



January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

## National Year of Reading 2026: The Competitive Edge for Sixth Formers

The National Year of Reading is a Department for Education initiative designed to strengthen the nation's reading culture. While often associated with younger students, this initiative is perhaps even more critical for our Sixth Formers as they prepare to transition into university or the workplace.

Evidence suggests that reading habits often drop off significantly during the teenage years. However, research consistently shows that students who maintain a habit of wider reading, beyond their textbooks, secure a distinct advantage.

Regular reading of high-quality non-fiction and fiction directly improves the vocabulary and critical thinking skills required for top grades in A-Levels and BTECs. After Sixth form, in the modern workplace, the ability to synthesise complex information, understand nuance, and communicate effectively is a prerequisite for almost every sector. Furthermore, Universities expect students to read independently around their subjects. This super-curricular reading is vital for writing compelling personal statements and coping with the demands of undergraduate study.

We recognise that reading together looks different at 17 than it did at 7. Strategies to support your young adult include:

**Encouraging "Reading Around":** Prompt them to read articles, journals, or biographies related to the subjects they are studying.

**Discussing Current Affairs:** talking about news articles or long-form journalism helps develop the critical arguments they need for exams and interviews.

**Modelling Reading:** Simply seeing reading valued as a relaxation tool or a professional necessity at home makes a difference.

Our Learning Resource Centre offers access to a range of academic journals, periodicals, and senior fiction. Additionally, students have access to the Ashlyns eLibrary via their Chromebooks/devices, where they can access digital books and audiobooks - a format that many busy students find fits easier into their schedule.

By encouraging your child to keep reading, you are helping them build the cultural capital and intellectual stamina needed for their future careers.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey, Head of English

Ms R Lambert, LRC Manager