

Bideford Literacy Strategy 2021-22 – Information for Parents and Carers

It is well documented that young people who leave school *without* good literacy skills are held back at every stage of their life. Literacy is essential for students to access the school curriculum and prepares them for their next stage in education.

The aim of our literacy strategy is to ensure that all students at Bideford College possess a functional level of literacy that will allow them to make excellent progress in their education, both at the college and beyond, and in such a way that allows them to access and fully engage with the personal, social, cultural and professional opportunities that they face in later life.

This is consistent with Ofsted's inspection framework which states that there should be 'a rigorous approach to the promotion of literacy in schools'.

To support our aims Bideford College will:

- A. Promote literacy across and through the college curriculum and, where appropriate, teach literacy skills as a discreet part of subject teaching
- B. Ensure all students are routinely required to acquire and develop literacy skills and subject knowledge, and to practise the use of these, to a standard at least equivalent to those required in end of Key Stage examinations so that they gain the qualifications to thrive in later life
- C. Implement suitable interventions where a student's literacy is disadvantageous to them or substantially below where it should be, across all year groups
- D. Increase the familiarity of staff with key literacy concepts that will allow them to promote and develop literacy within their subject teaching (and tutoring) including their feedback to students' written work
- E. To ensure staff at the college have access to, and make use of, accurate and regularly updated information about students' literacy levels, so as to plan high quality teaching and learning that accounts for students' different literacy needs
- F. Better equip parents and carers so that they can support children's learning, progress (and assessment)

Footnote:

Bideford College library's approach to texts containing 'challenging' themes or language

The following principles inform the texts that we stock in the library and the access our students have to them:

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- The college library plays an instrumental part in the process of giving our students the adequate knowledge and skills to prepare them for the adult world ahead of them. By continuing to promote a culture of reading, whether this is to support a subject discipline or recreationally, we help to instil a lifelong love of learning. To do this successfully it is vital that we stock books which help our students make sense of a complex and changing world.
- Books stocked will necessarily cover a range of interests as well as catering for readers of different ages and levels of maturity. Inevitably there will be some texts, particularly works of fiction, where the content might be aimed at more mature readers.
- We will only stock texts we feel hold some merit and which will engage our students in positive reading habits.
- We acknowledge that some parents and carers might wish to limit the content that their child reads whilst in the early years of their secondary schooling.
- We will discreetly label all texts with content we feel might be considered unsuitable for some of our younger readers (ie years 7 and 8). By doing this library staff will be aware when a book addresses content that some parents might see as 'age-appropriate' because sensitive or delicate matters are explored in a way that might be considered 'challenging'. As examples, this could include books that contained depictions of prejudice, discrimination or other anti-social behaviour; violence; explicit sexual themes or swearing.
- If a parent or carer wishes such texts *not* to be issued to their child they need to email the library stating their child's name and tutor group and asking for 'lending restrictions to apply'. We will then limit access to these texts *until* Year 9. By this point we feel that most of our students should be ready to engage with the range of material on the library shelves.
- We will not restrict loans to a student unless we specifically hear from their parent or carer.
- If library staff have a concern about the suitability of a text for a student they would potentially discuss this with the student, their tutor, or their parent or carer, according to the situation.
- Parents and carers can email the college library at any time, if they would like to know which books their child has borrowed library@bidefordcollege.org

