**Progetto Read to be Happy – Upper Secondary School**

*"Reading for pleasure is the single biggest factor in success later in life, outside of an education. Study after study has shown that those children who read for pleasure are the ones who are most likely to fulfil their ambitions. If your child reads, they will succeed - it's that simple."*  
*— Bali Rai, author*

**Overview of the project**

The **Read to be Happy Project** is an inclusive and engaging reading project designed for **Upper Secondary school students**. Its objective is to help students foster a love for reading while simultaneously enhancing students' English language proficiency, emotional intelligence, and citizenship and cross-disciplinary skills.

**Inclusive learning and teacher development**

The **Read to be Happy project** promotes inclusive, collaborative, and student-centered learning and critical thinking skills. It helps create an active classroom community and fosters autonomous learning with students as protagonists, ensuring everyone can participate. The project also supports teacher development by offering fresh ideas and strategies to engage students in reading both inside and outside the classroom.

According to the **National Literacy Trust’s** 2018 report *Mental Wellbeing, Reading and Writing*:

* Teenagers most engaged with reading and writing are three times more likely to have high levels of mental wellbeing than their less engaged peers.
* Those with above-expected reading skills are three times more likely to report high wellbeing than those with below-expected skills.
* Literacy engagement is strongly linked to life satisfaction, coping skills, and self-belief, all of which are key indicators of mental wellbeing.

**Digital citizenship**

Digital citizenship is a key focus, and students will have access to audio versions of the readers to support inclusion and improve listening comprehension and pronunciation. Students will collaborate in shared reading experiences and create responses to their reading, which they will showcase at a festival at the end of the year.

**Objectives of the project**

* Encourage reading for pleasure and engagement with reading inside and outside the classroom using level-appropriate graded readers
* Improve fluency in English, comprehension, and pronunciation through integrated audio
* Promote social-emotional learning (SEL) and well-being through literature.
* Encourage collaborative learning, inclusive learning and helping reluctant readers develop reading as a keystone habit
* Explore themes for Citizenship through female empowerment, Olympic Games and Timeless classics.

**Key themes– autumn 2025**

**Female Empowerment**

SEL: emptahy, respect

ONU goals:

* Goal 4: quality education
* Goal 5: gender equality
* Goal 10: reduced inequalities

**Olympic Games**

Insights and preparation for the Milano-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games and paralympic Games.

SEL: teamwork, resilience.   
ONU goals:

* Goal 3: good health and well-being
* Goal 4: quality education
* Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

**Timeless Classics**

SEL: Relationship skills, self-awareness

ONU goals:

* Goal 3: good health and well-being
* Goal 4: quality education
* Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
* Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
* Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
* Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institution

**Project Description**

Teachers select one of the topics suggested and guide students in choosing appropriate reading levels and exploring diverse genres. Students work in groups and read the same book as their group. Activities include maintaining a reading log, creating posters or videos, and presenting projects during events like a celebration of reading in your school. Emphasis is placed on creativity, self-expression, and building confidence in English. Participating teachers will be provided with supporting activities and ideas to engage students in the project and achieve successful outcomes.

**Reading circles and social emotional learning integration**

Students work in small groups (4–5) to read the same book and explore its themes through the lens of social-emotional learning. Each student takes on a role and contributes a slide to a group presentation linking the story to Social Emotional Learning themes such as:

* Self-awareness
* Self-management
* Social awareness
* Relationship skills
* Responsible decision-making

Final presentations may include dressing up as characters, acting out scenes, or creating games and crafts for example a Lap-Book, a book box.

**Titles by theme**

**Female Empowerment**

* Little Women – ISBN: 9781292747033
* Pride & Prejudice – ISBN: 9781292480633

**Olympic Games**

* Inside Out – ISBN: 9781292346830
* Barcelona Game – ISBN: 9781292758497
* Olympic Promise – ISBN: 9781292751771

**Timeless Classics**

* Gulliver's Travels – ISBN: 9781292479071
* Hamlet – ISBN: 9781292479255
* Oliver Twist – ISBN: 9781292480640

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/primary/literacy-wellbeing/>