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## The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines

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Under the auspices of the IFLA School Libraries  
and Resource Centres Section.

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. MISSION AND POLICY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Mission .....	4
1.2. Policy .....	4
1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	5
<b>CHAPTER 2. RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1. Funding and Budgeting for the School Library .....	7
2.2. Location and Space .....	8
2.3. Furniture and Equipment.....	9
2.4. Electronic and AV Equipment .....	10
2.5. Material Resources .....	10
2.6. Collection Management Policy .....	11
2.7. Material Collection.....	12
2.8. Electronic Resources .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 3. STAFFING</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	12
3.2. The Role of the School Librarian.....	13
3.3. The Role of the Library Assistant .....	13
3.4. Cooperation between Teachers and School Librarian .....	13
3.5. Skills of the School Library Staff.....	14
3.6. Duties of the School Librarian .....	15
3.7. Ethical Standards .....	15
<b>CHAPTER 4. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1. Programmes.....	16
4.2. Cooperation and Resource Sharing with Public Libraries .....	16
4.3. Activities at School Level .....	17
<b>CHAPTER 5. PROMOTION</b> .....	<b>21</b>
5.1. Introduction .....	21
5.2. Marketing Policy .....	22
5.3. User Education .....	23
5.4. Model for a Study Skills and Information Literacy Programme .....	23
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>29</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto: the school library in teaching and learning for all* was published in 2000. It has been extremely well received all over the world and translated into many languages. New translations continue to be made and librarians all over the world are using the manifesto to raise the profile of school libraries in their own schools, own regions and own countries.

The manifesto states:

Governments, through their ministries responsible for education, are urged to develop strategies, policies and plans that implement the principles of this Manifesto.

These new guidelines have been produced to inform decision makers at national and local levels around the world, and to give support and guidance to the library community. They have been written to help schools to implement the principles expressed in the manifesto.

The drafting of the guidelines involved many people from many countries, with very different local situations, to try and satisfy the needs of all types of school. The guidelines will need to be read and used within a local context.

Workshops have been organised during IFLA conferences; meetings have taken place, and discussions held between library experts in person and using email. The resulting guidelines are the product of much debate and consultation, for which the editors are very indebted and grateful. They also acknowledge the contributions of members of the standing committee of the section of school libraries and resource centres, and the guidelines from many countries that have informed the IFLA/UNESCO guidelines, especially *The Public Library Guidelines* published by IFLA in 2001.

The section has also published *The School Library: Today and Tomorrow*, during 2002. We hope that the manifesto, visions and guidelines together will form a foundation for excellent school libraries everywhere.

Tove Pemmer Sætre  
with Glenys Willars  
2002

## CHAPTER 1. MISSION AND POLICY

*“The school library in teaching and learning for all”*

### 1.1. Mission

The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in our increasingly information- and knowledge-based present day society. The school library equips students with lifelong learning skills and develops their imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens.

### 1.2. Policy

The school library should be managed within a clearly structured policy framework. The library policy should be devised bearing in mind the overarching policies and needs of the school and should reflect its ethos, aims and objectives as well as its reality.

The policy will specify when, where, for whom and by whom the full potential of the library will be realised. The library policy will become feasible if the whole school community supports and contributes to the aims and objectives set out in the policy. Therefore it should be written with as much involvement as viable, with as much consultation as practicable, and it should be as widely shared as possible in its printed form. In this way, the philosophy, the ideas, the concept and the intentions for practice and development will become clear and will be commonly understood and endorsed, and will thus be ready to be put into practice effectually and enthusiastically.

The policy must be comprehensive and workable. It should not be drafted by the school librarian alone, but jointly with the teaching staff and senior managers. The draft should be consulted widely throughout the school and supported by exhaustive open discussion. The document and subsequent plans will specify the role of the library in relation to the following aspects:

- the school curriculum
- learning methods in the school
- satisfying national and local standards and criteria
- students’ learning and personal development needs

- staff's teaching needs
- raising levels of achievement.

The components which contribute to effective successful well-managed school libraries are the following:

- finance and budgeting
- accommodation
- resources
- organisation
- staffing
- library use
- promotion

All these components are essential in a realistic policy framework and action plan. They will be considered throughout this document. The action plan should be made up of strategies, tasks, targets, monitoring and evaluation routines. The policy and plan should be an active document subject to regular review.

### **1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation**

In the process of attaining the goals of the school library, the management must continually monitor the performance in the services to ensure that the strategies are achieving the specified objectives. Statistical studies should be carried out periodically in order to identify trends. An annual evaluation should cover all the main areas of the plan document to ascertain the following points:

- whether they are achieving the objectives and declared goals of the library, the curriculum and the school
- whether they are meeting the needs of the school community
- whether they are able to meet changing needs
- whether they are adequately resourced
- and whether they are cost effective.

The following key performance indicators may prove useful tools for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the library goals:

Usage indicators:

- loans per member of school community (specified per student and per staff member)

- total library visits per member of the school community (specified per student and per staff member)
- loans per item (i.e. turnover resources)
- loans per opening hour (during school hours and after school)
- reference enquiries per member of school community (specified per students and per staff member)
- use of computers and on-line information sources.

#### Resource indicators:

- total book stock per member of school community
- provision of terminals/personal computers per member of school community
- provision of on-line access computers per member of school community

#### Human resource indicators:

- ratio of full-time equivalent staff to members of school community
- ratio of full-time equivalent staff to library use

#### Qualitative indicators:

- user satisfaction surveys
- focus groups
- consultation activities

#### Cost indicators:

- unit costs for functions, services and activities
- staff costs per functions (e.g. book loans)
- total library costs per member of the school society
- total library costs expressed in percentage of total school budget
- media costs expressed in percentage of total library costs

#### Comparative indicators:

- Benchmark statistical data against other relevant and comparable library services at other schools of similar size and characteristics.

## CHAPTER 2. RESOURCES

*“The school library must have adequate and sustained funding for trained staff, materials, technologies and facilities, and its access shall be free of charge”*

### 2.1. Funding and Budgeting for the School Library

In order to ensure that the library receives its fair share of the school’s financial resources, the following points are important:

- understand the school budgeting process
- be aware of the timetable for the budget cycle
- know who the key staff are
- make sure that the needs of the library are identified.

The components of the budget plan will need to include the following:

- an amount for new resources (e.g. books, periodicals and non-printed material); an amount for promotional materials (e.g. posters)
- an amount for stationery and administrative materials
- an amount for promotional events
- the costs of using ICT equipment, software and licensing costs, if these are not included in a general ICT budget for the school..

As a general rule, the school library material budget should be at least 5% of the per student expenditure for the school system, exclusive of all salaries, special education expenses, transportation and capital improvement funds.

Staff costs may be included in the library budget but, at some schools, it may be more appropriate to have them included in the general staff budget. It is however important to emphasise that estimating staff costs for the library is a task which the school librarian should be involved in. The amount of money available for staffing is closely related to important issues such as how many opening hours the school library can manage and what standard and range of services it can offer. Special projects and other developments such as new shelving may require a separate bid for funds.

Spending of the budget should be carefully planned for the whole year and be related to the policy framework. Annual reports should throw light on how the library budget has been used and clarify whether the amount of money spent on the library has been enough to cover its tasks and attain the policy targets.

The school librarian must be clear about the importance of an adequate budget for the library, and may need to convey this to the senior management as the library serves the whole school community. It may be worth justifying an increase in financial support along the following lines:

- the size of school library's staff and collection is the best school predictor of academic achievement
- students who score higher on standardised tests tend to come from schools with more school library staff and more books, periodicals, and video material regardless of other factors such as economic ones.

## **2.2. Location and Space**

The strong educational role of the school library must be reflected in the facilities, furniture and equipment. It is of vital importance that the function and use of the school library is incorporated when planning new school buildings and reorganising existing ones.

There is no one universal measurement for school library facilities but it is useful and helpful to have some kind of formula on which to base planning estimates so that any new or newly designed library meets the needs of the school in the most effective way. The following considerations need to be included in the planning process:

- central location, on the ground floor if possible
- accessibility and proximity, being close to all teaching areas
- noise factors, with at least some parts of the library free from external noise
- appropriate and sufficient light, both through windows and artificial light.
- appropriate room temperature (e.g. air-conditioning, heating) to ensure good working conditions all year round as well as the preservation of the collections
- appropriate design to meet the special needs of disabled library users
- adequate size to give space for the collection of books, fiction, non-fiction, hardback and paperback, newspapers and magazines, non-print

resources and storage, study spaces, reading areas, computer workstations, display areas, staff work areas and a library desk

- flexibility to allow multiplicity of activities and future changes in curriculum and technology

The following list of different areas may also be worth considering when planning a new library:

- study and research area space for information desk, catalogues, on-line stations, study and research tables, reference materials and basic collections
- informal reading area space for books and periodicals that encourage literacy, lifelong learning, and reading for pleasure
- instructional area space with seats catering for small group, large groups and whole classroom formal instruction, ‘teaching wall’ with appropriate instructional technology and display space
- production and group project area space for functional work and meetings of individuals, teams and classes, as well as facilities for media production
- administrative area space for circulation desk, office area, space for processing of library media materials, audiovisual equipment storage, and storage space for supplies and materials

### **2.3. Furniture and Equipment**

The design of the school library plays a central role in how well the library serves the school. The aesthetic appearance contributes to the feeling of welcome as well as the desire for the school community to spend time in the library.

An appropriately equipped school library should have the following characteristics:

- safety
- good lighting
- designed to accommodate furniture that is sturdy, durable and functional as well as meeting the specific space, activity and user requirements of the library

- designed to accommodate the special requirements of the school population in the least restrictive manner
- designed to accommodate changes in library programmes, the school's instructional programme as well as emerging audio, video and data technology
- designed to enable proper use, care and security of furnishing, equipment, supplies and materials
- arranged and managed to provide equitable and timely access to an organised and diverse collection of resources
- arranged and managed so that it is aesthetically appealing to the user and conducive to leisure and learning, with clear attractive guiding and signposting

## **2.4. Electronic and AV Equipment**

The school library serves an important function as a gateway to our information-based present day society. For this reason, it must provide access to all necessary electronic, computer and audiovisual equipment. This equipment will include the following:

- computer work stations with Internet access
- public access catalogues adjusted to the different ages and levels of students
- tape recorders
- CD-ROM players
- scanning equipment
- video players
- computer equipment, specially adjusted to the visually or otherwise physically handicapped

Computer furniture should be designed for children and easy to adjust in order to fit their different sizes.

## **2.5. Material Resources**

A high standard of library accommodation and a wide range of high quality resources are essential. For this reason, a collection management policy is vital. This policy defines the purpose, scope and contents of the collection as well as access to external resources.

## **2.6. Collection Management Policy**

The school library should provide access to a wide range of resources that meet the needs of the users regarding education, information and personal development. It is imperative that collections continue to be developed on an ongoing basis to ensure that the users have constant choice of new materials.

The school library staff must cooperate with administrators and teachers in order to develop a common collection management policy. Such a policy statement must be based upon curriculum, particular needs and interests of the school community, and reflect the diversity of society outside the school. The following elements should be included in the policy statement:

- IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto - the mission
- statements of intellectual freedom
- freedom of information
- purpose of the collection management policy and its relation to school and curriculum
- long and short term objectives

## **2.7. Materials Collection**

A reasonable collection of book resources should comprise ten books per student. The smallest school should have at least 2500 relevant and updated items to ensure a wide balanced book stock for all ages, abilities and backgrounds. At least 60% of the stock should consist of curriculum-related non-fiction resources.

In addition, a school library should acquire materials for leisure purposes such as popular novels, music, computer games, videocassettes, video laser disks, magazines and posters. These kinds of materials may be selected in cooperation with the students to ensure it reflects their interests and culture, without crossing reasonable limits of ethical standards.

## **2.8. Electronic Resources**

The range of services must include access to electronic information resources which reflect the curriculum as well as the users' interests and culture. The electronic resources should include access to Internet, special reference and full-

text databases, as well as instruction-related computer software packages. These may be available in CD-ROM and DVD.

It is vital to choose a library catalogue system which is applicable for classifying and cataloguing the resources according to accepted international or national bibliographic standards. This facilitates their inclusion in wider networks. In many places around the world, school libraries within a local community benefit from being linked together in a union catalogue. Such a collaboration may increase the efficiency and quality of book processing and make it easy to combine resources for maximum effect.

## **CHAPTER 3. STAFFING**

*”The school librarian is the professionally qualified staff member responsible for planning and managing the school library, supported by staffing who is as adequate as possible, working together with all members of the school community, and liaising with the public library and others.”*

### **3.1. The Library Staff**

The richness and quality of the library provision depend upon staffing resources available within and beyond the school library. For this reason, it is of paramount importance to have a well-trained and highly motivated staff, made up of a sufficient number of members according to the size of the school and its special needs for library services. The term ‘staff’ means, in this context, qualified librarians and library assistants. In addition, there may be supporting staff, such as teachers, technicians, parents and other kinds of volunteers. School librarians should be professionally trained and qualified, with additional training in educational theory and learning methodology.

One of the main objectives for staff management in school libraries should be that all staff members have a clear understanding of library service policy, well defined duties and responsibilities, and properly regulated conditions of employment and competitive salaries which reflect the professionalism of the job.

Volunteers should not work as substitutes for paid staff, but may work as support based upon a contract that gives a formal framework for their involvement in the school library activities. Consultants at local or national level

can be used as external advisers in matters concerning the development of the school library service.

### **3.2. The Role of the School Librarian**

The librarian's main role is to contribute to the mission and goals of the school including the evaluation procedures and to develop and implement those of the school library. In cooperation with the senior school management, administrators and teachers, the librarian is involved in the development of plans and the implementation of the curriculum. The librarian has the knowledge and skills regarding the provision of information and solution of information problems as well as the expertise in the use of all sources, both printed and electronic. Their knowledge, skills and expertise meet the demands of a specific school society. In addition, the librarian should lead reading campaigns and the promotion of child literature, media and culture.

The support of the school management is essential if the library is to carry out interdisciplinary activities. The librarian must report directly to the headteacher or deputy head. It is extremely important for the librarian to be accepted as an equal member of the professional staff and be entitled to participate in the teamwork and all meetings as the head of the library department.

The librarian should create an environment for leisure and learning which is attractive, welcoming and accessible for everyone without fear or prejudice. Everyone who works in the school library should have a good rapport with children, young people and adults.

### **3.3. The Role of the Library Assistant**

The library assistant reports to the librarian and supports them in their functions. This position requires clerical and technological knowledge and skills. The assistant should have prior basic library training. Otherwise, the library should provide it. Some of the duties of the job include routine functions, shelving, lending, returning and processing library material.

### **3.4. Cooperation between Teachers and School Librarian**

Cooperation between teachers and the school librarian is essential in maximising the potential of the library services.

Teachers and librarians work together in order to achieve the following:

- develop, instruct and evaluate pupils' learning across the curriculum
- develop and evaluate pupils' information skills and information knowledge
- develop lesson plans
- prepare and carry out special project work to be done in an extended learning environment, including the library
- prepare and carry out reading programmes and cultural events
- integrate information technology in the curriculum
- make clear to parents the importance of the school library

### **3.5. Skills of the School Library Staff**

The school library is a service addressed to all members of the school community: learners, teachers, administrators, counsellors as well as parents. All these groups require special communication and cooperation skills. The main users are the learners and the teachers, but also other categories of professionals such as administrators and counsellors should be included.

The fundamental qualities and skills expected from the school library staff can be defined as follows:

- the ability to communicate positively and open-mindedly with children and adults
- the ability to understand the needs of users
- the ability to cooperate with individuals and groups inside and outside the school community
- knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity
- knowledge of learning methodology and educational theory
- knowledge of information skills and of how to use information
- knowledge of the materials which compose the library collection and how to access it
- knowledge of child literature, media and culture
- knowledge and skills in the fields of management and marketing
- knowledge and skills in the field of information technology

### **3.6. Duties of the School Librarian**

The school librarian is expected to do the following:

- analyse the resource and information needs of the school community
- formulate and implement policies for service development
- develop acquisition policies and systems for library resources
- catalogue and classify library materials
- instruct in library use
- instruct in information knowledge and information skills
- assist students and teachers in the use of library resources and information technology
- answer reference and information enquiries using appropriate materials
- promote reading programmes and cultural events
- participate in planning activities connected to the implementation of the curriculum
- participate in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of learning activities
- promote the evaluation of library services as an ordinary part of the general school evaluation system
- build partnership with external organisations
- prepare and implement budgets
- design strategic planning
- manage and train library staff

### **3.7. Ethical Standards**

The school library staff have the responsibility to observe high ethical standards in their dealing with all members of the school community. All users should be dealt with on an equal basis regardless of their abilities and background. Services should be adjusted to match the needs of the individual user. In order to strengthen the role of the school library as an open and safe learning environment, the staff should emphasise their function as advisors rather than as instructors in the traditional sense. This implies, first and foremost, that they must try to adopt the user's perspective rather than let themselves be biased by their own attitudes and prejudices in providing library service.

## CHAPTER 4. PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

*“The school library is integral to the educational process”*

### 4.1. Programmes

In national curriculum and education development programmes at national level, school libraries should be considered as vital means for fulfilling ambitious goals regarding the following:

- information literacy for all, gradually developed and adopted through the school system
- availability of information resources for students at all educational levels
- open dissemination of information and knowledge for all student groups to exercise democratic and human rights

At national as well as local levels, it is advisable to have programmes designed specifically for the purposes of school library development. These kinds of programmes may involve different aims and actions related to the context they are in. Here are some examples of actions:

- develop and publish national (and local) standards and guidelines for school libraries
- provide model libraries to demonstrate ‘best practice’
- establish school library committees at national and local level
- design a formal framework for cooperation between school libraries and public libraries at national and local level
- initiate and offer professional school librarian training programmes
- provide funding for school library projects such as reading campaigns
- initiate and fund research projects related to school library activities and development

### 4.2. Cooperation and Resource Sharing with Public Libraries

In order to improve library services for children and young persons in a given community, it may be a good idea for school libraries and public libraries to cooperate. A written cooperation agreement should include the following points:

- common measures for the cooperation

- specification and definition of cooperation areas
- clarification of economic implications and how to share costs
- scheduled time for cooperation period

Examples of cooperation areas are the following:

- sharing staff training
- cooperative collection development
- cooperative programming
- coordination of electronic services and networks
- cooperation in the development of learning tools and user education
- class visits to the public library
- joint reading and literacy promotion
- joint marketing of library services to children and young persons

### **4.3. Activities at School Level**

The school library should cover a wide range of activities and should be a main role player in achieving the mission and vision of the school. It should aim to serve all potential users within the school community and meet the particular needs of different target groups.

The programmes and the activities must thus be designed in close cooperation with the following:

- principal/headteacher
- heads of departments
- teachers
- support staff
- students.

The users' satisfaction depends on the ability of the school library to identify the needs of individuals and groups, and on its capability to develop services which reflect changing needs in the school community.

#### The Principal and the School Library

As the instructional leader of the school and the key person in providing a framework and climate for implementing the curriculum, the principal should

acknowledge the importance of an effective school library service and encourage the use of it.

The principal should work closely with the library in the design of school development plans, especially within the fields of information literacy and reading promotion programmes. When the plans are to be put into effect, the principal should ensure flexible scheduling of time and resources to allow teachers' and students' access to the library and its services.

The principal should also ensure cooperation between teaching staff and library staff. He or she must ensure that the school librarians are involved in instruction, curriculum planning, continuing staff development, programme evaluation and assessment of student learning.

In the evaluation of the whole school, the principal should integrate library evaluation (see Chapter 1) and highlight the vital contribution a strong school library service makes in the achievement of the established educational standards.

### Heads of Department and the School Library

As the main person in charge of professional activities each departmental head should cooperate with the library in order to ensure that its range of information resources and services cover the special needs of the subject areas of the department. Like the principal, the head of department should involve the library in development planning and direct attention to the library as a vital part of the learning environment and as a learning resource centre.

### Teachers and the Library

Cooperation between teacher and librarian has already been addressed in Section 3.4. Some complementary aspects are worth highlighting at this point.

The teachers' educational philosophy constitutes the ideological basis for their choice of teaching methods. Some of the methods that are based on a traditional view upon the teacher and the textbook as the most important learning resources do not favour the role of the school library in learning processes. If this view is combined with a strong wish to keep the door of the classroom closed and to have strict control over the students' learning activities, the library may be even more shut out of the mind of the teacher as an important support for information. Even if most teachers favour such a 'banking education ideology' and therefore

look upon the students as passive stores to be filled up by transferring their selected knowledge to them, it is still important for the library to find its role as a supporting service linked to the curriculum. A useful strategy to establish a partnership in learning within the frames of the ideology just described could be to promote the services of the library especially for the teachers. This promotion should highlight the following:

- ability to provide resources for teachers which will widen their subject knowledge or improve their teaching methodologies
- ability to provide resources for different evaluation and assessment strategies
- ability to be a working partner in planning the tasks to be done in the classroom
- ability to help teachers to cope with heterogeneous classroom situations by organising specialised services to those who need more support and those who need more stimulation
- the library as a gateway to the global village through its interlibrary loans and electronic network

Teachers who have a more progressive and open educational ideology are likely to be keener library users. In addition to all the functions and possibilities mentioned above, they may include the library as a teaching place, and in so doing, move away from traditional teaching methods. In order to activate students in the learning process and develop their independent learning skills, teachers may cooperate with the library in fields such as the following:

- information literacy by developing the students' 'spirit of inquiry' and educating them to be critical and creative users of information
- project work and assignments
- do reading motivation with students at all levels, for individuals or for groups

### Students and the Library

The students are the main target group of the school library. Cooperation with other members of the school community is important only because it is in the interest of the students.

Students can use the library for many different purposes. It should be experienced as an open free non-threatening learning environment where they can work on all sorts of assignments, as both individuals and groups.

The students activities in the library are likely to include the following:

- traditional homework
- project work and problem solving tasks
- information seeking and information use
- production of portfolios and material to be presented to teacher and classmates

### Use of Internet

The new electronic resources are a special challenge for all library users. Using them can be very confusing. The librarian can provide the support to show that these resources are just tools in the learning and teaching process; they are means to an end and not an end in itself.

Library users become very frustrated when they look for information and think that, if they can access the Internet, then their information problems are resolved. The opposite is usually the case. The librarian can help users with Internet and can also help minimise the frustrations resulting from information searches. What is important here is to select relevant and quality information from the Internet in the shortest time possible. The students themselves should gradually develop the ability to locate, synthesise, and integrate information and new knowledge from all subject areas in the resource collection. Initiating and carrying into effect information literacy programmes are therefore amongst the most important tasks of the library (see Section ‘Teachers and the Library’ above for further consideration).

### The Cultural Function of the School Library

The library can be used informally as an aesthetic, cultural and stimulating environment containing a variety of journals, novels, publications and audiovisual resources.

Special events can be organised in the library such as exhibitions, author visits and international literacy days. If there is enough space, students can do literature inspired performances for parents and other students, and the librarian can organise book talks and story telling for the younger students. The librarian should also stimulate interest in reading and organise reading promotion programmes in order to develop the appreciation of literature. Activities addressed to encourage reading involve cultural as well as learning aspects.

There is a direct link between reading level and learning results. Librarians should always be pragmatic and flexible in their approach when providing reading material to users and supporting the individual preferences of the readers by acknowledging their individual rights. By reading fiction and non-fiction literature which fits their needs and levels, students may be stimulated in their socialisation process and identity development.

### Cooperation with Parents

The tradition of involving parents and carers in school activities varies across countries. The library can provide an opportunity for the parents' involvement in the school. As volunteers, they can help with practical tasks and support the library staff. They may also participate in reading promotion programmes by being motivators at home in the reading activities of their children. They can also take part in literature discussion groups together with their children and thus contribute, in a way of master learning, to the outcome of reading activities.

Another way to involve the parents is to form a 'friends of the library' group. This kind of group may provide extra funding for library activities and can assist the library in organising special cultural events which require more resources than the library has at its disposal.

## **CHAPTER 5. PROMOTION OF THE LIBRARY AND LEARNING**

### **5.1. Promotion**

The services and facilities provided by the school library must be actively promoted so that the target groups are always aware of its essential role as a partner in learning and as a gateway to all kinds of information resources. The target groups have already been mentioned on several occasions in previous chapters. They are the principal and the other members of the school management group, heads of departments, teachers, students, governors and parents. It is important to adjust the type of promotion to the nature of the school and to the different target groups.

## 5.2. Marketing Policy

The school library should have a written marketing and promotion policy specifying objectives and strategies. It should be worked out in cooperation with the school management and teaching staff.

The policy document should include the following elements:

- objectives and strategies
- action plan which ensures that the objectives are attained
- evaluation methods

The actions that are needed will differ depending on aims and local circumstances. Some essential issues are provided on the following list as a way of illustration:

- starting and running school library websites which promote services and have linkages to and from related websites and portals
- organising displays and exhibitions
- writing publications containing information about opening hours, services and collections
- preparing and distributing resource lists and pamphlets linked to the curriculum, also for cross-curriculum topics
- giving information about the library at meetings for new students and their parents
- organising ‘friends of the library’ groups for parents and others
- organising book fairs and reading and literacy campaigns
- providing effective interior and exterior signposting
- initiating liaison with other organisations in the area (e.g. public libraries, museum services and local history associations).

The action plan should be evaluated, reviewed and revised annually and the whole policy document should be discussed throughout at least once every second year.

## 5.3. User Education

Library-based courses and programmes aimed at teaching students and teachers how to use the library are perhaps the most effective marketing tool. For this

reason, it is extremely important that these courses are well designed and have width and balance.

Because these programmes play a key role in the library, it would also be appropriate to consider them in Chapter 4. The marketing aspect of all kinds of user education is, however, so essential that it may be even more suitable to deal with this topic in this chapter.

Courses specially designed for teachers should give them clear guidance on the role of the library in learning and teaching and on the support available from the library staff. These courses should especially emphasise the practical training in information seeking connected to the subject areas taught by the teachers. Through their own experiences in finding relevant resources, the teachers are likely to develop a deeper understanding of how the library can complement classroom work and be integrated within curriculum topics.

Like other learning programmes at school, the various components of the student courses should be delivered in logical sequences to promote progression and continuity in the student's learning. This means that skills and resources must be introduced progressively through stages and levels. The school librarian should have the main responsibility for user education programmes, but should cooperate with the teachers in order to link their different components as closely to the curriculum as possible. The teacher should always be present while students are having their library training programmes and act as an adviser in cooperation with the librarian.

In user education, there are three main teaching areas to be considered:

- knowledge about the library; what is its purpose, what kinds of services are available, how it is organised and what kinds of resources it has
- skills in information seeking and information using motivations for using the library in formal and informal learning projects.

## **5.4. Model for a Study Skills and Information Literacy Programme**

### Philosophy

Information literate students should be competent independent learners. They should be aware of their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas. They should display confidence in their ability to solve problems and

know what is relevant information. They should be able to manage technology tools to access information and to communicate. They should be able to operate comfortably in situations where there are multiple answers, as well as those with no answers. They should hold high standards in their work and create quality products. Information literate students should be flexible, able to adapt to change and able to function both individually and in groups.

Information literacy guidelines provide all students with a learning process that is transferable across content areas as well as from the academic environment to real life. These guidelines specify the following:

- the student should construct meaning from information
- the student should create a quality product
- the student should learn independently
- the student should participate effectively as a member of a work group
- the student should use information and information technology responsibly and ethically.

Learning skills which may contribute to make this ‘philosophy’ alive are included in the following list:

- self-directed learning skills
- cooperating skills
- planning skills
- locating and gathering skills
- selecting and appraising skills
- organising and recording skills
- communicating and realising skills
- evaluating.

### Self-Directed Learning Skills

Self-directed learning skills are critical in the development of lifelong learners. Independent learners should be able to establish clear information goals and manage progress towards achieving them.

They should be able to use media sources for information and personal needs, seek answers to questions, consider alternative perspectives and evaluate differing points of view. They should be able to ask for help and recognise the organisation and structure of the library. The librarian plays a role as a learning partner, advising, not instructing, the students on their learning activities.

### Cooperating Skills

The school library is a place where individual differences mesh with the diversity of resources and technology. When students are working in a group, they learn how to defend opinions as well as how to criticise opinions constructively. They acknowledge diverse ideas and show respect for the others' background and learning styles. Furthermore they help to create projects that reflect differences among individuals and contribute to synthesise individual tasks into a finished product. The librarian can act as a group counsellor and support them as much as necessary when they use the library as a resource in problem solving activities.

### Planning Skills

Planning skills are an essential prerequisite for any research task, assignment, project, essay or topic. At the initial stages of a learning process, activities like brainstorming, appropriate question framing and keyword identification require creativity as well as regular practice.

A student with planning skills should be able to develop goals, spell out the problems to be solved and design working methods to be used for that purpose. The librarian should be involved in the planning process to the extent the students wish. The librarian is expected to advise them on available resources and on the viability of any given assignment from the very beginning of the working process.

### Locating and Gathering Skills

Locating and gathering are fundamental skills to be acquired by the students in order to be able to tackle information seeking at the library as independent learners. These skills include an understanding of alphabetical and numerical order, use of different kinds of tools for information seeking in computer databases and on the Internet. Reinforcement is required for these locating skills. They need to be related to the whole curriculum and developed progressively within a subject context. Exercises in these skills should involve the use of indexes, a wide variety of reference sources and the full range of information technology. A competent student who masters these skills is able to integrate them when working with different methods of generating information such as survey, interview, experiment, observation and study of sources. The librarian

should design courses in locating and gathering skills which can be adjusted to meet the special needs of individuals and groups. The design should be carried out in cooperation with the teachers. In many ways, training in these skills represents the most essential part of user education at the library.

### Selecting and Appraising Skills

Students need to develop critical and evaluative thinking skills. Together with the skills mentioned above, these skills are vital in order to obtain optimal results out of library use.

Programmes designed to promote these skills should include exercise in the following:

- framing appropriate questions
- identifying likely resources
- using a variety of strategies
- building a reasonable timeline
- making ethical decisions.

The librarian should especially focus on student guidance in how to find relevant updated authoritative information and in how to detect any bias or inaccuracy. A wide range of resources need to be consulted, compared and appraised to ensure that hypotheses and conclusions are formed upon the widest possible knowledge base. The competent student should be able to identify criteria regarding authoritativeness, completeness, format and relevance, point of view, reliability and timeliness.

### Organising and Recording Skills

Traditional conceptions about the function of a library are often limited to gathering and selecting information. The subsequent organisation and use of this information has not been acknowledged in the same way. However, in a school library, this part of the process is just as important as the starting point. The librarian should also support the students in the development of these skills when they are working with projects and assignments. For this reason, the librarian should be an expert in the structural conventions of a project report and should give the students advice on how to write headings, chapters and references. In addition, skills such as summarising, quoting and writing complete accurate bibliographies should be developed in the library and

supported by the librarian. Competent students should be able to take notes, store information and make it ready for use.

### Communicating and Realising Skills

Interpreting information and making use of it when working on projects and assignments are two of the most difficult learning skills. Through these skills, the students show whether they have a true understanding of the information they are providing or not. Transforming the information gathered into one's personal knowledge is indeed a challenging activity.

The competent student should be able to process information along the following lines:

- integrate information from a variety of sources
- make inferences
- draw conclusions
- construct meaning
- build connections to prior knowledge.

Furthermore, the competent student should be able to do the following:

- communicate clearly
- reflect established aims and criteria
- demonstrate effective presentation skills.

The librarian's role here is to advise and train students on these activities and provide a learning environment in the library which matches the student's support needs.

### Evaluating Skills

The final stage of a learning project consists of evaluating process and result. It is of vital importance that the students are able to do critical thinking about their effort and what they have achieved. Therefore the competent student should be able to accomplish the following:

- relate the finished product to the original plan and determine if the product has achieved its purpose
- determine the strengths and weaknesses of the learning project

- reflect on improvement and implications for future assignments

The librarian should be involved in the evaluation process together with the teachers for two reasons. One is to be informed about how the library managed to meet user needs. The second reason is to be able to function as an active learning partner who may contribute to throw light on the relationship between the learning process and the finished product.

Many countries, local authorities and school libraries have worked out very successful plans for user education. Some of them are available on the Internet.

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