



## The Cavendish School

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to you regarding a new initiative we will be introducing after Easter to support students' literacy at The Cavendish School called Drop Everything and Read, (DEAR).

Research has proven that 'while good readers gain new skills very rapidly, and quickly move from **learning to read to reading to learn**, poor readers become increasingly frustrated with the act of reading, and try to avoid reading where possible'. Consequently, 'the **word-rich** get richer while the **word-poor** get poorer' in their reading skills. Students who begin with high verbal aptitudes not only do well in exams but tend to find themselves in verbally enriched social environments giving them a double advantage<sup>1</sup>.

Being able to read and being able to access the kind of material required to be academically successful are not at all the same thing<sup>2</sup>. Many young people would claim that "I can read", however, the acquisition and use of vocabulary needs constant practice and development. Age 7, children have a vocabulary of between 3000 – 7100 words yet by the age of 16, 1 in 12 have a *working vocabulary* of only 800 words. Reading, like any skill such as football or playing a musical instrument, requires constant practice to maintain and develop expertise.

Whilst we live in an increasingly technological world, even the digital world is centered around the written word and it is imperative that students develop the best literacy skills possible.

With all this in mind, after Easter we are introducing 'Drop Everything And Read'. This means that once a week everyone in school, students and staff alike, will spend a period of time reading quietly. Initially, this will be in Form Time on Mondays. Please support us and your child by ensuring that he/she has suitable reading material, the frequency of reading is more important than the type of material; books, newspapers, suitable magazines – all these provide an opportunity for your child to expand their vocabulary and develop their literacy skills. All students will be expected to have a book with them, if they wish to get a book from the school library they should do so on the preceding Friday as they won't be permitted to use DEAR time to go and find a book.

If you have any queries or concerns about this please contact your child's form tutor.  
Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours faithfully,

Mr G. Lewis  
Executive Headteacher

Mrs T Turton  
Literacy Coordinator

Mr D. Fisher  
Assistant Headteacher

1. *The Matthew Effect*, Daniel Rigney.
2. *The Learning Spy*, David Didau.