**BookTrust’s Time to Read campaign supports transition to primary school for 740,000 children in England and Northern Ireland**



**16 September 2020** – Today, BookTrust, the UK’s largest children’s reading charity launches its fifth annual [Time to Read campaign](booktrust.org.uk/TTRCampaign) which aims to get children and families reading together. From September through to January 2021, BookTrust will be sending out Time to Read packs to every reception child in England and every primary one child in Northern Ireland, reaching a total of 740,000 children.

For children aged 4-5, starting school for the first time means establishing new routines at home and often learning to read and tasks set by school can be prioritised over reading for fun. Time to Read is designed to encourage families to relax and continue reading together at this critical transition point in their lives.

This year, the Time to Read pack includes a free copy of *The Runaway Pea* by Kjartan Poskitt and Alex Willmore, published by Simon and Schuster, alongside top tips about how reading can be done anytime and anywhere. With creative ideas for sharing stories as a family, the pack aims to spark children’s imagination, help improve their language and listening as well as develop more practical skills such as making new friends and dealing with change. Reading together regularly as a family can also create a safe space for children to express themselves, something that children might be especially in need of following the coronavirus outbreak.

BookTrust is working in partnership with local authorities in England and the Education Authority in Northern Ireland to distribute Time to Read packs through schools and libraries, helping to connect communities and encourage them to share stories throughout the autumn term. The packs will include a series of tailored resources including lesson ideas for teachers to introduce the books to their classes and support for libraries to run sessions to share their own knowledge, expertise and get children enthused about reading.

Alongside the book packs, during the week 19-25 October 2020, BookTrust will be sharing videos of popular picture book readings, top tips for how to get children reading as well as other book recommendations that we know children will love at this time.

**Diana Gerald, BookTrust’s Chief Executive said**: “We know that families have faced many challenges these past few months, adjusting to a different way of life with schools, nurseries and libraries being closed. However, many parents and carers have told us that they have found more time to read and enjoy stories with their children during lockdown.

Sharing a book is about so much more than simply reading a story together. It creates a wonderful closeness, and it’s also an opportunity to talk about the themes in the book, whether that’s starting a new adventure, making friends, or simply learning to be brave. It is so easy to stop the bedtime story or other shared reading once children can read for themselves, but that magical time doesn’t just help engage children in stories and reading; it also relaxes them, helps them understand the world around them, and often stimulates important conversations about what’s going on in their lives. We hope that Time to Read will encourage families to enjoy the benefits of reading together as their children adjust to new routines.”

**Deborah Peck, Development Officer for Newham Libraries said**: “We love to encourage parents to read with their children. Sadly, this year we can’t do it in person so our lovely library staff will be connecting with our parents and children virtually, helping parents and children see that’s there’s no right way to read a book. Using a variety of voices, styles and experience our library teams will read this years’ Time to Read book and share tips on reading aloud, beamed straight into homes via the schools. A familiar book, an enthusiastic parent and a friendly librarian what better combination to encourage reading this autumn.”

For more information on Time to Read visit: [booktrust.org.uk/TTRCampaign](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/TTRCampaign).

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**Notes to Editors**

**BookTrust** is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.9 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. booktrust.org.uk