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# The library in the school

## Overview

A school library contributes to enhanced student learning by providing innovative programs and services which support teaching and learning in the school.

See also [Library Policy – Schools](#) and *Information skills in the school*.

## Responsibility for library policy and information literacy

The principal is accountable for all educational and administrative matters in the school, including contemporary information and digital literacies and library policy. The teacher librarian has a key role to play, and is well placed to initiate planning and implementation. All members of the school community, teachers, students, parents and community members, have parts to play. A school library committee may be a useful structure to oversee strategic planning and policy implementation. School library committees are discussed later in this section.

## Libraries in NSW government schools

The key concepts in the [Library Policy – Schools](#) are presented below. The concepts have been grouped to show their relationship to each other.

Activities which centre around teaching and learning are central to the school library's purpose. The provision and management of resources, the provision of social and recreational resources and the library environment support the school library's involvement in all aspects of the curriculum.

### Policy concept

#### Teaching and learning

- Involvement in the total school program and innovative learning
- Educational and administrative leadership by the principal
- Regular evaluation of involvement in teaching and learning
- Cooperative planning, teaching and evaluation of information and digital literacies within the context of classroom programs, linked to syllabus outcomes and supporting Quality Teaching
- Encouraging the development of discerning reading, viewing, listening skills
- Providing innovative technology and supporting its effective use across learning areas
- Assisting students and teachers to critically select, access and creatively use resources.

#### Provision and management of resources

- Reflecting government policies related to equity
- Involvement in selecting, acquiring and organising contemporary materials to support the school's curriculum



- Formulating selection and acquisition policies which ensure that resources are relevant to quality teaching and learning programs
- Operating relevant and efficient library systems to make resources available
- Resource sharing with other schools and institutions
- Streamlining library systems by using support services provided by the NSW Department of Education, such as *Oliver*, OASIS Library and Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS)
- Regular evaluation of library services and management.

### **Social and recreational development**

- Providing and promoting social and recreational resources of all formats for teachers and student
- Promoting the enjoyment of reading, viewing and listening.

### **Environment and atmosphere**

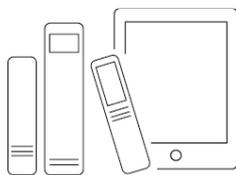
- Creating a teaching and learning environment that stimulates interest and enthusiasm for learning
- Creating a flexible teaching and learning environment that provides variety according to class, group or individual needs, supporting Quality Teaching.

## **Information skills in the school**

*Information skills in the school: engaging learners in constructing knowledge* provides a conceptual framework for the development of students' information literacy. The document identifies the phases, skills, attitudes and values involved whenever an information task is completed. Taken together, these components become the information process, which can be broken down into six cyclical phases. The focus of each phase is found in its accompanying question. The information process supports the development of information literacy in the context of syllabus outcomes and content.

Defining	What do I really want to find out?
Locating	Where can I find the information I need?
Selecting	What information do I really need to use?
Organising	How can I best use this information?
Presenting	How can I present this information?
Assessing	What did I learn from this?

Responsibility for the development of students' information literacy is shared by all staff of the school. Specific sections of *Information skills in the school: engaging learners in constructing knowledge* detail the roles teachers, teacher librarians and members of the school executive play in school library and information literacy programs supporting Key Learning Area units of work. Potential roles for the community are also outlined. *Information skills in the school* suggests useful steps schools can take in planning, implementing and evaluating learning activities with an information literacy focus. Strategies for the selection and use of information sources are clarified.



## Planning for the school library

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*Thoughtful, focused strategic and management planning is integral to the teacher librarian's proactive role.*

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A school's identified goals and priorities are articulated in its strategic and management plans. All other planning throughout the school flows from these decisions. Thoughtful, focused strategic and management planning is integral to the teacher librarian's proactive role.

### **Planning is a cyclical process. Effective planning for the school library involves:**

- Analysing the school's strategic and management plans to identify the library's role in achieving school goals and priorities

The role of the library may be implicit rather than explicit in the school's plans. Look for cue words and phrases such as information literacy, information skills, *Oliver* implementation, staff development, information technology, study skills, resources to support Learning across the curriculum and General capabilities.
- Determining library goals

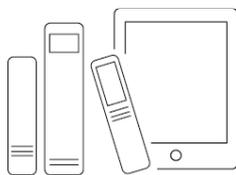
Translate the analysis into desired achievements. Express goals in achievable, viable terms. Be selective about the number to include.

Indicate extent of involvement. [Library Policy – Schools](#) and *Information skills in the school*, give direction; stated outcomes should be compatible with these documents.
- Analysing the current situation

Assess the existing situation. What are the experiences and opinions of classroom teachers? specialist teachers, including the teacher librarian? the school executive? SAS staff? students? parents? volunteers? other involved people? How can information be collected?

  - survey
  - checklist
  - observation
  - interview
  - other method.
- Formulating strategies to achieve anticipated goals

Strategies are practical steps which itemise what action will be taken to ensure stated goals are achieved. Strategies should be sequenced, include a timeframe and statement of responsibility for implementation. Allocation of resources (personnel, financial, time, physical) should be considered as strategies are formulated. Performance indicators are the observable signs of the successful achievement of outcomes and should be identified at this stage.



- Evaluating progress towards goals

Use performance indicators to assess the extent to which goals have been achieved. Compare actual goals with anticipated outcomes. Analyse the reasons for any differences. This analysis influences the next cycle of planning and is recorded in the library's annual report.

Because the school library's strategic and management plans relate directly to whole school plans, they provide a sound basis for other planning, such as budget submissions and staffing allocations. Using similar format or layout to that used for whole school planning documents will enhance communication and cohesion. The demonstrated link between school priorities and library programs strengthens the library's place in the school. Time spent on sound planning is a worthwhile investment in the library's future.

## Developing a school library committee

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*...participation helps to ensure the library's services and resources fully and effectively meet the needs of the whole school community.*

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A dynamic and effective library is essential if high quality teaching and learning is to occur in a school. The teacher librarian has a leadership role to play in the development of students' information and digital literacies, and in the management of diverse learning resources. However, other members of the school community should be encouraged to participate in decisions about the library's services and resources. Such participation helps to ensure the library's services and resources fully and effectively meet the needs of the whole school community. For this reason, many schools have established library committees.

The membership of such a committee can be drawn from the school executive staff, teachers, parents, the community, students and school assistants. In some instances the teacher librarian chairs the committee; in other instances the teacher librarian serves as an executive officer, ensuring the committee's decisions are implemented. Library committees could meet at least once each term or more frequently as required.

A library committee most usefully functions at the policy-making level, leaving procedural matters to those working in the library, led by the teacher librarian. Specific roles and functions of the committee will vary from school to school according to the other decision-making and management structures in place in the school. The committee's role may include:

- contributing to and endorsing library policies
- overseeing budget submissions and monitoring expenditure
- assisting in the development of the library's strategic and management plans
- providing input on user needs
- evaluating library services and programs
- assisting in the compilation of the annual report
- liaising with the school community
- communicating with other school committees and decision-making bodies.



## Departmental support for school libraries

### Libraries are for future learners:

As part of Learning Systems, the School Libraries team provides expert curriculum and policy support and advice to NSW Public Schools.

Key services include:

- [School Libraries support](#) website:  
Visit the website for key contacts and information.
- [Scan](#) quarterly online professional journal for educators available by subscription
- resource reviews
- support for the implementation of the *Oliver* library system
- enabling Lighthouse schools to lead the way in implementing *Oliver* for quality teaching and learning
- supporting school libraries to lead the way in innovative, future learning
- School Cataloguing and Information Services (SCIS) for NSW schools: NSW Department of Education schools use SCIS for cataloguing. The specialist NSW SCIS team provides cataloguing support directly to schools. Visit the [School Libraries support](#) website for contacts and additional information.



# The library in teaching and learning

## Overview

Expertise in information and digital literacies underpins the teacher librarian's role, and their involvement in the school's teaching and learning programs.

Information literacy concepts are embedded in references to 21C skills and future learning. Information and digital literacies are embedded in a range of outcomes in each learning area syllabus, and in the learning across the curriculum components including general capabilities.

*Information skills in the school* offers ideas on roles and responsibilities of library and other staff members, and a framework for supporting school programs and priorities.

## Information literacies and student-centred learning

*Student-centred learning, where learners are actively involved in their own learning, is more likely to foster information literacy than instruction*

The skill of finding information resources and using them effectively is sometimes known as information literacy. It is as vital to the development of independent learners as is the ability to communicate directly with others. Information and digital literacies involves the processes of:

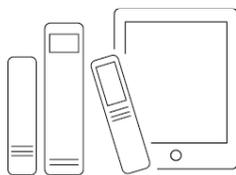
- defining the purpose or tasks for which information is required
- locating appropriate sources of information
- selecting relevant information from diverse, contemporary sources
- understanding and analysing information from several sources
- presenting the knowledge gained in an appropriate way.

Information literacy is the sum of the skills, attitudes and values outlined in *Information skills in the school*. Learners who use information successfully are able to:

- add to their core knowledge, and do so frequently
- use a variety of information sources and the necessary technology
- process information they encounter
- use information confidently and effectively

Student-centred learning, where learners are actively involved in their own learning, is more likely to foster information literacy than instruction which is teacher-centred.

In order to become active learners, students need access to a broad range of information sources and services to cater for their individual learning needs and styles. The appendices of *Information skills in the school*, and Section 4 of this handbook survey the range of possible information sources and examine how schools can develop effective collections of information resources. The development of effective information services to students and other users of school libraries is the subject of Section 3 of this handbook.



## The role of the teacher librarian

Students are more likely to become information literate if learning is undertaken within the context of class-based activities; isolated information skills instructions is less effective. The teacher librarian plays a key role in this process by:

- participating in the school's information literacy program within the context of the total curriculum
- managing the school's information sources and services.

The teacher librarian has teaching qualifications, and ideally, qualifications in information science/librarianship. These qualifications assist the teacher librarian to balance the many aspects of the role, which include:

- professional involvement in the school's teaching and learning processes by collaborating with teachers to plan, implement and evaluate learning activities, with an emphasis on information skills and student-centred learning supporting curriculum
- identifying the information needs of the school community
- selecting, developing, organising and managing information sources, services and appropriate technology to meet the educational, cultural, recreational and professional needs of the school community
- facilitating access to sources of information outside the school
- providing experiences to encourage reading, viewing and listening
- responsibility for library management, including
  - devising and implementing systems for efficient library operation
  - preparing and administering the library budget
  - training and supervising library staff, both paid and unpaid
  - evaluating and reporting on library programs, which support school learning priorities

This description of the teacher librarian's role should be read in conjunction with *Information skills in the school*.

Teacher librarians are essential teaching partners collaborating to support planning and implementing the teaching and learning program of the school. For further information about the dual aspects of the teacher librarian's role, as teaching partner and manager of the library, refer also to:

- [Library Policy – Schools](#)
- the Teacher librarians memorandum (IRC 05/18).



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## The role of the classroom teacher

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*The classroom teacher's knowledge of students and subject content is combined with the teacher librarian's expertise in information literacy and knowledge of information sources and services so that together they can plan, collaborate for enhanced student learning.*

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As a partner in the teaching and learning processes, the classroom teacher brings special expertise and knowledge, which is likely to include the following:

- familiarity with a range of effective teaching and learning strategies, and a commitment to student-centred learning
- establishment of a flexible classroom environment catering for a variety of learning styles
- knowledge of student needs, learning styles and existing skills
- knowledge of curriculum documents and an undertaking of how these documents are interpreted and translated into innovative classroom programs to meet learning needs
- subject expertise
- an overview of how the current learning task fits into ongoing learning programs.

Pages 12 – 14 of *Information skills in the school: engaging learners in constructing knowledge* describe more fully how individual teachers and grade or faculty groups can ensure information skills are incorporated across the learning areas.

The classroom teacher's knowledge of students and subject content is combined with the teacher librarian's expertise in information literacy and knowledge of information sources and services so that together they can plan, teach and evaluate. Such collaboration is commonly referred to as 'cooperative planning and teaching'.

## The role of the principal

The principal can promote information literacy by:

- ensuring the inclusion of the library and information literacies in the school's strategic plan
- ensuring library funding matches school curriculum needs
- ensuring adequate clerical assistance for the library
- supporting the teacher librarian through supervision or the provision of a supervisor. Such supervision would result in regular discussion, feedback and advice regarding:
  - negotiation of the teacher librarian's role within the school
  - balancing the duality of the teaching and library management aspects of the teacher librarian's role
  - teaching practice
  - development of library policies and procedures



- building the teacher librarian's confidence in their role and abilities as a curriculum leader
- provision of opportunities for the professional development of the teacher librarian.

Page 11 of *Information skills in the school: engaging learners in constructing knowledge* lists eight actions the principal or other members of the school's executive can take to ensure information literacy supports the school teaching and learning program.

## **The role of other library personnel**

The School Administration Officer (SAO) plays a valuable supportive role in the school library, as part of a team led by the teacher librarian. The teacher librarian requires clerical assistance to fulfil teaching and library management responsibilities. An examination of the current duty statement for school assistants reveals many ways in which the SAO working in the library can help with the school's information literacy and other learning programs, as well as with tasks associated with the provision of information services.

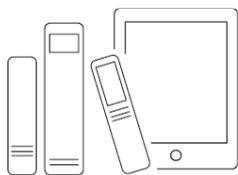
Volunteer assistants can also provide valuable help in the school library. Parents, carers, students and community members can perform many duties under the supervision and leadership of the teacher librarian. The duties undertaken by volunteers would match their interests, skills and abilities. Adequate training is also essential.



# Copyright

The [Smartcopying](#) website is the official guide for all copyright issues for Australian schools.

It includes a range of guides, information sheets, FAQs, legal requirements and resources. Visit this site for the latest, authoritative information and guidance.



# Disputed materials: sample form

## Request for reconsideration of school and library resources

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

URL and date viewed if online: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents:

Self

Organisation (please name): \_\_\_\_\_

Other group (please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer Questions 1–10 in spaces provided or on a separate page if necessary.**

1. What do you object to in this material? (please be specific: cite sections/pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you feel might be the result of using this material?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. For what age group would you recommend this material?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there anything worthwhile about this material?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you examine the whole item?

\_\_\_\_\_

If not, which parts?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



6. Are you aware of the educational/literary assessments of this material?

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7. Are you aware of Department commitments to values and equity in education?

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8. What do you believe is the intention/theme of this material and its place in the curriculum?

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9. What would you like your school to do about this material? (please indicate)

- Reconsider its suitability for inclusion in the school library.
- Reconsider its suitability for inclusion in the teaching program.
- Do not give it to my child.
- Use it with teacher support only.
- Withdraw it from all students as well as from my child.

10. If you wish it to be withdrawn, what item would you recommend to replace it in the collection?

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Office use only**

Follow up action: \_\_\_\_\_

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Principal/delegate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# School Assistant Duty Statement

## Introduction

A School Assistant is responsible to the principal or the supervisor for providing assistance in school routines, classroom activities and financial and administrative matters. A School Assistant can be required to undertake the following duties:

### 1. Finance

- undertaking, under the supervision of the principal and/or the senior School Assistant, the day to day banking, bookkeeping and general accounting duties including receipting and ordering.
- assisting the principal and/or senior School Assistant with end of year financial procedures by way of computerised/manual systems.

### 2. Office and Reception

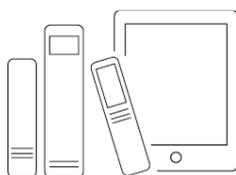
- undertaking routine telephone duties, taking messages, noting appointments and other reception duties
- enrolment of students
- drafting and preparation of routine correspondence
- maintaining filing, indexing or record systems
- collecting, distributing and posting mail
- operating and caring for office and/or classroom equipment and machinery
- arranging for quotations for office and classroom equipment and minor maintenance
- use of computer based programs/systems to design, layout and print school publications and learning materials
- photocopying, duplicating and printing/binding of school documents and learning materials.

### 3. Administration

- recording, transcribing and collating information including operation of computerised administrative systems
- ordering, purchasing, receiving, despatching and stocktaking materials, goods and consumables, including compiling orders, unpacking, checking, sorting, shelving and storing items and maintaining inventories
- servicing school committees including processing and distribution of minutes.

### 4. Teacher and Student Support

- preparing and maintaining learning environments and materials including:
  - maintaining equipment, learning materials and resources at a suitable standard
  - maintaining work areas in a clean and tidy state



- caring for and comforting sick or distressed students
- administering first aid subject to the School Assistant having a current St John's First Aid Certificate or equivalent and receiving the first aid allowance
- use of computerised library systems for accessioning, ordering, invoicing,
- budgeting and cataloguing, data input and retrieval
- assisting teachers in classroom and other activities:
  - implementation of learning and other programs, under the supervision of a teacher,
  - including library, physical education, sport and recreation activities
  - monitoring (ie checking, observing and recording) student behaviour when teachers are periodically absent from the school library
  - assisting with the supervision of students in the library during recess and lunch breaks
  - assisting students with library research
  - settling in new students
  - helping infant students with toileting, ablution and dressing
  - assisting with the organisation of excursions
  - implementation of learning and other programs, under the supervision of a teacher, in science laboratories.
- within home science areas washing up, spot cleaning of floors, spot cleaning of windows within arms reach whilst standing on the floor, laundering of home science tea towels, aprons, etc
- managing lost property and clothing pools.

## **5. Other Duties**

- Undertaking other related duties as determined by the principal or the supervisor.