



ST. MARY'S *Catholic High School, Dubai*

READING POLICY

2025-2026



Philosophy: *Read, challenge, engage*

'The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go'. (Dr. Seuss)

Reading provides a source of pleasure, enjoyment and enrichment as well as a means to participate in a range of activities in school, in public, multicultural and working life. Children bring with them to school a wide range of attitudes towards understanding of and experiences with reading. We recognise this diversity of experiences, skills and understanding and work with them, and their families to develop each individual as an able and enthusiastic reader.

MISSION:

Empower students to become independent, innovative and critically thinking readers, equipped with the skills to succeed in an ever-changing world and contribute positively to their communities.

VISION:

To cultivate a community of readers who are:

- Confident in themselves as active readers.
- Knowledgeable and confident in key reading skills, enabling them to read with fluency, accuracy, understanding, and enjoyment.
- Knowledgeable and familiar with a wide range of children's literature, both narrative and non-narrative.
- Confident in applying reading skills across the curriculum to support learning in all subject areas.
- Able to respond to texts in thoughtful, reflective, and imaginative ways, using all modes of language: reading, speaking and listening, and writing.
- Skilled in using information texts to locate, extract, and apply relevant information effectively.
- Secure in digital, media, and critical literacy as integral components of the reading curriculum.
- Motivated readers who demonstrate an enduring love of and engagement with reading.
- Are able to demonstrate enriched vocabulary, secure spelling, and strong phonics knowledge.
- Able to engage in high-level critical thinking through analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of texts.
- Well familiar with a broad, varied, and representative range of texts that promote wellbeing, cultural diversity, equity, and a strong sense of belonging for all learners.
- Able to achieve national educational priorities and expectations in reading attainment and progress.

Literacy

Reading Literacy Curriculum is aligned with the international definition of reading literacy and assesses reading skills in line with UK National and International assessments:

Type of reading	Provides opportunities to:
Year 1, 2 and 3 – Guided reading in small groups – a structured reading programme, Bug Club Reading Programme.	- Develop knowledge/familiarity with a range of fiction and non-fiction books. - Relate world of texts to own experiences. - Develop co-operative skills. - Develop key reading skills- use of phonic/ graphic/ at word level and sentence level/ vocabulary and language techniques. - Consolidate and extend phonics, grapheme–phoneme correspondence, vocabulary and sentence-level understanding. - Consider the characteristics and features of different kinds of texts. - Develop skills in reading aloud. - Develop the ability to talk about characters, events and language in texts. - Evaluate the texts, read and refer to relevant passages to support opinions. - Attempt texts which may be too difficult to read independently. -Explore the meanings of words using context clues.
Year 1to13 – Whole class reading	- Develop knowledge of and familiarity with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. - Relate the world of texts to their own experiences. - Develop cooperative skills. - Develop key reading skills, including the use of phonic, graphic, and contextual cues; word and sentence structure; vocabulary; and language techniques. - Consider the characteristics and features of different kinds of texts. - Develop skills in reading aloud and reading silently. - Explore the meanings of words using context clues. - Develop the ability to talk about characters, events, and language in texts. - Evaluate texts read and refer to relevant passages to support opinions. - Synthesise and compare different texts. - Discuss their own reading development in terms of skills, knowledge, understanding, and attitude. - Talk in a meaningful and purposeful way and offer critical opinion on the text read.

- ✓ Approach key skills in varied and systematic ways to ensure students develop a wide range of reading strategies.
- ✓ Integrate reading with writing, speaking, and listening in meaningful contexts for focused work with texts.

Arabic Reading Literacy

- Teachers support reading activities in Arabic classes.
- Guided Reading Programme in Arabic for Year 2 to Year 4 has been established in coherence with Guided Reading Programme in English.
- The Abjadyat platform supports Arabic A students in Years 1–5 by providing age-appropriate digital reading resources that develop Arabic literacy skills, including phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension, through structured, interactive texts and activities..
- A structured reading programme- ALEF, MOE platform and Oxford University Press leveled books are used.
- Progress through levels is monitored by teachers.
- Students are brought to the library during lessons. Teachers keep a log of which classes use the books in the library to read.
- Provision for new students to get oriented with the basics of Arabic by attending the Beginner's Arabic classes before moving on to the expected year level.

Reading Literacy across the curriculum

- English Reading is linked to other subjects in an integral way in group discussions, non-narrative writing across the curriculum, reading instructions, study skills in research work etc.
- Topics requiring extensive reading are included in Medium-Term Plan.
- Reading passages are considered in both Formative and Summative Assessments across the subjects in all phases.
- Students who are in the senior classes are actively encouraged to use physical books as reference and cite their sources in their assignments.
- Information literacy is emphasised with students doing Model United Nations, Public speaking, Debate etc being made aware of how to identify good sources vs. questionable ones.
- Year 7 and 8 has public speaking and debate as part of MUN, where they are given cross curricular topics to work with.

Mathematical Literacy in classroom

Mathematical literacy develops wider, functional use of mathematics and the ability to engage in, recognise and formulate mathematical problems in various situations. This further aids to:

- Develop mathematical vocabulary;
- Explore word problems which involve more than one operation, reasoning and problem solving in Maths.
- Interpret a wide range of tables, charts and graphs, drawing accurate conclusions, spotting trends and questioning the validity of the data presented.
- Communicate mathematical understanding using well-chosen words, symbols and visual representations so that thinking is transparent, logical and mathematically sound.

Science Literacy in classroom

Science Literacy develops an understanding of scientific concepts as well as the ability to apply a scientific perspective. This provides opportunities to:

- ✓ Think scientifically about evidence.
- ✓ Present and communicate research and investigative findings effectively.
- ✓ Read age-appropriate information books, science journals, science articles, and updated scientific research reports.
- ✓ Read and respond to topic-based comprehension passages.
- ✓ Focus reading activities on searching for evidence related to investigations, asking questions while reading texts.
- ✓ Develop academic science vocabulary.
- ✓ Develop critical reading, investigation, and problem-solving skills in Science.
- ✓ Develop the ability to read and interpret information and data in graphs, maps, diagrams, tables, models, photographs, and images.
- ✓ Communicate scientific understanding and findings arising from experiential learning during field trips through clearly structured spoken and written outcomes, using accurate scientific vocabulary, age-appropriate conventions and well-matched visual representations.

A. Planning:

Planning is aligned with the framework of the National curriculum Programme of Study for English Reading and adapted to DSIB and International reading literacy requirements.

Planning for reading is done at three levels:

- a) Whole school planning–Long Term Plan
 - b) Year-group planning-Medium Term Plan/ Scheme of Work
 - c) Individual teacher's Lesson planning –Short Term Plan
- ✓ Long term plans are monitored by the Subject Leader and Curriculum in-charge. Medium and Short-Term Plans are monitored by Subject leaders and Year group leaders. Lesson plans are evaluated and modified to different needs of students and are adapted to curriculum requirements.
 - ✓ Progress and continuity are integral parts of planning.

B. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Subject Leader co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the teaching and learning of reading.

Evidence used to inform such evaluations includes:

- Lesson plans
- Structured formal and informal professional dialogue with teachers and students to probe practice, expectations and learning behaviours.
- Scrutiny of student's work.
- Lesson observations and learning walks focused on reading pedagogy.
- Internal assessments
- External assessments

Assessments

The main modes of assessment used are:

- Observation of children browsing, reading silently, reading in pairs or groups, whole-class interactive sessions.
- Listening to individual children read either alone or in group reading sessions, particularly in Years 1, 2, 3.
- Teacher talking to a child about his/ her reading.
- Formative assessment that aims to provide constructive feedback about how he/ she can improve.
- Summative assessment that summarises a student's achievement at a particular point in time.
- Standardised approved tests (Edexcel GCSE (9-1), IBT, PIRLS, PISA, GL CAT4, GL PROGRESS TESTS, NGRT).
- Analysis of children's oral and written responses to materials they have read.
- Students' record of observation and analysis of investigation.
- Reading for pleasure assessment so that motivation, choice and breadth of reading are actively monitored and strengthened.
- The Head Start programme for incoming Year 1 students to establish early reading baselines and provide timely, targeted support from the outset.
- Ongoing Guided Reading assessment and flexible grouping to ensure that instruction remains sharply aligned to pupils' current needs and secures sustained progress.
- Integrated research projects in Years 7–10 (Language) and Years 12–13 (Literature) to assess students' capacity to research, synthesise, reference and present ideas through extended, independent reading.

Focus of Assessment of Reading

To get a comprehensive picture of a child's reading abilities, we assess a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes to reading. Assessment of reading is aligned with the UK National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Reading in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, Key Stage

5. The assessment of reading focuses on Range, Key Skills, Standard English and Language Study.

<i>Range</i>	<i>Key Skills</i>	<i>Standard English and Language Study</i>
- Listen to literature being read aloud and read themselves, from a wide range of genres. - Read information in printed texts and digital texts onscreen. -Use a range of sources of information, including information texts, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines, business journals, science journals, blogs, podcasts, researches and reports. - Read or have read to them, texts written by key children's authors (past and present), stories from a range of cultures, classic poetry, myths and legends). - Read classic and contemporary novels; classic and contemporary poetry. -Read literary and non literary non-fiction texts.	- Read with fluency, accuracy, enjoyment and understanding. - Use a range of knowledge, understanding and skills when reading, e.g. phonic knowledge, graphic knowledge (letter patterns), word recognition (sight vocabulary), grammatical knowledge (use word order and structure of sentence to check meaning), contextual understanding (meaning derived from the text as a whole). - Talk about character, plot, language used in the text. - Predict about events, characters, and outcomes using clues from the text, illustrations, and prior knowledge. - Re-tell stories in sequence, summarizing key events accurately while demonstrating clear understanding of plot, characters, and main ideas. - Skim and scan texts to retrieve relevant information. - Use inference and deduction- interpretation and integration of complex ideas/ information within and across texts. - Evaluate what they have read. - Use the text to support their opinions. - Use reference materials and their organizational devices. - Use research skills to retrieve, tabulate, interpret and evaluate information. - Compare and contrast poetry and prose texts.	- Discuss the characteristics, language and text features of different kinds of texts - Use varied and relevant vocabulary in order to aid discussion, e.g. author, setting, etc. - Use knowledge gained from reading to develop their understanding of the structure, vocabulary and grammar of Standard English. -Understand how language varies according to context purpose and audience. -Know when it is appropriate to use informal and formal talk and begin to use Standard English in formal situations. -Recognise similarities and differences between written and spoken forms of standard English.

Tracking and Monitoring of Assessment Data

Subject Leaders-

- ✓ Track attainment and progress across the school.
- ✓ Support teachers and children with assessment processes, both formative and in summative.
- ✓ Support teachers with data analysis, monitoring and feedback.
- ✓ Lead on moderation of assessment.
- ✓ Support the Principal and teachers to ensure assessment systems accurately match the curriculum.
- ✓ Provide CPD to staff on assessment systems where needed.

Teachers-

- ✓ Use assessment to inform learning and teaching.
- ✓ Use assessment to give feedback to parents.
- ✓ Carry out effective in-class AFL and use it to inform planning.
- ✓ Set targets for children to ensure next steps.
- ✓ Analyse data for individual, groups, classes, year groups and phases where appropriate to track attainment and progress and identify trends.
- ✓ Use assessment data to inform the SEND Department.
- ✓ Report on attainment and progress to parents and Subject Leaders.
- ✓ Ensure assessment procedures as defined by the school are carried out accurately and in-line with the assessment timeline.
- ✓ Keep accurate records of assessments as outlined in the School Assessment Policy.
- ✓ Design appropriately differentiated worksheets and tasks that use assessment information to scaffold, extend and challenge all learners effectively.

Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs are integrated into the classroom. The Student Support and Service Department led by the school SENCO advises, guides and supports teachers in adapting Classroom materials to meet individual needs. They regularly meet teachers to discuss relevant strategies and materials for children with reading difficulties. Systematic and regular assessment is made and from this Individual Education Plans are designed for each individual. The Student Support and Service Department ensures that each child has clear identifiable targets which are communicated to parents. **(SEND Department Policy outlines details)**

HEAD START READING PROGRAM

Students who have not achieved the appropriate Year 1 reading ability at the time of admission ,new admissions (Year 2-4) and ESL students (Year 2-4) who are identified in their classrooms with reading difficulty are given a simple assessment of reading with grade-appropriate words and sentences. Students who fail to read with automaticity and fluency are then taken through a systematic reading programme after getting consent from the parents.

Staff Development Needs

- The Subject Leaders will conduct regular discussions with staff on their development needs in reading.
- Areas in reading that affect whole-school will be targeted for development through staff meetings and whole-school curriculum meetings. These will take place in a negotiated programme along other curriculum priorities.
- Needs of individual teacher will be supported by the Subject Leader using a range of possible methods:
 - ✓ Working alongside the teacher in the classroom on the particular area of need.
 - ✓ Providing informal support through discussions.
 - ✓ Providing a list of reference books, articles etc which the teacher could consult.

Reading-related Initiatives

1. Primary and Secondary students enrolled in the Chevron Reader's Cup as part of the Emirates Literature Festival for both Arabic and English.
2. Encouraged students' active participation in various competitions as part of the Emirates Literature Festival, like Reader's Cup, TedEx Talks, ENBD Poetry for All (including 2 students from the SEN Department), Short Story Writing and Letter Writing in both Arabic and English.
3. Reading Corners in Year 1 to Year 4 classes.
4. Reading Corners in Year 10 and 11 classes (Arabic Books included for 10E, 10F, 11E, 11F).
5. Reading Corner for Primary Islamic students.
6. Relevant reading initiatives such as Tre(e)adding (Years 1-3), Book in a Box (Years 1-6), drama and debate projects, one-minute acts, five-minute acts, plot-twist performances and stand-up comedy that animate texts and strengthen oracy (Years 7-11).
7. Reading Days (Year 1) that feature book swaps, dress-up as a book character etc.
8. Drama Performance in Talent Show.
9. Debate and Public Speaking for Secondary in MUN.
10. Poetry Project Presentation and Formal Discussion for Years 7 to 10.
11. Extensive research work on various authors and literary theories for Years 12 and 13.

12. Library memberships for Years 9-13.
13. Book Week Celebration
 - a) BookSwap
 - b) Dress up as your Favourite Book Character Event
 - c) Literary Quiz
 - d) Guess that Book One-Minute Act
14. Book Art Competitions
 - a) Book-Colourful
 - b) Book-tastic-My Favourite Book
 - c) Page to Palette: The Art of Wellbeing
15. Author Visits
 - a) Onjali Q Rauf visited the school and addressed the students from years 4-7; spoke about the refugee crisis and her new book, Hope on the Horizon.
 - b) Sandra Piesik, Architect and Author visited the school and spoke to students from Years 10-12 about sustainable housing and about her book "Habitat" which explores the same theme. She also conducted a workshop for a group of 40 students.
 - c) Oceanographer and physicist Helen Czerski spoke passionately about conservation to the students. She emphasized the significance of preserving marine ecosystems and described how daily human activities are intimately linked to the oceans.
16. Primary and Secondary students involvement in the publication of the school's Newsletter
 - a) Primary and Secondary students are invited to send in their original work for the first edition of the school Newsletter in Arabic and English. Art works are also welcomed.
 - b) A panel of senior secondary students is responsible for writing formal articles on a range of school events and activities involving the school community and its students.
17. Various library-related tasks in Library lessons for Years 4 to 9.
18. The Senior Library has a dedicated wall space where students can recommend new reads to their peers, share quotes that inspired them in a book they read, along with a word of the week section.
19. Senior Library also has a space where books specifically curated for a selected theme are displayed to keep students interested in new releases and new genres. The themes for this term are wellbeing, inclusivity and overcoming fears.
20. Additional enrichment such as DC Book Fair.
21. Reading Bingo for Years 1-10.
22. Various participations in Emirates Literature Foundation Competitions.
23. Morning Book Chats for Years 1-4.

Suggested Initiatives:

1. Book Club
2. Inter class Competition in Reading Arabic storybooks
3. Reading buddy in all cohorts

Appendix 1

ST.MARYS'CATHOLICHIGHSCHOOL, READING RUBRIC FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL(Extracted from PIRLS)

Advanced Level(Above 83%/A*)

When reading relatively complex literary texts, students can:

- Interpret story events and character actions to provide reasons, motivations, feelings, and character traits with full text-based support.
- Begin to evaluate the effect on the reader of the author's language and style choices.

When reading information texts, students can:

- Distinguish and interpret complex information from different parts of the text and provide full text-based support.
- Integrate information across a text to explain relationships and sequence activities.
- Begin to evaluate visual and textual elements to consider the author's point of view.

High Level (From 59% -83%/ B-A)

When reading relatively complex literary texts, students can:

- Locate and distinguish significant actions and details embedded across the text.
- Make inferences to explain relationships between intentions, actions, events, and feelings, and give text-based support.
- Interpret and integrate story events and character actions and traits from different parts of the text.
- Evaluate the significance of events and actions across the entire story.
- Recognize the use of some language features (e.g., metaphor, tone, imagery).

When reading relatively complex information texts, students can:

- Locate and distinguish relevant information within a dense text or a complex table.
- Make inferences about logical connections to provide explanations and reasons.
- Integrate textual and visual information to interpret the relationship between ideas.
- Evaluate and make generalizations about content and textual elements.

Intermediate Level (From 29% to 58%/ C-E)

When reading a mix of simpler and relatively complex literary texts, students can:

- Independently locate, recognize, and reproduce explicitly stated actions, events, and feelings.
- Make straightforward inferences about the attributes, feelings, and motivations of main characters.
- Interpret obvious reasons and causes and give simple explanations.
- Begin to recognize language features and style.

When reading relatively complex information texts, students can:

- Locate and reproduce two or three pieces of information from within the text.
- Make straightforward inferences to provide factual explanations.
- Begin to interpret and integrate information to order events.
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Low Level (below 29%/ U-F)

When reading relatively complex literary texts, students can:

- Locate and retrieve explicitly stated information, actions, or ideas.
- Make straightforward inferences about events and reasons for actions.
- Begin to interpret story events and central ideas.

When reading relatively complex information texts, students can:

- Locate and reproduce explicitly stated information from text and other formats (e.g., charts, diagrams).
- Begin to make straightforward inferences about explanations, actions, and descriptions.

Appendix 2

ST.MARYS'CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL DUBAI,

READING LEVEL DESCRIPTOR FOR SECONDARY READING.(Extracted from PISA Report)

Level 6-(Above 84%/ A*)

At **Level 6**, tasks typically require the reader to make multiple inferences, comparisons, and contrasts that are both detailed and precise. They require demonstration of a full and detailed understanding of one or more texts and may involve integrating information from more than one text. Tasks may require the reader to deal with unfamiliar ideas in the presence of prominent competing information, and to generate abstract categories for interpretation.

Reflect and evaluate tasks may require the reader to hypothesize about or critically evaluate a complex text on an unfamiliar topic, considering multiple criteria or perspectives, and applying sophisticated understandings from beyond the text.

Level 5-(59%-83%/ B-A)

At **Level 5**, tasks that involve retrieving information require the reader to locate and organize several pieces of deeply embedded information, inferring which information in the text is relevant.

Reflective tasks require critical evaluation or hypothesis, drawing on specialized knowledge. Both interpretative and reflective tasks require a full and detailed understanding of a text whose content or form is unfamiliar.

For all aspects of reading, tasks at this level typically involve dealing with concepts that are contrary to expectations.

Level4-(48%-58%/C)

At level 4, tasks that involve retrieving information require the reader to locate and organize several pieces of embedded information. Some tasks at this level require interpreting the meaning of nuances of language in a section of text by considering the text. Other interpretative tasks require understanding and applying categories in an unfamiliar context. Reflective tasks at this level require readers to use formal or public knowledge to hypothesize about or critically evaluate a text.

Level 3-(29%-47%/ E-D)

At **Level 3**, tasks require the reader to locate, and in some cases recognize the relationship between, several pieces of information that must meet multiple conditions.

Interpretative tasks at this level require the reader to integrate several parts of a text to identify a main idea, understand a relationship, or construe the meaning of a word or phrase. They need to consider many features when comparing, contrasting, or categorizing.

Level 2-(20%-28%/ F)

At **Level 2**, some tasks require the reader to locate one or more pieces of information, which may need to be inferred and may need to meet several conditions.

Other tasks require recognizing the main idea in a text, understanding relationships, or construing meaning within a limited part of the text when the information is not prominent, and the reader must make low-level inferences.

Tasks at this level may involve comparisons or contrasts based on a single feature in the text.

Level 1-(10%-19%/G)

At **Level 1**, tasks require the reader to locate one or more independent pieces of explicitly stated information; to recognize the main theme or author's purpose in a text about a familiar topic; or to make a simple connection between information in the text and common, everyday knowledge.

Typically, the required information in the text is prominent and there is little, if any, competing information.

Below Level 1- (less than 10%/ U)

Students **below Level 1** tasks require the reader to locate a single piece of explicitly stated information in a prominent position in a short, syntactically simple text with a familiar context and text type.

Review and Evaluation of the Policy

The policy for reading will be reviewed and evaluated in June 2026 to ensure relevance, effectiveness and practicality.



Date for Review: June 2026

Relationship to other policies, guidelines and statements

- Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Inclusion Poli