

Library Collections Policy

Mission Statement

The mission of the school library is to foster a love of reading, inspire intellectual curiosity and allow students to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners. The library supports the academic, social and emotional growth of all students, providing an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and respect for different perspectives with material that allows students to explore a wide range of ideas and voices.

Choosing Library Resources

The collection will reflect the school curriculum and interests of the students as well as providing resources for recreational and academic reading, wellbeing and social development that are relevant, accurate, up-to-date and current. It should also say that resources will support cultural diversity and a wide range of ideas, opinions and viewpoints.

In developing a collection of fiction that is relevant to adolescents it is imperative to include works that challenge students and reflect all aspects of our complex society, not just the positive ones. Many realistic plots can only be developed by placing characters in situations which can make some adults, who perhaps do not want to acknowledge the darker side of some young adults' lives, uncomfortable. These books, while sometimes distasteful, can offer a very valuable message to any pupil seeking to understand the issues raised within. By exploring such themes and situations in a fictional setting, young people can gain an awareness of possible outcomes in a risk-free environment. Therefore, I would like to stress that we do not exclude books from the collection solely on the basis that they contain 'bad' language, references to sexual relationships or other controversial issues such as drug use or violence. Restricting fiction based solely on the reader's age is unworkable at best and in my experience creates more problems than it solves.

The Equality Act of 2010 sets out several protected characteristics that apply to all schools. These characteristics are as follows:

- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Pregnancy

The library aims to provide equal opportunities for pupils within a broad, balanced curriculum, which does not discriminate against them because of gender, race, sexuality, religious beliefs or ethnic origin. All resources should be assessed with respect to how they contribute to the equal opportunities policy.

We seek to ensure that our resources:

- reflect the interests of all students with a suggestions box and survey
- value equally the experiences of all students
- portray a world view as seen from diverse cultural perspectives and thereby communicate how it may feel to be of another gender/sexual orientation or ethnic/cultural group.
- are factually accurate and use up-to-date text and illustrations which avoid caricature.
- do not stereotype individuals, genders, or groups.

- do not equate either gender or any race with being dominant or subservient.
- show the achievements and attributes of different genders and diverse cultures both past and present e.g., African civilisations before colonisation and the benefits of the extended family system. The pupils themselves are often the most important multicultural resource within the library and their experiences are valued and shared.
- allow students from all cultural/ethnic groups/gender identities to find characters with which they can identify
- accurately reflect the multicultural population of Britain today.

In addition, the librarian contributes to Queen Elizabeth's equal opportunities policies by:

- viewing cultural and gender diversity as a positive advantage
- using appropriate opportunities to challenge prejudice as it arises
- recognising the contributions which have been made by diverse cultures

The librarian uses their professional judgement. We are prepared to contact expert agencies outside school for advice about choice of texts and resources in general.

The librarian follows the Freedom of Information Policy and ethical code of CILIP, the librarians' professional body, as well as consulting the school policies and safeguarding lead when dealing with censorship issues.

Student Access and Library resources

The library catalogue allows for students to search easily for diverse and inclusive resources, and they are shown how to use the catalogue in library lessons; the catalogue is accessible from outside school, and may also be linked to the public library system.

Book and wall displays in the library should reflect the diversity of the student body.

All students should feel included in the library and feel safe when borrowing any resources.

The main library stock is open to all students. They have access to the library in class library lessons, at breaks, lunchtimes and after the school day.

It is understood that the library includes classic novels which can feature outdated language or class ideas. It should be appreciated that these are 'of their day', and that classic books should be taken on their own literary merit and not excluded from the library.

Library resources are regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date. The school welcomes donations of books, though not all donations will necessarily be put on the library shelves.

Challenges to library stock

If a resource is challenged by the parent of (or person legally responsible for) a student, it will initially be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the librarian, with reference to the criteria above. Any decision will be based on educational and professional judgement.

A parent may request that their child does not borrow an individual book, and this will be noted on the library management system (Oliver). However, they may not prevent any other person from borrowing or browsing resources freely from the library, as this would contravene the Equality Act and would violate the protected characteristics of others.

At all times, the school's policies should be consulted alongside this policy, and in doubt, the Safeguarding Lead should be involved with any queries.

References

1. <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/FreedomOfAccessToInformation>