

CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

17-B, I.P. ESTATE. NEW DELHI – 110092

CBSE/ACAD(Liby)/2003/

Dated : 16/07/03

Circular No. 17

SUBJECT: PROMOTING READING HABITS

Dear Principal,

As a Principal, I am sure, you are aware of the importance and need for promoting reading as a skill in your students. To bring children and books together successfully, children have to experience the pleasures of reading. They have to hear stories, visualize characters, talk about themes, emotionally respond to characters and think with new information, ideas and viewpoints.

It is not enough to offer children what is considered a good selection of reading texts. For, this alone does not guarantee that the child will engage with a reading passage and become a good reader. A conscious attempt needs to be made to help children to ``connect`` to the text in a meaningful way.

Reading is not simply decoding or pronouncing words correctly. It is an ongoing dialogue and interaction between the author and the reader. Good readers bring their knowledge and experience to an author's world to help them understand the text. Good readers are able to use the information to arrive at a deeper understanding. They don't merely recall what they read, they comprehend it. They are able to bring past knowledge and experience to the information and text, and create new understanding, solve problems, make inferences and make connections to other texts and experiences.

In order to help readers interact with the text, it is absolutely necessary to bear in mind that different kinds of texts demand different reading skills and strategies like Skimming. Scanning. Sequencing. Deducing meaning of an unfamiliar word from the contextual clues and so on. The purpose that a reader has for reading a text also determines the reading strategy (or a combination of two or more strategies) he or she will actually use.

The students in language classes may be asked to improve reading speed. They may be asked to read topics as diverse as science and technology to politics. This improves concentration. Once settled into reading at an optimum speed, they must try and practice reading longer passages to increase concentration levels.

The Board has been emphasizing on making school education meaningful and relevant, so that it acts as a powerful tool for human resource development. It is, however, seen that in a large number of institutions exclusive emphasis is given to management of curriculum and syllabi in a time frame and in orienting the students to the periodic tests and examinations. In this process, certain vital aspects of student development are either neglected or not taken care of. One such area is the management and use of library. Though adequate guidelines have been issued by the Board from time to time and through its publication `Organising School Library Guidelines`, it is noted that many schools do not periodically update their resources in the library. The Heads of Institutions should ensure that a reasonable sum of the annual budget is allotted and fully made use of.

The librarians should bring to the notice of the students the following information:

- (a) Types and number of books available in the library in each category.
- (b) Use of Catalogues.
- (c) Methods of choosing the right book.
- (d) Maintenance and handling of books.
- (e) Reading Techniques.
- (f) Relevance and methods of note making.
- (g) Referencing of books.

New and latest arrivals must be displayed in the library. A small brief about the book will be an added advantage. It should be ensured that library periods are purposeful and provide adequate scope for the students in enriching their knowledge.

Emphasis has to be given to the study of classics, autobiographies, biographies, travelogues, essays and poetry. Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and other reference books should be available for use and should not be used only for display. Diversified choice of books for reading will help the students in building up emotional balance and stability and promote intellectual curiosity. Students should also be helped to write 'Book Reviews' which could be displayed on the Notice Board.

It is also seen, during formal inspections of schools that the staff members do not use the libraries adequately. Heads of institutions may organize periodical meetings of staff for book review and discussion on latest books of relevance. Academic enrichment of content and methodology is vital in information –flooded society. The impact of Technology on the management of knowledge dynamics in school libraries has opened newer dimensions of challenge. Several efforts have been made to bring knowledge at the doors of learners through e-libraries etc., While there is increasing need for digitalization of Libraries and packing up information of largest size in smaller volumes, it is equally important to provide required speed and access to the information. It is time that the school libraries gear up for the same to become a part of this universe of knowledge and facilitate the empowerment of the present generation of learners to be active partners of the emerging knowledge society.

Schools may organize lectures and symposiums with local experts to motivate the students on 'reading habits'. The lectures could include:

- (a) Postures while Reading.
- (b) Attentiveness
- (c) Improving Concentration.
- (d) Methods of Reading.
- (e) Impact of Environment on reading habits.
- (f) Understanding and appreciation of books.

In view of a large-scale media explosion, the reading habits of students seem to have been adversely affected. As it is a matter of common concern for all those involved in the system of education, it is hoped that the Heads of Institutions will address themselves to this vital issue. The Board looks forward to the whole-hearted co-operation of all the schools.

Yours faithfully



(G. BALASUBRAMANIAN)
DIRECTOR(ACADEMIC)