



Allenbourn Middle School
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Headteacher: Mr M Legge B.Ed (Hons) NPQH

11th September 2025

Dear Parent/Carers,

This half term in Year 8 English, we will be reading the novel 'Long Way Down' by Jason Reynolds. Before we start our study of this novel, I would like to give you some information about its content. 'Long Way Down' is written in verse, rather than prose, from the perspective of Will, a young man who has just lost his brother to gang violence. Accordingly, for a novel dealing with such an emotionally raw subject, the narrator's emotions are very strong at times and sometimes expressed using swear words.

I am aware that many of us will find profanities troublesome but we would not include a book on our curriculum which used inappropriate language gratuitously. It is our genuine belief, along with that of the other English Leads across Initio Learning Trust, that the cultural and literary benefits of studying this novel outweigh the swearing used by the writer. I would like to assure you that students will be reminded that the use of such language is not tolerated at Allenbourn Middle School. There will be discussions around the vernacular employed by the author in writing this award-winning book, including contextual factors influencing vocabulary choices. The novel concludes with a strong anti-violence message with the narrator encountering figures from his past who force him to reconsider his plans for revenge.

Students have already encountered Reynolds' writing through reading 'Ghost' as a Year 7 class novel and it proved very popular. Through studying a second Reynolds text, we might engender an ongoing appreciation for and interest in this author's works.

If you would like to borrow a copy of 'Long Way Down' to gain a clearer understanding of its contents, please email me to arrange this.

Yours sincerely

Miss Chadwick
Lead Practitioner - English and Achievement





Additional Information

(AMS is not responsible for the content of external websites.)

Author's Website

<https://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>

Interview with Jason Reynolds, speaking about 'Long Way Down'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuXNSJvNaFs&t=632s>

GoodReads Page for 'Long Way Down'

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22552026-long-way-down#>

Common Sense Media Review of 'Long Way Down'

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews/long-way-down>