Oakham School Archives Learning and Outreach Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy is created to outline and support the provision for learning and outreach at Oakham School. This policy applies to every person who engages with the archives physically or digitally.

1.1 DEFINITIONS

Learning is defined as informal and formal activities that help to develop knowledge, understanding and skills for both adults and children.

Outreach is defined as activities that help to broaden the audience of the archives beyond the archives' physical rooms and the school's campus.

1.2 OAKHAM SCHOOL ARCHIVES BACKGROUND

The Oakham School Archives, hereafter Archives, is in The Barber Rooms, College House. It derives its authority to collect, preserve and make available archives from this policy statement, adopted formally by the Trustees of Oakham School. The Archives were officially set up in 2010. Beforehand, there was no official service, and archiving and staff volunteers undertook collecting on an ad hoc basis. An official archive was set up to ensure proper security of the material as well as enabling collecting of material from Old Oakhamians and other sources. Peter Lawson, OO and Chairman of Trustees, provided considerable support.

Previous volunteers were made up of ex members of staff and Old Oakhamians including Brian Needham, Roger Blackmore, Nigel Webb, Kate Williamson, Roger Anderson, and Michael Allbrook.

The Archives currently holds a wide variety of materials relating to the history of Oakham School dating from the 16th Century.

2 WHAT ARE THE ARCHIVES' AIMS?

1) To promote and increase the awareness of and access to Oakham School Archives.
2) To show what tasks Oakham School Archives can do to assist the development of education and outreach locally and nationally.
3) To encourage the Oakham School Archives collection to be used for learning resources both inside and outside of the school community.
4) To supplement the school's curriculum to improve the quality of learning and skills of pupils in all years.
5) To promote social inclusion, ensure that our collections are accessible to everyone, and to build a collection that represents the diverse community of Oakham School.
6) To develop partnerships with external bodies such as museums and local groups.
7) To ensure that a culture of dedication to learning and outreach is embedded within Oakham School Archives' mission statement and values.

8) To promote the importance of archives and museum collections to the public as well as the importance of Oakham School's history.
9) To ensure that Oakham School Archives' collections are enjoyed and used to foster a sense of creativity and wellbeing.

3   WHAT ARE THE ARCHIVES' OBJECTIVES?

1) To encourage donation of material to the archives.
   a. To encourage the donation of material that is underrepresented within our collection.
2) To increase access to the archives to local and far afield users, as well as to Old Oakhamians.
   a. To know our core user base.
   b. To identify barriers for people which may limit their engagement with our outreach programme.
3) To create interactive and engaging exhibitions physically and digitally.
4) To lead tours of the archives to visitors when requested.
5) To promote Oakham School Archives through digital and physical media.
6) To produce learning resources that assist the classroom teaching of all ages and to help support teachers with using archive material in their lessons.
   a. To be aware of different learning styles and ensure that our outreach material can be utilised and enjoyed by all.
7) To train the public to use our documents within research.
8) To encourage collaborations between Oakham School Archives and external partners.
9) To have a volunteer programme.
10) To evaluate our work frequently through a variety of methods, allowing us to better fit the needs of stakeholders and the public.
11) To encourage an interest in history, heritage, archives, and museum collections.

4   ACHIEVING OUR AIMS

Oakham School Archives will achieve its aims and objectives through the following methods.

4.1   EXHIBITIONS

- Production of a termly exhibition for the reception cabinet.
- Regular provision of display material for the library.
- Production of exhibition videos and upload exhibition material onto its Libguides site to widen the audience of the display.
- Cooperation and provision of loan material and expertise to external groups requesting these.

4.2   VISITS

- Quick response to requests from visitors and accommodation of their requests as far as possible, with provision of material specifically targeted for the visit.
- Provision of support to the Old Oakhamian Club Chairman in giving tours outside operating hours to Old Oakhamians.

4.3 EDUCATION

- Production of educational material for all ages (children and adult) based upon the collections available.
- Provision of volunteering opportunities and work experience (where suitable) for people of all ages.
- Support for teachers in the delivery of the curriculum by provision of resources for use within the classroom. These teaching materials will be made available digitally as well as physically.
- Production of exhibitions and digital content that complement the studies of pupils.
- Provision of online guides on how to use archives in research.
- Production of resources for Oakham School's partner primary schools.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL OUTPUT

- Regular posting of articles and archival material via our social media outlets (e.g. blogs and twitter).
- Development of a digitisation strategy to ensure that archival material can be made accessible to more people.
- Promotion of the archives, the School, and the work we do through various media.
- Investigation of innovative ways of reaching new audiences digitally.

4.4 CATALOGUE

- Development of an online catalogue which is user friendly and accessible to all.
- Incorporation of digitised collections into the catalogue.

4.5 REQUESTS

- Response to enquiries and requests within 5 working days (during term time) and as quickly as possible at other times.
- To work with external groups and internal stakeholders on a variety of projects.

5 LIMITATIONS

There are limitations as to what the archives can achieve. Results can be influenced by:

- Staffing – number of staff members and time spent in the office. Staffing will also be affected by the workload on the archives.
- Budget
- Space – having only a small office and reading room limits the size of gatherings that the archives can permit.
- Equipment – some archives need specialist equipment to digitise them.
- Archival material – some material may not be able to be digitised or made public for a variety of reasons including preservation, copyright and GDPR.
- Location

6 CHILD PROTECTION

Oakham School Archives rigorously adheres to child protection and safeguarding procedures. We take all possible precautions to safeguard children whilst in the archives and on school property.

7 MEDIA

The archives recognise the importance of the work done for local and national media. Any request from media bodies or for which the work will be accessible to the public, the archives will liaise with the school's press officer for guidance.

8 EVALUATION

The archives will continually evaluate their learning and outreach output to ensure that we are achieving our aims and objectives. This will vary from project to project.

We welcome feedback verbally and in writing regarding our exhibitions, digital output, and visits. Some feedback may be noted down within a spread sheet as qualitative data.

Any complaints will be reviewed, and the issuer of the complaint will be contacted regarding the outcome.

The learning and outreach policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure that the policy reflects the changes occurring in the archives and that the archives retain a relevant and active outreach and learning programme.

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