



Date: Wednesday 16th July 2025

Our ref: EAB/sjt

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: St. Bernard's High School - Whole School Reading Initiative

St. Bernard's High school values reading and the way it can open doorways to new worlds. To embed the love of reading across KS3, Year 7 and Year 8 will be enjoying a reading book together in form time. During tutor time once a week, the tutor will read aloud from the set reading book and students will discuss the themes and ideas, answering questions in their booklet. This is 'guided reading' and promotes verbal fluency, vocabulary, listening for meaning, comprehension and understanding. This method has been researched by Education Endowment Fund with a high impact result. The chosen text for Year 8 is 'The Bone Sparrow'. **Year 8 – The Bone Sparrow – Zana Fraillon**

Subhi is a refugee. Born in an Australian permanent detention centre after his mother and sister fled the violence of a distant homeland, Subhi has only ever known life behind the fences. But his world is far bigger than that—every night, the magical Night Sea from his mother's stories brings him gifts, the faraway whales sing to him, and the birds tell their stories. And as he grows, his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of his containment. The most vivid story of all, however, is the one that arrives one night in the form of Jimmie—a scruffy, impatient girl who appears on the other side of the wire fence and brings with her a notebook written by the mother she lost. Unable to read it herself, she relies on Subhi to unravel her family's love songs and tragedies. Subhi and Jimmie might both find comfort—and maybe even freedom—as their tales unfold. But not until each has been braver than ever before.

Your child will need their own copy of the novel. Please purchase a copy of the book for your child to read at school.

The book is available now to buy from ParentPay at a **reduced cost of £9.50**. Students will then receive their book in the first week of the new term. We look forward to enjoying this reading experience as a year group and we look forward to the interesting discussion and conversations around the books. We like to follow the words of Margaret Fuller, 'Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.'

Yours faithfully,

Mrs E Bailey
Assistant Headteacher