

Parents,

Saint James School has a mandatory summer reading program for students in grades one to eight. If your child is entering kindergarten or prekindergarten, keep reading to them so they learn that rich story language!

Our 1-8 mandatory summer reading program is based on students choosing the books that they want to read. We want our students to experience a love of reading by reading books that they choose. We also want to maintain their literacy skills over the summer. Most summer reading programs are based on required reading, but ours is based on student choice. Saint James School summer reading requirement is for students to read books at their level over the summer vacation and record it in some fashion. Our summer reading program is based on research that shows students succeed in reading when they read what they want to read. A journal is provided so they can make an entry of their choice but it should include some thought and be relevant to the book Read.

Here are some examples of things you can do but the list is endless. For the very young reader, they might just make a list of books they like and those that were so-so and those that they did not like. They might draw pictures or find words they learned or write a summary or write how the book reminds them of another book they read or something that they did.

Is your child artistic? Maybe they will draw a picture of their favorite part? Design a new cover? Draw the characters? Draw the setting? Make a cartoon strip depicting the book or the plot? Create a movie poster putting actors into the characters?

Does your child like to write? Maybe they want to write a review? Maybe they want to write a letter to a character? Maybe they want to write a new ending? Perhaps they want to write a teaser about the book for a poster? Maybe they just want to write a little bit about the story? Possibly they could explain a funny, surprising or puzzling part of the story.

For the upper grades, maybe they want to compare books or compare authors or relate the book to the real world. Perhaps they want to imagine that they meet a character from the book and write the dialogue that they would have with the character. They can write a letter to the author or the illustrator about the book and tell them what they liked or disliked. Maybe they want to write their own test and an answer key about the story or they could just have a conversation with somebody else that has read the book. They can write down some new vocabulary words that they learned and write what they meant. They can make a list of great adjectives or describing words used in the book or just words they like. Maybe they want to create a pretend FaceBook page or Twitter conversation that one of the characters would have.

The middle school should be reading all summer long and writing about the books they choose. In addition, the middle school has the requirement to read one required book. Sixth grade will read The Egypt Game by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. Seventh grade will read My Brother Sam is Dead by Christopher Collier and James Lincoln Collier. Eighth grade will read A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park. The requirement is to read one required book and then several other books, of their choice and record it in their summer reading journal.

The requirement is that your child reads over the summer and the books read are recorded in these story journals in some way. They will return these in September and this will be their first grade in September. In order for this to be successful, children will need time and books. So, please give your child a time to read. Is it right before bedtime? Is it a quiet time after supper? Is it in the car when you are driving? Give them access to books. The libraries all have a lot of appropriate age level books for your student to read. If you have difficulty, feel free to contact me. Let students choose the books and let's celebrate the fact that they read over the summer!

Make it fun! One parent puts a number of locations to read in a jar and when they pull out a paper, they find where they are reading (in bed, under the table, on the couch, outside, etc. Another parent reads chapter books in a cycle. The parent will read with their children one evening and then have the student read the next evening. The next time they talk about it and the child makes the journal entry. Grandparents love to be a part of this process and can help your child read over the summer!

Research shows that when parents are involved, it is more successful so if you read to your younger student, that would count. Maybe you want to have a family reading time where you model reading with your child. Just keep them reading books of their choice and have them record in some way. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me.

Happy reading,

Nancy Naimey
Principal