



We hope that you and your child have had a wonderful summer break. As the new academic year begins, we are delighted to be able to share a selection of books that cover a range of reading ages and topics of interest. If you received our summer newsletter before the break, you'll have seen that we explored the many benefits that reading has for education as well as in life.

In these half-termly newsletters, we're delighted to be collaborating with best-selling authors to give you an even wider selection of book recommendations. You and your child can watch each of them talk about their recommendations by using your phone to scan the QR codes underneath their photos. With the wide variety of books showcased here, we hope that you may be able to select some that your child might enjoy.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.

In addition to exploring the books mentioned in this newsletter, you can encourage reading in other ways too. For example:

- Find out what your child is curious about, or takes an interest in, and look at books around these topics.
- Encourage them to research into an area further through non-fiction texts such as online articles.
- If your child struggles with reading and this poses an obstacle to their enjoyment, explore the blurbs of books and select a couple to try on audiobook. You can often borrow these for free from your local library too.
- Support your child with reading for purpose. You could read recipes, newspaper articles, blog posts and other forms of texts.

Whatever you and your child choose to read, we hope you enjoy it!



NERVOUS ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL?

In case you've missed our previous newsletters, we wanted to share a few books which may be of use to you if you're nervous about the return to school, or you're looking to approach this year differently.



Dare to be You

MATTHEW SYED

What would you dare to try if you stopped worrying about fitting in? Drawing examples from sport, science and even business, Dare to Be You empowers young readers to follow their own path, love what makes them different and question the world around them.

There is also an accompanying Dare to Be You Journal which you could purchase as well, if you think this would be useful for your child.

Go Big

MATTHEW BURTON

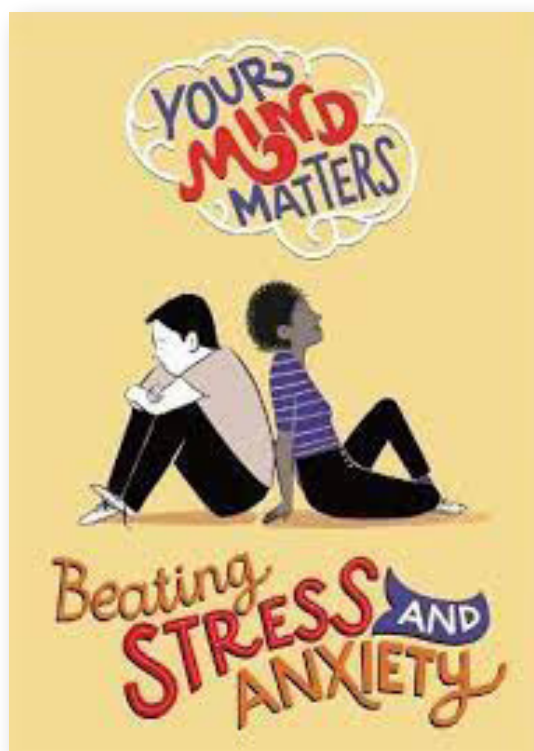
The bestselling back-to-school handbook, from the nation's favourite head teacher, Mr Burton. Secondary school can seem scary. Corridors are wide, older students look terrifying and there's homework, messy friendships and stressful exams to deal with. But, whether you're about to land at secondary school or you're still settling in, Mr Burton is here to guide you through your journey – worry-free.



Your Mind Matters: Beating Stress and Anxiety

HONOR HEAD

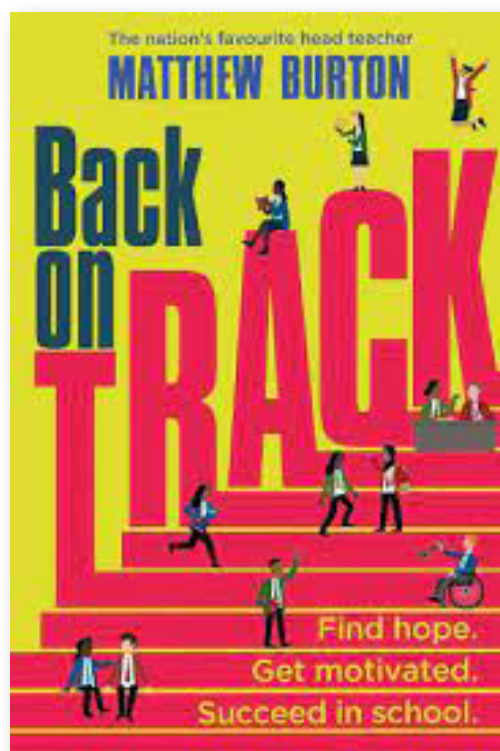
Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at times in their lives, but sometimes the feelings build up and can affect our physical and mental health. This book will help you to recognise the signs of feeling stressed and anxious and what you can do to feel better.



Back on Track

MATTHEW BURTON

From ways to manage the tough times and solve even the biggest problems or anxieties, to skills for beating school stress and tapping into your potential, this is the one-stop guide for students who are in need of a bit of hope, some soothing words of advice and a good old pep talk to get them going in school again. Whether facing assessments, a big change or having to make up for lost time, this book is crammed with advice so that though things at school might seem hard, readers will soon be back on track and raring to go.



SHORTER-LENGTH READS



Leila and the Blue Fox

KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE

Based on the true story of an Arctic fox who walked from Norway to Canada in 76 days, a distance of 2,000 miles. Leila embarks upon a journey to find her mother who left her, with help from a determined little fox.

Stitched Up STEVE COLE

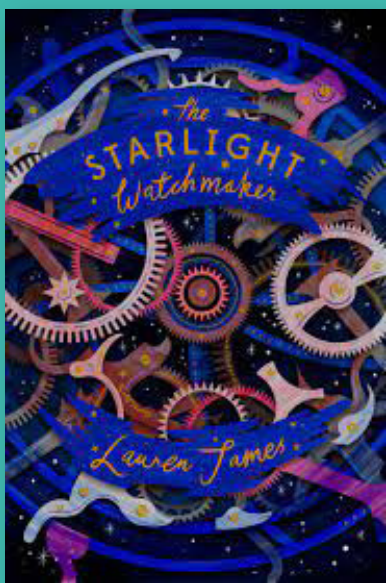
When twelve-year-old Hanh is offered a job as a shop assistant in Hanoi, she sees it as a chance to earn money to send back to her family living in poverty in rural Vietnam. But on her arrival in the city, she soon learns that the job offer was a lie and finds herself working in virtual slavery in an illegal garment factory.



Needle PATRICE LAWRENCE (13+)

Charlene is a demon knitter. It's the only thing she enjoys and the only thing she believes she's really good at. So when her foster mum's son destroys her latest creation, Charlene loses it and stabs him in the hand with her needle. Despite getting sucked into the criminal justice system, Charlene's not sorry and she's never apologised to anyone. But people keep telling her that if she says sorry, they'll go easier on her...





The Starlight Watchmaker

LAUREN JAMES (13+)

Wealthy students from across the galaxy come to learn at the academy where Hugo toils as a watchmaker. But he is one of the lucky ones. Many androids like him are jobless and homeless. Someone like Dorian could never understand their struggle - or so Hugo thinks when the pompous duke comes banging at his door...



Keeper

ALAN GIBBONS

New boy, Shane Logan, has a temper, but he's also a talented goalie. When Peter and his friends invite him to join their football team, he delivers a star performance,

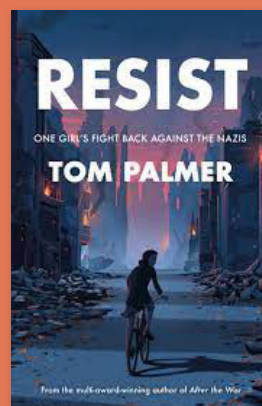
but Shane's not the only one who makes an impression. His dad, Mick, yells orders and insults from the sidelines. What is his problem? And why does Shane seem afraid of him?

Resist

TOM PALMER

As WWII stretches on, life for ordinary Dutch people in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands is fraught with hardship. After the murder of her uncle and the capture of her brother, Edda is determined to do

anything she can to fight back. But what can a teenage girl do and how much risk is she willing to take? Resist shines a light on the work of the WWII Dutch resistance, in a story inspired by the childhood of Hollywood legend Audrey Hepburn.



LONGER-LENGTH READS

21% Monster

P.J. CANNING

When Darren Devlin is arrested for destroying his school with his bare hands, it's not just the police who are after him. Enter Marek Masters, 14 years old, 19% alien, and the most intelligent, most wanted "almost human" alive. Marek is here to tell Darren the truth - he is 21% monster, and together they must take down the secret organisation that created them...



When I See Blue

LILY BAILEY

Sometimes Ben's brain makes him count to 4 to prevent bad things happening. Sometimes it makes him tap or blink in 4s. Mostly it makes the smallest things feel impossible. And with a new school, a moody big brother, an absent dad and a mum battling her own demons, Ben feels more out of control than ever. But then he meets April and, with his new friend, Ben might finally figure out how to stand up to the bully in his brain...





Sadé and Her Shadow Beasts

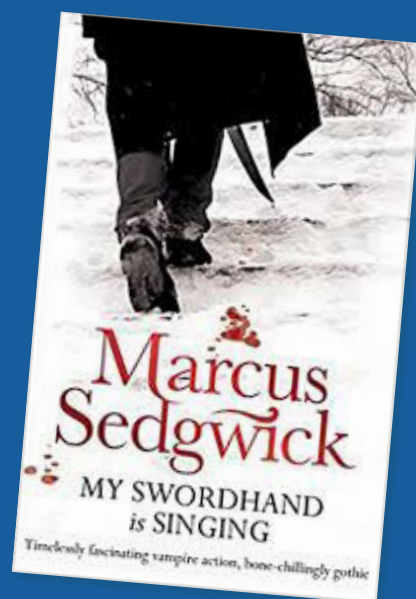
RACHEL FATUROTI

When her mum dies, the colours in Sadé's mind fade like old jeans, and shadow beasts appear. They're trouble. They follow Sadé to school and cause chaos wherever they go. Then Sadé joins a grief support group and slowly her beasts retreat. But just as it's her turn to perform her poetry at the school talent show, they're back, larger and stronger than ever...

My Swordhand is Singing

MARCUS SEDGWICK (12+)

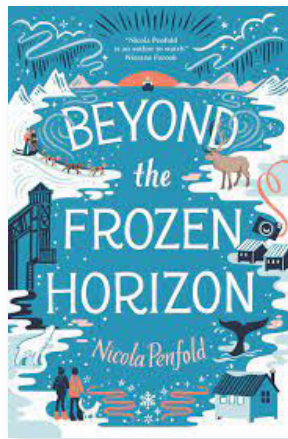
Tomas and his son, Peter, arrive in Chust during a bitter winter. Despite the villagers' lack of hospitality, they settle there as woodcutters. But there are many things Peter does not understand. Why does Tomas dig a channel of fast-flowing waters around their hut so they live on an isolated island? Why does Tomas carry a long battered box everywhere they go - and refuse to tell Peter of its contents? Peter falls for a beautiful gypsy princess, Sofia, and intoxicated by her community's love of life, he even becomes drawn into their deadly quest - for these travellers are Vampire Slayers, and Chust is a community to which the dead return to wreak revenge on the living.



Beyond the Frozen Horizon

NICOLA PENFOLD

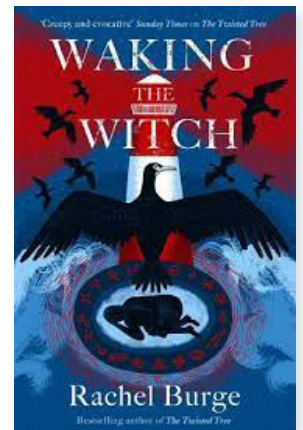
The earth is thriving – with wilderness status protecting land and wildlife, and scientific organisations researching new ways to support human life sustainably. Rory's mum is a geologist on one of these projects, and Rory is beyond excited to join her on a work trip to the Arctic. But the project isn't all that it seems...



Waking the Witch

RACHEL BURGE (14+)

When Ivy's search for her mother draws her to a remote Welsh isle, she uncovers a dark secret about her past. An ancient and corrupt power is stalking Ivy, and her only chance of survival is to look deep within herself. For not every story in legend is true, and some evils are not what they seem.



The Short Knife

ELEN CALDECOTT

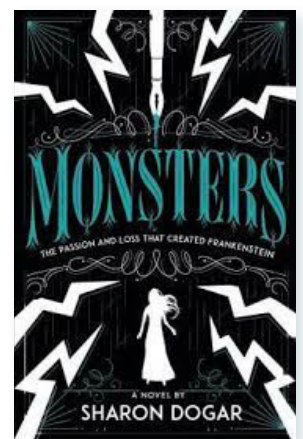
It is 454 AD. The Roman Empire has withdrawn from Britain, throwing it into the chaos of the Dark Ages. Mai has been kept safe by her father and her sister, Haf. But when Saxon warriors arrive at their farm, the family is forced to flee to the hills where British warlords lie in wait. Can Mai survive in a dangerous world where speaking her mother tongue might be deadly, and where even the people she loves the most can't be trusted?

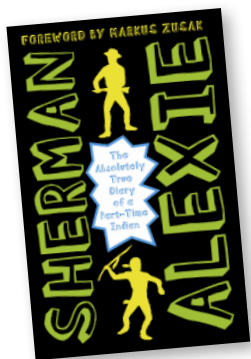


Monsters

SHARON DOGAR (13+)

1814: Two 16-year-old stepsisters run away with a married man. The results are devastating and the ripples will be felt for centuries. This is the incredible story of Mary Shelley. It is the story of a young woman who defies tradition and society, and who draws upon the monstrous elements of her own life to create the most memorable monster of them all: Frankenstein.





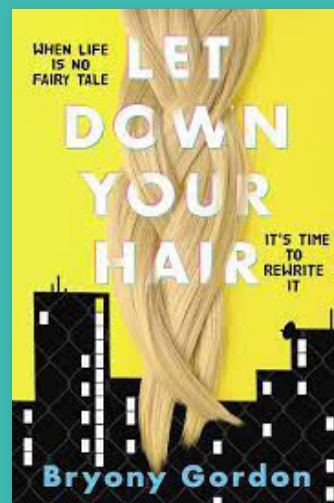
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian

SHERMAN ALEXIE (12+)

Junior is a budding cartoonist who leaves his school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white high school. This heartbreaking and funny tale, features poignant drawings that reflect the character's art and is based on the author's own experiences. It chronicles contemporary adolescence as seen through the eyes of one Native American boy.

Let Down Your Hair BRYONY GORDON (12+)

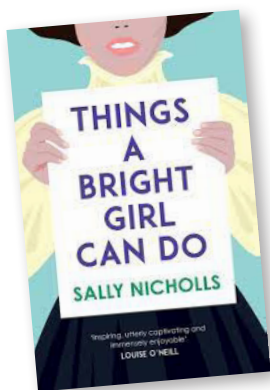
Barb may have zero friends IRL, but online, she is popular. Like, several-hundred-thousand-followers popular. Or at least, her hair is popular. Because Barb's hair is glossy and beautiful. Which is why hairbrush manufacturers pay her stupid money for a 30-second clip. But most of the time Barb just wants to be a normal teenager, who has friends and a life. One who isn't confined to her bedroom on the 12th floor of the tower-block flat she shares with her aunt making content. One who can go about her business without everyone obsessing over the way she looks. But it's soon clear something isn't right. Because when Barb runs her fingers over her scalp, she feels something smooth and different. Barb has alopecia. *In this stunning retelling of Rapunzel, Barb must learn that she is so much more than her hair...*



Things a Bright Girl Can Do

SALLY NICHOLLS (12+)

Through rallies and marches, in polite drawing rooms and freezing prison cells and the poverty-stricken slums of the East End, three courageous young women join the fight for the vote. But the fight for freedom will challenge Evelyn, May and Nell more than they ever could believe. As war looms, just how much are they willing to sacrifice?



NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the non-fiction recommendations we shared at the start of the newsletter, you may also be interested in exploring some of the recommendations below. However, there is such a wide variety of non-fiction texts available to you – about all sorts of topics, issues and interests – so if nothing catches your eye here, do look up books about things that interest you, or ask a teacher/librarian for advice!

Usborne’s 100 Things to Know About Series



Within this series, you can select from a variety of books based on your interests. From Music to Climate Change – there is something for everyone so do have a look online to choose one you’d be interested in!

What is Politics? Why should we care? And other big questions

MICHAEL ROSEN

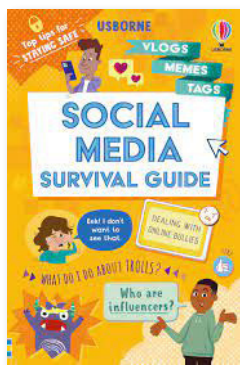
Politics, in its widest sense, affects us all, every day. What if there were no politics? What would that look like? What does it mean to be political or non-political and what effect do each of these positions have?



Social Media Survival Guide

HOLLY BATHIE

The Social Media Survival Guide answers questions about all aspects of social media - the good AND the bad - making it a must-have tool for young people (and parents) to help navigate the online world safely and confidently and to learn the best approaches to taking care of themselves.



What’s the T?

JUNO DAWSON (14+)

Discover what it means to be a young transgender and/or non-binary person in the twenty-first century in this frank and funny guide for 14+ teens. In What’s the T?, Stonewall ambassador and bestselling trans author, Juno Dawson defines a myriad of labels and identities and offers uncensored advice on coming out, sex and relationships with her trademark humour and lightness of touch.



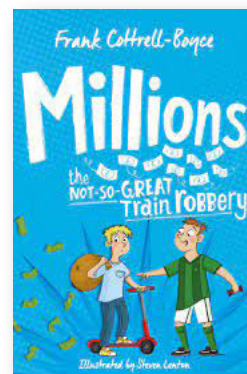
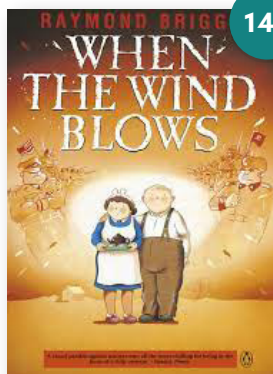
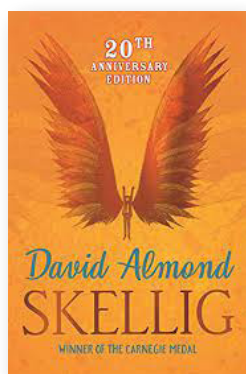
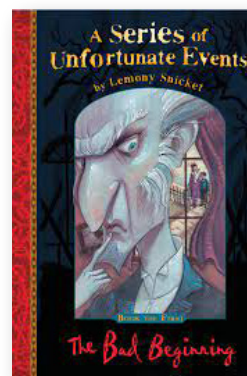
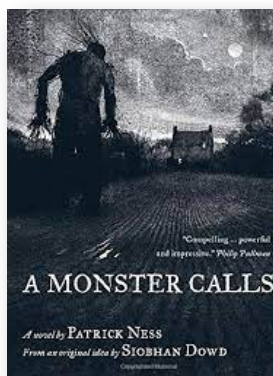
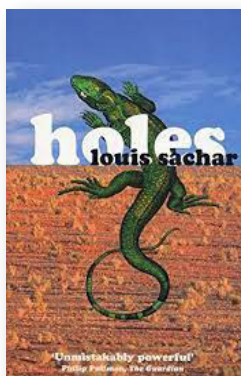
AUTHOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Phil Earle Recommends...

We are delighted that award-winning author, Phil Earle, will be continuing in his role as PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year and sharing his book recommendations and tips for reading. Despite finding reading difficult when he was younger, Phil has gone on to write many incredible books; his most recent novels are *When the Sky Falls* and *While the Storm Rages* and these have been extremely popular.



To watch his video which explores how he got into reading, his thoughts on the importance of films and some books he'd recommend in light of this, scan the QR code below.



AUTHOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Darren Simpson Recommends...

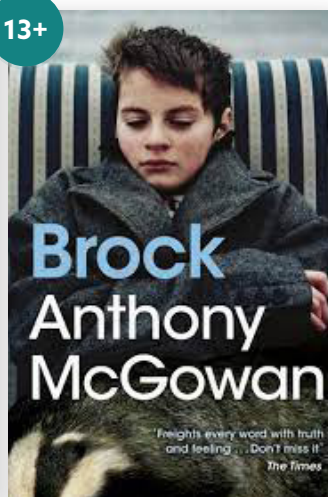
Darren Simpson is a fantastic author, and his three books were shared on various newsletters last academic year: *Scavengers*, *The Memory Thieves* and *Furthermoor*. We are so pleased that Darren will be taking on the role of PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year. He is keen to not only share recommendations with students and parents, but also to hear what they think about books he's shared or ones they'd like him to explore, so feel free to use the hashtag #PiXLReading on Twitter to share your thoughts!



To watch his video containing several recommendations for students across the Key Stage 3-4 range and ideas for accessing books if you can't purchase them yourself, scan the QR code.



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