SLA
School Library Association

RECOMENDATIONS FOR
Secondary
SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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> 66 *Growing up, my only access to books was via libraries: local, school and mobile. I can honestly say that they changed my life and opened doorways to ideas that would otherwise have been closed to me. Libraries are the most underappreciated engines of social mobility in the world.*
>
> *– David Goodhew, Head, Latymer Upper School*

THE PURPOSE OF A SCHOOL LIBRARY

"A school's physical and digital learning space where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity are central to students' information-to-knowledge journey and to their personal, social and cultural growth."
– IFLA 2015

https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/9512

The School Library Association believes that the purpose of a school library is:

- To provide a flexible space with a wide and inclusive range of resources to support learning and teaching, personal development and wellbeing throughout the school.
- To have a vibrant role in the development of a culture that promotes wider reading, motivated readers and learners for life.
- To provide a place for collaborative learning, creativity, and for developing independent research and information literacy skills.
- To support teaching staff in embedding media and information literacy skills across the curriculum.
- To provide support for and link into the school's improvement/development plan.

To achieve this, it should be managed by trained staff, funded and accessible to the whole school community of pupils, staff and parents during and outside of the school day.

However, the balance of the above will vary from school to school. Additionally, we understand that this may not be possible in all circumstances. Therefore, throughout this document we utilise ideal or alternative to provide recommendations which work for a range of contexts. We are happy to work with individual schools to develop a plan which works for each school.

"Overall, children and young people who used the school library had better levels of reading enjoyment, reading for pleasure, reading confidence, writing for pleasure, writing confidence, and reading attainment than those who did not. They also tended to read and write a greater variety of material relative to non-library users."

Understanding the Impact and Characteristics of School Libraries and Reading Spaces, Georgina Rudkin and Clare Wood, Nottingham Trent University, October 2019.

https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Libraries_project_review_2019_-_final.pdf

TERMINOLOGY

- **Librarian** – this term is used when we refer specifically to the person in charge of the Library department and who manages all library matters, including budget and staffing. Could be called Library Manager.

- **Library Assistant** – someone who is a valuable help in carrying out library duties, but the role is to support the running of the library rather than lead it.

- **Library Staff** – a term used to refer to all library staff no matter what their experience.

- **Library** - used throughout, but some schools may refer to their Library Resource Centre (LRC).

QUALIFICATIONS

There is no specialist School Librarian/Teacher Librarian qualification in the UK, so there are a range of qualifications which may be applicable at different stages of career or for different backgrounds.

- **Certification** - Certification is aimed at those who are at the beginning of their professional career or who want to gain some recognition for the knowledge and skills they have developed working in a library, information or knowledge role. Open to all.
  https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/ProfessionalRegistrationCertification

- **Chartership** - Chartership is the level of Professional Registration for those working in the information professions who wish to be recognised for their skills, knowledge, and application of these in the form of reflective practice. Open to all.
  https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/ProfessionalRegistrationChartership

- **Library and Information Services/Management degree** – a degree which covers the Professional Knowledge and Skills needed to run a library, across a range of settings. Some are accredited by CILIP (Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals), and can be completed in person or by distance.

- **Teaching/education degrees** – can be very useful in a school setting, and allow for improved communication with colleagues, but additional training should be undertaken in addition.

- **Apprenticeships** – there are library and information apprenticeships available, designed by CILIP. The Level 3 standard covers a wide range of professional skills, including digital skills and information literacy. There are also more generic apprenticeships available which may support those working in school libraries – leadership for example.

STAFFING

School libraries should ideally be run by a dedicated member of trained staff, with some experience in a relevant role. This training may have been acquired through a librarianship qualification, Chartership or other on the job training. School libraries should be run by someone with a passion for working with children, and an extensive knowledge of modern children's literature/research dependent on aims of the school library.

Volunteers can make an important contribution to school libraries but shouldn't be the sole staffing element. Any volunteers should be trained.

Staff should be provided with every opportunity to pursue relevant training and acquire the specialist knowledge required for the role of school librarian. This is even more important when the librarian is not experienced in librarianship or education.

Ideally the librarian should be employed for 52 weeks of the year. Our minimum recommendation is term time plus two weeks.

We recommend a minimum staffing level of a full-time librarian and a full-time assistant for schools of over 1,000 pupils. We recommend a minimum staffing level of a full-time librarian and a part-time assistant (term-time only, plus two weeks) for schools of up to 500 pupils. These staffing levels are to maximise the impact and benefit of the library, making it central to other learning within the school. Liaising with colleagues, visiting classrooms to assist with information literacy, attending external meetings and completing strategic plans and administrative tasks are all a part of a librarian's role, and they require the equivalent of Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

Any additional hours worked over those contracted for should be taken as holiday or paid as overtime.

All staff are legally entitled to an adequate lunch break of at least 20 minutes if you are expected to work more than six hours at a stretch. The SLA recommends a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes.

The library should be open before and after the school day.
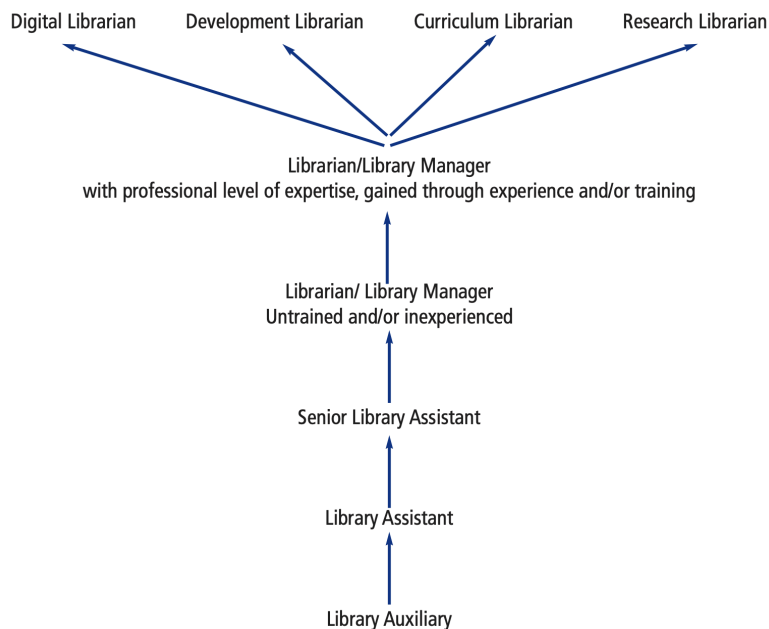
These hours (including lunchbreaks) and any extended school day activities within the library should be supervised by a member of staff with the ratio of one member of staff to 30 pupils.

All library staff should be included in the school's formal performance and appraisal process. Support for this can be found on the website or by calling the advice line. Tel 01793 530166 or email info@sla.org.uk

Structures and job descriptions available here: https://www.sla.org.uk/hr

SCHOOL LIBRARY CAREER PROGRESSION:

| Digital Librarian | Development Librarian | Curriculum Librarian | Research Librarian |

Librarian/Library Manager
with professional level of expertise, gained through experience and/or training

Librarian/ Library Manager
Untrained and/or inexperienced

Senior Library Assistant

Library Assistant

Library Auxiliary

LIBRARIAN'S SKILLS AND EXPERTISE:

Skills Base **PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE**
Resource Management & Development
Cataloguing and classification
Knowledge of current children's and young adult fiction
Development of policies for stock selection, withdrawal and disposal
Financial management
Resources on careers and HE
Research Skills
Knowledge of research methods
Ability to assess the research needs of a student or teacher
Copyright, Plagiarism and referencing
Internal and external resource knowledge
Literacies & Learning
Information literacy
Digital literacy
Encouraging reading for pleasure
Teaching & learning skills
Educational Context
Curriculum knowledge
Educational systems
Behaviour management
Awareness of SEND issues
Awareness of safeguarding
School Specific
Awareness of PP pupils, including promoting the library as a safe place to study
Knowledge of individual pupils' reading ability

Skills Base **GENERIC SKILLS**
Advocacy
Building relationships within the organisational context
Demonstrating value
Working with decision makers
Strategic thinking
Planning & Management
Planning in line with organisational aims and ethos
Policy development
Financial management
People management
IT & Communication
ICT skills
System development
Social media knowledge
Communication skills
Networking skills

Taken from Library Skills and Expertise: https://www.sla.org.uk/hr

STATUS OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

The School Library Association believes that the Librarian/Library Manager should:

- Have full control of their departmental budget and be responsible for management of all additional staff, volunteers, library helpers and organisation of the area, including preparing risk assessments and implementing policies relevant to the school library.

- Be considered the head of a department, attending head of department and curriculum meetings to keep the library central to school life.

- Be line-managed by a member of the School Management Team with curricular oversight.

- Be entitled to attend and deliver relevant whole school INSET as relevant.

- Be entitled to an induction at the start of their employment.

- Be entitled to relevant continuing professional development, including being allowed time to network with other school librarians in the area, attend relevant meetings and actively participate in professional groups outside of their school.

If someone is working within a role not equivalent to that of a Librarian, these may vary, however, an induction, continuing CPD and INSET should apply at all levels.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT:

A School Library for the Curriculum: Supporting Teaching and Learning,
Sally Dring, SLA, 2019, 9781911222200

Train to Gain: Continuing Professional Development for School Librarians,
Barbara Band, SLA, 2017, 9781911222095

Both available from https://www.sla.org.uk/shop

THE LIBRARY SPACE

The library should have sufficient space to incorporate areas for study, soft seating, group work and computer provision for project work, research and homework.

There must be sufficient, suitable room for the book stock with easy access to it.

There should be sufficient space to house a full class of students, with a teacher, and additional accommodation for students wishing to study. At minimum there should be space for 10% of total pupils.

There should be areas for book display and promotional materials.

There should be office space for a library manager and staff, space to provide storage and space for a book preparation/administration area, with some space which can be secured.

We recommend that dedicated computer suites should be housed separately from the main library area.

We recommend that there should be additional sixth form study areas separate from the library to accommodate differing study requirements of group collaboration work, as well as independent study.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT:

Supporting Autistic Students in the School Library: A Personal Perspective, Karen Bainbridge, SLA, 2018, 9781911222132

Available from https://www.sla.org.uk/shop

Designing Libraries: http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk

DfE Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools Building Bulletin 103, June 2014 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905692/BB103_Area_Guidelines_for_Mainstream_Schools.pdf
Page 25 - at least one library or learning resource centre (LRC) with a total area of at least 9m2 plus 0.05m2 for every primary pupil place and 0.12m2 for every secondary pupil place

However, we believe that this is too small for a space to deliver the range of activities which should happen in a school library and will hamper the functioning of the department.

STOCK

We recommend that the library should stock 13 – 18 items per pupil aged 11 – 16, in the ratio of 50% fiction and 50% non-fiction. Alternatively, we recommend a minimum of 13 items per pupil aged 11 – 16.

Schools with sixth forms should have 17 - 25 items per pupil in the 17 - 18 age range.

The collection should include books, graphic novels, poetry and information books. Music, comics and e-books should be considered. The whole collection should offer diversity and inclusion so that all pupils can see themselves represented and are able to read about others.

Journals and magazines should also be kept in hardcopy and/or online, covering both academic and leisure subjects.

Access to news information should be provided – either in hardcopy or online, or both.

All stock must contain accurate and accessible information and be relevant to the cohort of pupils.

We recommend that general stock over 10 years old be regularly checked to ensure that it complies with the above statement.

We recommend that stock which covers topics of science, technology and geography should be checked when it is five years old or over, or when significant developments occur.

Fewer resources which are newer and more applicable are better than a surplus of old, unattractive or inaccurate titles.

Utilising local School Library Services is recommended where this service exists. Discover your nearest SLS: https://sls-uk.org/

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT:

Voice and Vision: Essential Issues Around Diversity and Inclusion for School Libraries, Jake Hope, SLA, 2018, 9781911222118

Available from https://www.sla.org.uk/shop
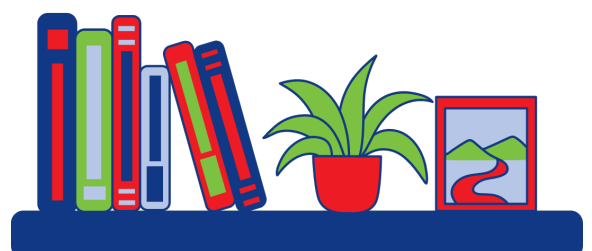
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY AND RESEARCH SKILLS

Society is moving at an extraordinary rate, and the ability to utilise information has never been more important. Young people need to emerge from school with the skills needed to operate in a digital world where they will encounter fake news, mis and disinformation and have a reduced ability to turn it off.

Added to this is the progression in the realm of machine learning and AI; meaning that independent learning skills and curiosity are important for the future of work. Not only can the library support delivery of these skills, they can be leading it.

DEFINITION OF INFORMATION LITERACY

"Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society."

CILIP's Information Literacy Group updated the CILIP definition of Information Literacy to the above in 2018. The definition is supported by an introduction and background information with links to information on skills and competencies.

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip/information_professional_and_news/press_releases/2018_03_information_lit_definition/cilip_definition_doc_final_f.pdf

Students need to be taught skills of searching the most appropriate formats, then using and presenting this information in ethical ways. Linking to curriculum subjects is useful as it helps pupils put skills to practical use. Teaching alongside teaching colleagues will offer classes access to the specialist knowledge of the teacher and access to appropriate resources by the library staff.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT:

https://infolit.org.uk/
This website has been designed and developed by information professionals from key UK organisations actively involved in the field of information literacy. The site supports practitioners by providing news, case studies, examples of best practice and freely available toolkits.

There are various models which will help set out skills: https://infolit.org.uk/definitions-models/

Resources for secondary schools
http://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/fake-news-and-critical-literacy-resources/

Identifying Fake News: Critical Literacy and the School Library,
Cathal Coyle, SLA, 2020, 9781911222217

A School Library for the Curriculum: Supporting Teaching and Learning,
Sally Dring, SLA, 2019, 9781911222200

Both available from https://www.sla.org.uk/shop

BUDGET

We recommend a spend of:

For pupils aged 11 – 16:
number of pupils in KS3 and KS4 school x 15 x current average book price. Figures updated annually on SLA website, provided by Peters https://peters.co.uk/

For pupils aged 17 – 18:
number of pupils in sixth form x 20 x current average book price. Figures updated annually on SLA website, provided by Peters https://peters.co.uk/

This figure is for the allocation of all book stock, including e-books.

We recommend that 10% of stock will need to be replaced annually, so with a school population of 1,000 which includes 200 in sixth form this will be:

(800 x 15) + (200 x 17) = 15,400 ÷ 10 = 1,540 x average book price
UNLESS you are developing your library when an increased development budget is needed for x years.

In addition to this figure, there should be an additional budgetary allocation for magazine subscriptions, stationery, digital and online resources (annual support) - e-book platform and library management system, at least one author visit per term and other events as appropriate.

The downloadable automatic SLA budget planner, available on our website from the Member Resource Library will help create a budget.
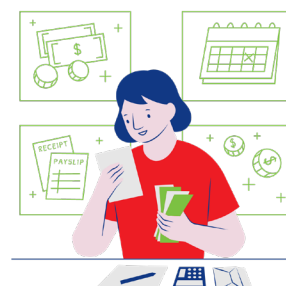
THE SCHOOL LIBRARY FOR WELLBEING

One in six children aged five to 16 were identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021, a huge increase from one in nine in 2017. That's five children in every classroom.

Source: https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of- children-and-young-people-in-england/2021-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey

Scotland, to further the health and wellbeing aim of the National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland, pulled together some suggestions here:

The school library offers:

- A safe space – a retreat from the busy playground or stressful classroom.
- Pupil involvement and a sense of pride, increasing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Bibliotherapy
- Clubs and competitions – the fun stuff.
- Events
- Reading for relieving stress and offering an escape from reality.
- Individual choice – of reading, of what activities in which to participate.
- Research support
- A friendly face – every interaction with pupils & staff is important.
- All contributing to improved social and health benefits.

Source: https://www.cilips.org.uk/health-wellbeing-and-the-national-strategy-for-school- libraries/

Using a mental wellbeing index, which combines life satisfaction, coping skills and self-belief variables into a scale from 1 to 10 could explore the impact of school libraries on mental wellbeing. The findings show that children and young people who use the school library have, on average, higher mental wellbeing scores. Those who don't use the school library are nearly twice as likely to have low mental wellbeing than they are to have high mental wellbeing

School libraries: Why children and young people use them or not, their literacy engagement and mental wellbeing,
Christina Clark and Anne Teravainen-Goff, 2018
https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/School_libraries2018_1.pdf

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT:

Pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health Guideline,
Barbara Band, SLA, 2018, 9781911222255

Available from https://www.sla.org.uk/shop

Wellbeing through Reading is a partnership between the SLA and Bounce Together resulting in a digital platform for measuring and monitoring the link between a pupil's attitude to reading and their wellbeing.
https://www.sla.org.uk/wellbeing-through-reading

Examples of good practice: https://www.greatschoollibraries.org.uk/wellbeing-diversity

THE READING AGENCY LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Impact of Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment
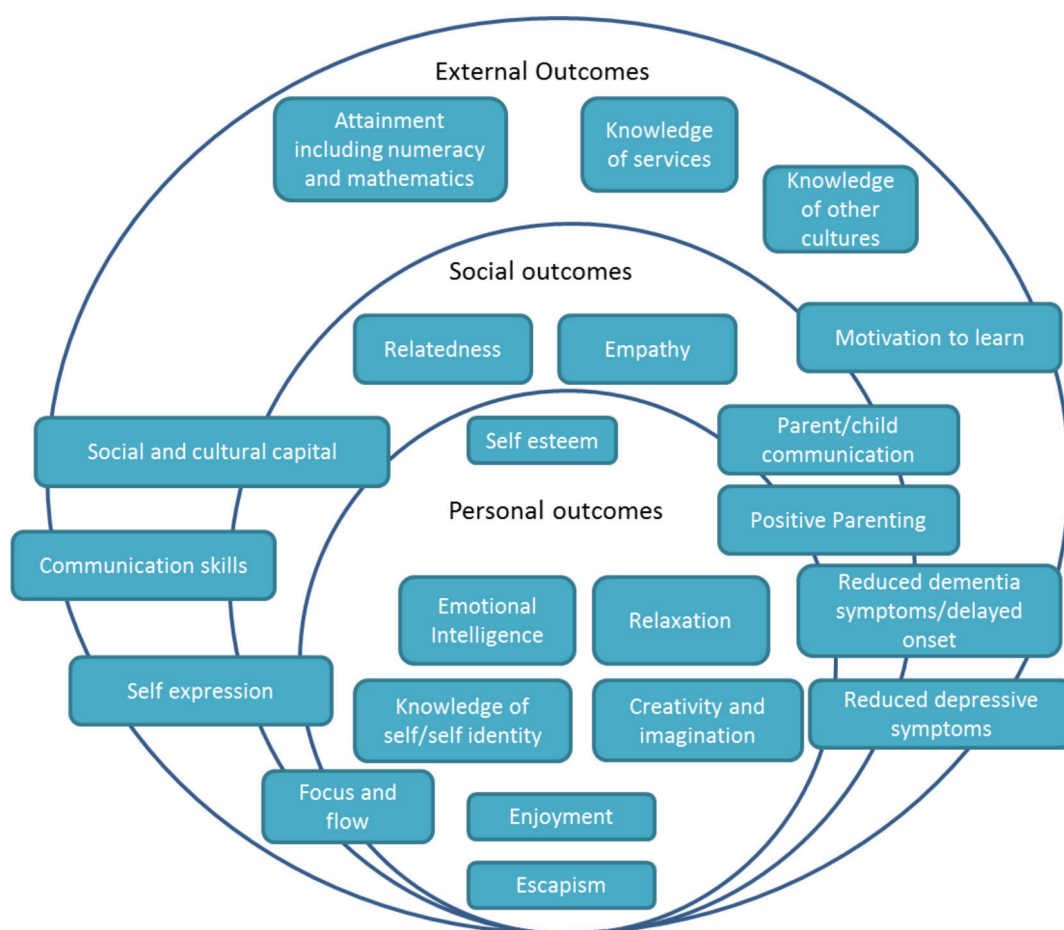
Overall Outcomes Map
© BOP Consulting 2015
https://tra-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/entries/document/2277/The_ Impact_of_Read ing_for_Pleasure_and_Empowerment.pdf

ABOUT THE SLA

The School Library Association (SLA) is a not-for-profit which supports schools develop their school library, establish a reading culture and deliver independent learning skills. We believe that all schools should have their own (or shared) staffed library to help all children and young people fulfil their potential.

We currently have over 2,200 members and are the first port of call for schools and individuals wanting advice, resources and training. We support schools to overcome their barriers - including time, money and space, amongst others – to ensure that no child gets left behind on their reading journey.

We work to ensure that every child gets the strongest start when considering their future. The environment of the school library often means it's the first shared space children inhabit. It provides precious opportunities to learn about who they are, and who they could be. Reading can deliver a range of skills, and inquiry can build independent learning skills vital for lifelong self-sufficiency.

We have a wide range of resources that provide a starting point to support these important topics, and can also support lessons or individual conversations.

Up to 10 members of staff can benefit from free resources, on demand and live training, networking opportunities, a quarterly journal, personalised advice, exclusive discounts and more as part of a school membership. Our membership is designed to help you build an inclusive, supportive and engaging reading culture, where all children read widely and often to develop their confidence, enjoyment and skill.

**School Library Association
1 Pine Court
Kembrey Park
Swindon
SN15 2FN**

info@sla.org.uk

www.sla.org.uk