and at home.

In school we teach the children to decode words using their phonic knowledge. We feel that it is important for children to be able to apply these newly learned skills in their independent reading, so the books we will be sending home allow children to access the text themselves. The words they are expected to recognise will be in line with the phonics they are secure with in class. This will ensure that children will become more fluent, confident readers at a quicker pace.

Due to this there will be a change to the way that books are sent home. The main changes are as follows:

- Books will be allocated in a phonics phase, not a colour band.
- Staff will allocate a book to a child to bring home on a Monday
- Books will be kept for at least 2 days and maximum of 4 days; we suggest the following pattern of sharing the books at home:
  - Days 1 & 2 are for the children to be able to practise their decoding of words using their sound talk (depending on the length and complexity of the text).
  - Day 3 is to re-read the book again so they can begin to develop their fluency as the hard work of decoding the text has already been done.
  - Day 4 is for pleasure - the more the book is re-read, the more confident your child will become with the text and the more they get to feel like a fluent reader. Please make sure that you add a note into the reading diary if you would like the book longer (over the weekend).
- Always use the opportunity to discuss the text with your child, following examples at the back of the books.
- Children will select their own choice of reading book on a Friday to share with you at the weekend. These may not be phonically decodable so we would not expect your child to recognise or work out every word.

Teachers will constantly be assessing the children during phonics teaching so that your child will be bringing home appropriately challenging texts. It is important that they consolidate their skills, both of decoding words quickly but also understanding more about the text they are reading. We want to foster a depth to your child's reading to ensure that once they reach Year 2, they are confident and fluent readers with the ability to develop a love of reading for pleasure. Once the children in Year 2 reach a level where they have become fluent readers, recognising most words by sight, they will be moved onto colour bands – usually at around purple level, when the focus moves from decoding text to understanding what is read. To be able to do this well, children should be able to read at a speed of around 80 words per minute.

In addition to our new books in school we also have an opportunity to access Big Cat books online via Collins Connect Big Cat, here you will be able to login in with your child, to view and



read other Big Cat eBooks at home (not fully decodable). To log in you will need the following information:

<https://connect.collins.co.uk>

(Click on the blue STUDENT login circle at the top right of the screen) and enter the following login details:

School: St. Ives Infant School (TR26 1DH)

D.O.B: 1

Month: Jan

Surname: A

Year Group: 1

You will then gain access to the Big Cat eBooks.

As you can imagine, getting to grips with a new system will take a little bit of time for parents/carers, children and school staff. Teachers will be more than happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have, as well as listening to your feedback.

For more information about the Big Cat Phonics scheme please visit:

<https://collins.co.uk/pages/phonics-for-letters-and-sounds>

Thank you for your continued support with learning at home during these unprecedented times.

*Miss Saunders*