

PLASHET SCHOOL



Working together to promote & celebrate achievement

Library Collection Development Policy

Applicable from 12th June 2024

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irene Papadopoulos".

Chair of Governors

Aims

This collection development policy is aimed at all Plashet School's stakeholders to inform them of the rationale behind the development of the collection, and who is responsible for it. It outlines the characteristics of the collection, and the objectives it is striving to reach. The policy focuses on the methods used for the selection and acquisition of materials. Procedures for the de-selection of materials and for dealing with challenged materials are also spelt out.

Introduction

Plashet School has two libraries which provide access to resources for students and staff. The North Library caters to Years 7 and 8. The South Library is used by Years 9, 10 and 11.

School Library Association guidance recommends that secondary school libraries should have a minimum of 10 items per student aged 11-16 in the ratio of 50% non-fiction to 50% fiction. For Plashet, the reading habits of our students suggest that there is a need for a collection that is distributed as a ratio of 70% fiction to 30% non fiction. Responding to the needs and habits of the students, which may fluctuate and change over time is at the forefront of the factors used to guide decision making over the types of texts that are housed in the collection.

Stock Selection

1. Responsibility

The Librarian is responsible for selecting stock to be added to the Library collection. Teaching staff are regularly asked to provide recommendations for curriculum-linked resources and these are given priority over other suggestions. Students are able to recommend items for purchase via stock suggestion folders in each Library and during educational visits to bookshops or other events.

In order to identify appropriate materials, the Librarian may also take recommendations from:

- Book reviews in The School Librarian magazine
- Pen&inc, CILIP's¹ magazine celebrating diversity, inclusion and representation in children's publishing
- Book summaries in the CILIP Youth Libraries Group newsletter
- Lists of books nominated for awards such as the Carnegie Medal and the Young Quill Historical Fiction competition

¹ Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

- Booklists produced for events such as Empathy Day and Reading Well for Mental Health
- Booksellers, particularly during stockbuying visits
- Library staff from other schools

A decision will be made on whether a resource is suitable based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the needs of Library users
- Value for money
- Age of information contained and the manner in which it is presented
- Accuracy and impartiality of information
- Age suitability
- Compliance with equalities legislation
- Quality of the item, both in terms of content and physical condition.

2. Fiction Collection

Plasnet students are the main audience for the library's fiction collection. Their needs are addressed as a priority when selecting new materials for the fiction collection. Much effort is put into selecting items that combine good quality of writing alongside popularity. If pupils make recommendations, these are examined against rigorous criteria. Recommended items are not automatically purchased.

The criteria used are:

- Age appropriateness- to suit students interests
- Reading levels- to represent a range of reading accessibility regardless of pupils age
- Variety of points of view-to reflect global communities and promote open-mindedness
- Variety of genres and formats- to develop pupil's literacy skills
- Variety of tones- to enhance pupils' ability to empathise with others
- Price- if a title is first published in hardback, we might wait for a cheaper, paperback edition to be published.

3. Non-Fiction Collection

The selection of non-fiction items is a collaborative enterprise between the librarian and teaching staff. Attention is given to potential gaps in the collection. Few or no resources will be purchased in an area already satisfactorily covered if money is needed to expand another area of the curriculum.

The Libraries stock fiction and non-fiction resources to support and enrich the curriculum and students' personal interests and to encourage reading for pleasure. The library commits to maintaining a base level number of revision guides and material to support independent preparation for examinations.

4. Ebooks

Plasnet also subscribes to ePlatform, a service which allows students to borrow ebooks and a limited range of audiobooks.

5. Diversity, Inclusion and Representation

The Libraries follow Plaset's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy to ensure that all members of the school community are respected and treated with dignity. School libraries are well placed to foster empathy and understanding between different communities and different sections of society by providing resources which allow borrowers to learn more about the experiences of others.

In order to achieve this aim, library stock should include works which feature authentic representations of different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religions, socio-economic statuses, disabilities, health conditions, sexual orientations and gender identities. This requires stocking books written by diverse writers as these titles are more likely to accurately reflect lived, representative experiences. These works should be shelved with general library stock rather than being kept separate, although they may be included in displays or temporary special collections if appropriate for a particular event or theme. There is caution surrounding the selection process which takes into consideration that diverse authorship does not mean the text itself is representative.

It is also vitally important that students see themselves represented in books. The Librarian should seek out titles which reflect the lives of Plaset students, particularly those set in East London with a diverse, multicultural cast of characters.

Resources which contain offensive language will not necessarily be dismissed as long as the overall message of the book does not promote discrimination against those with protected characteristics. For example, titles with an anti-racist message will often contain offensive terms in order to enhance the authenticity of the narrative. The Librarian is responsible for making this assessment and will include content warnings on Oliver, the Library management system, for any titles which contain language which students may find distressing.

6. Accessibility

Plaset's aims and objectives state that the school commits to 'provide an inclusive educational offer that ensures equality of access for all'.

The Library therefore has a duty to provide resources which meet the needs of students at all ability levels including those with SEND and EAL. The Librarian should liaise with the SEND and EAL teams to identify gaps in Library stock and to assess the suitability of items considered for purchase. This is an ongoing process as the needs of these groups are not static and will change over time.

Resources purchased for the use of designated groups may have borrowing restrictions placed on them to ensure fair access. This is administered via Oliver and students are identified using the SEND information booklet distributed to staff annually. However, resources required solely for the use of SEND or EAL students within their departments should be kept in these departments rather than in the Libraries.

7. Age Suitability

Resources may be restricted by age to prevent younger students from accessing materials which they may not be emotionally ready to read, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The Librarian is responsible for determining whether restrictions should be applied based on the content of the book, taking into consideration:

- Depictions of graphic violence
- Sexual content
- Offensive language
- The level of comprehension of the ideas and themes presented which is required to fully understand the text

Titles containing scenes or information which students may find distressing will be given a content warning on Oliver.

The Librarian will use a range of online sources to determine the age suitability of a title, including:

- Commonsense Media
- Booktrust website
- Kirkus reviews
- Books for Keeps magazine

The Librarian and Library Assistants will also read resources themselves if a more thorough knowledge of the content is required to make an informed decision.

Age restrictions are entered into Oliver and ePlatform by the librarian and will automatically prevent underage students from borrowing or reserving these titles. Students may be permitted to borrow restricted books from the Libraries by seeking permission either from their English teacher or a parent / carer but this is considered on a case by case basis. Restrictions on ePlatform cannot be overridden.

8. Donations and Gifts

The Libraries regularly receive donations from a variety of sources. Some of these are new resources and are suitable for use in school, such as the books provided by Booktrust in the annual Bookbuzz pack or those donated as part of the Reading Well for Mental Health initiative. Second-hand books are not automatically added to stock and the Librarian will make a judgement on their suitability, taking into account the attractiveness and condition of the materials in addition to the criteria previously listed.

Unsolicited self-published titles will not usually be accepted. This is because they are often intended to promote a particular view or idea which is not in keeping with Plashet's aims and objectives. The Librarian will assess all unsolicited titles received by the school. Some titles may be retained as an example of bias but will not be added to Library stock or made generally available.

Withdrawal of Stock

The School Library Association recommends that there is a policy in place to replenish, at a minimum, 10% of stock per financial year. The Librarian is responsible for identifying stock to be withdrawn but will consult teaching staff with regard to curriculum-linked items.

Materials may be removed if they are:

- Out of date. The SLA recommends that most non-fiction items published 10 or more years ago should be discarded, although Geography, Science and Technology resources should be considered if they are older than five years. Art and History resources, poetry collections and biographies may be an exception to this rule if they meet other criteria.
- Damaged beyond acceptable repair
- No longer relevant to the needs of users
- No longer attractive enough to appeal to users.
- Rarely used, although some rarely borrowed items may be retained as they could be useful for a particular subject area.
- Held in an obsolete format.

This should be an ongoing process but consultation with teachers should happen at regular intervals, ideally once a year.

If items in poor condition are kept in stock, it will make the Library seem less attractive and users will not see the need to take appropriate care of the resources which are borrowed.

1. Repairs

Library staff will attempt to repair items wherever possible to prolong their shelf life by replacing covers / jackets, reattaching loose pages and covering torn pages. However the item should still be visually appealing and in good condition once repairs have been undertaken. If this is not the case, the item will be withdrawn.

Some damage, such as water damage and fading due to exposure to sunlight, cannot be repaired. Items affected by these issues will be withdrawn.

2. Disposal of Withdrawn Items

The Library service has a responsibility to dispose of unwanted items in as sustainable a way as possible. Withdrawn items should be reused wherever possible:

- Free Book Fridays are held to encourage students to take away withdrawn books.
- Unclaimed fiction and out of date / damaged non-fiction books are offered to the Art Department for use in lessons. They may also be used for craft projects within the Library.
- Any remaining stock is donated to the East Ham branch of British Heart Foundation if possible, who will either try to sell it in store or arrange for the books to be pulped, for which they also receive some income. This is dependent on the BHF having access to suitable vehicles to transport the books.

If it is not possible to pass withdrawn books to another user, covers will be removed and the pages will be recycled.

Challenged Items

Concerns raised with regard to materials in Library stock are likely to relate to content and may come from students, staff, parents / carers or other members of the community. All concerns or complaints should be addressed to the Librarian who, in conjunction with their line manager, will review the item and make a decision on whether any action needs to be taken. This action may include:

- Transferring an item from the North Library to the South so younger students cannot access it.
- Imposing age restrictions on an item.
- Adding content warnings on Oliver.

Items will not usually be removed unless they meet the criteria for withdrawal. This is because they should already have been assessed by the Librarian and have been considered suitable for use within school.

The Librarian should respond to the concern within five days in line with Plashet's complaints procedure. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the Librarian's response, they will be advised to put their concerns in writing to the Head Teacher and the formal complaints process will begin.