Primary School Library Charter

At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.

—President Barack Obama

It’s more fun in the Library!
Extract from the
United Nations Convention
on the Rights of the Child

Article 13
The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.

Article 17
States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.
To this end, States Parties shall:
(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children’s books; [...]
SLA Charter

This booklet is intended to help you set up and run a school library or give you ideas for improving what you already have; to point you towards inspiration and information on flexible, innovative and exciting library spaces and the development, maintenance and management of the resources held within them.

We believe that every pupil is entitled to effective school library provision.

We believe that there is a clear link between the quality of a school’s library and the general well being of the pupils and their literacy levels and that there are other cross curricular benefits.

We believe that school libraries contribute to the Every Child Matters outcomes.

We believe that every school library should be staffed as part of the school’s Study Support facilities and open to pupils before, during and after school.

My vision of learning for children and young people in the future has the library, in all its forms, at its heart.

— Prof. Tim Brighouse

Benefits

We believe that working in partnership with the wider school, governors and community, school libraries contribute to delivering the aims of the Children’s Plan for every child to enjoy their childhood and achieve their full potential.

We believe school libraries support children in becoming successful learners, responsible citizens and confident individuals and support schools in their duty to promote well being and community cohesion.

Just one book opened a gateway that has never since been closed.

— Lucy Bakewell, School Librarian of the Year 2009
Getting started

We believe school libraries should work in partnership with School Library Services and the local public library for the benefit of children and their families.

Leadership by supportive and knowledgeable headteachers and senior managers was the most important factor in improving library provision. They recognised how libraries contributed to learning...

The most effective headteachers had a vision for the library’s key role in raising standards of literacy and making a difference to learning. They talked about placing the library at the centre of the school – and meant it.

— Ofsted 2006

School Library Services (SLS) – part of your local council in many parts of the country – often have experts who can help you plan and design your new library, can offer you practical help in organising your library, offer a range of advisory services, including training for teachers and other staff managing libraries, purchase facilities and IT support, as well as resources and support. We recommend you use an SLS wherever possible. If there is not an SLS in your local authority it is possible to subscribe in neighbouring authorities. Follow the links to School Library Services – UK from www.sla.org.uk/links to find your nearest SLS. See also Teachers TV featuring Tower Hamlets SLS: Sustaining Your Library www.teachers.tv/video/3224.

Partnerships can be one of the ways to create excellent school libraries – with cluster schools, in federations or with your local public library service. School libraries should also work closely with their local public libraries to access class visits, reading activities, homework support and help for children to develop information literacy and research skills. Public library services should be promoted in schools. Co-location of public libraries in schools can provide access to a wider range of resources, better use of budgets and staffing and deliver extended services.

For information on ways to build such partnerships contact your SLS or see the case studies on Their Reading Futures, a site full of ideas for libraries incorporating Enjoying Reading which has practical help to build partnerships between schools and public libraries – http://is.gd/759tt-.
Spaces

The school library is incredibly important – much more so than in the past. It’s a place where everyone comes to learn and to share.

— Prof. Stephen Heppell

We believe that every school should have an area designated as a library where children and adults can relax and read for pleasure and where they can search for information relevant to their learning and personal needs.

The location of the library, its environment, furniture and fittings, is crucial in ensuring effective use.

School libraries can be an important community space for out-of-hours learning and activities for families in extended school provision.

Explore...


http://is.gd/754ka-
Planning

We believe that every primary school library needs to create a simple, practical policy document and should feature in the school’s development plan.

Explore...

See sample policy at www.sla.org.uk/paperwork (SLA members only)

Organisation and Staffing

We believe that every school should designate a trained person to run the library. This person should have a clear job description, line management based on the school’s learning and teaching needs and structure plus access to relevant training in and beyond school.

We believe that every school library should be organized in such a way that children, teachers and adults can find resources easily and quickly – we recommend that all resources are organized in line with a recognized classification system.

In good school libraries the two most important things are committed senior management and well-qualified and enthusiastic librarians.

— Philip Jarrett

In the best examples… pupil librarians were used very well and contributed significantly to the success of the library.

— OFSTED 2006

Explore...


CILIP. *Primary School Library Guidelines* – see page 5

Tower Hamlets ‘Managing the School Library’ scheme as an example of good practice – www.towerhamlets-sls.org.uk (under ‘Work in primary schools’)
Resources

‘Yes, it should include technology and CDs and DVDs, but books should be at the heart of the school. If anybody asked me to open a library I’d go like a shot because it’s so important that they’re there.’

— Michael Morpurgo, SLA patron, quoted on the Booktrust site

We believe that every school library should contain a wide range of current resources relevant to the social, cultural, emotional and educational needs of the pupils, to include books, ICT and other relevant materials.

We believe that the school library should be adequately funded on an annual basis in line with other school budget areas and that these budget figures should be provided to parents.

Explore...


Review magazines:
The School Librarian from the SLA – www.sla.org.uk
Books for Keeps – www.booksforkeeps.co.uk
Carousel – www.carouselguide.co.uk
Writeaway – www.writeaway.org.uk


CILIP. Primary School Library Guidelines see page 5
We believe in enabling every child to become a reader through enjoyment and enlightenment. We believe in creating independent readers for life through promoting literacy, inspiring reading and supporting teachers and librarians.

Explore...


Booktrust – Children’s Book Week, October each year. Free resources sent to every Primary School – www.booktrust.org.uk


Reading Agency – organizes the national summer reading challenge – www.readingagency.org.uk/children

World Book Day – the biggest annual celebration of books and reading in the UK and Ireland – www.worldbookday.com
Information Skills

We believe that to ensure that our pupils maintain an unquenchable enthusiasm for learning we need to guide and encourage them to become creative, curious, confident and flexible learners with their own strategies for handling information.

We believe that teaching information literacy skills and the associated ICT skills in a coherent curriculum and library context is one of the most important jobs for teachers, librarians and support staff in primary schools.

Explore...


Enjoying Reading: Information Literacy
http://www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk/bestPractice/enjoyingReading/informationLiteracy.html

Training

We believe in on-going training and skills improvement to develop knowledgeable and competent staff in all our school libraries.

Training courses for library staff are available from various bodies:
Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals –
CILIP www.cilip.org.uk/
School Library Association – SLA www.sla.org.uk/
Teacher Development Agency – TDA www.tda.gov.uk/
Your local School Library Service

Evaluating

We believe school libraries should evaluate their activity to show the contribution to pupils’ learning, well-being and motivation.

Explore...


MLA. Inspiring Learning for All: www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk


Further Reading


Our Supporters

‘Scholastic UK focuses on getting children reading and giving books to schools. We help every school to support their librarian and promote a love of reading in all children. We sponsor the School Librarian of the Year Award and are delighted to now offer our endorsement to the SLA’s Primary School Library Charter.’

—Alan Hurcombe, Group MD, Scholastic UK

‘Walker Books passionately believes that reading improves children’s lives and that every child has the right of access to a wonderful and inspiring school library filled with the very best books available today. We therefore fully endorse the SLA’s Primary School Library Charter.’

—Jane Winterbotham, Publishing Director

Pandora Books chooses the best books from leading UK publishers and puts them together into pertinent, affordable book collections that support the National Curriculum and leisure reading.

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Our Partners

ASCEL is a professional association comprising members responsible for public library services for children and young people and those provided through School Library Services. ASCEL is an advocacy organisation and is concerned about all initiatives and proposals that impact on library provision for children and young people.

Booktrust is an independent charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages and cultures to engage with books. The written word underpins all our activity and enables us to fulfil our vision of inspiring a lifelong love of books for all. [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

SLG, the School Libraries Group, is part of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals). It supports the work and professional development of all those working in this specialist field.

The Youth Libraries Group of CILIP is for all those working with or interested in children’s and young people’s books, reading development, the promotion of libraries and reading for pleasure.
About the SLA

We believe that every pupil is entitled to effective school library provision. The SLA is committed to supporting everyone involved with school libraries, promoting high quality reading and learning opportunities for all.

The School Library Association is an independent organisation and registered charity which was founded in 1937 to promote the development of libraries in schools. Today the SLA exists to support and encourage all those working in school libraries, raising awareness and promoting good practice through an effective training and publications programme. Membership of the Association brings many benefits including an advisory/information service for national and international enquiries, a quarterly reviewing journal, online resources, and reduced rates for all publications, training courses and our annual residential course.

‘The SLA know that books matter, that children matter, that children who do not have books in their lives are the poorer for it. That’s why they do what they do. That’s why I do what I do. That’s why I’m so pleased to be a Patron of the School Library Association.’

— Michael Morpurgo