



International
School of Panama

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PANAMA
LIBRARIES**

POLICY MANUAL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide transparency to ISP School Libraries' collection development processes as well as to the operations of the school library. This document has been developed and is maintained by the school Librarians and the Innovation Coordinator, with approval by the Head of School. The policy has been developed with consideration of [ISP's school policies](#). It is intended for all ISP community members, including students, parents and guardians, employees, the school Board of Trustees, and is also available to the general public.

Questions regarding the policies outlined in this document should be directed toward the Teacher Librarians or the Coordinator of Innovation.

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This policy will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis at the beginning of each school year.

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About the Library

Mission Statement

ISP School Libraries are safe and inclusive spaces where we foster the joy and curiosity of learners through reading, with a diverse collection that enriches and supports the curriculum, and develops competent and ethical users of information.

The school library's approach is driven by ISP's Core Values (2020):

- Commitment to Excellence
- Compassion and Integrity
- Strength in Diversity
- Innovative Spirit
- Lasting Impact

About the School Library

Strong school libraries build strong students! The Elementary School Library at ISP supports children, staff and parents from PK-5th grade. The Middle and High Schools' Library supports grades 6 through 12 in academic achievement, academic integrity, acquisition of 21st-Century information literacy and digital citizenship skills, and reading. It is our goal to inspire a love of reading and literature that our students will carry with them through their school years and beyond. We strive to create a nurturing and inclusive environment for all members of the ISP community to access ideas and information.

Our school library is a hub of discovery, inquiry, and innovation for the ISP community. Developing a love of literature and innate curiosity is also at the center of our school libraries. The ISP community can find a rich collection of books, ebooks, audiobooks, and periodicals in our physical and virtual library media centers. Our school librarians strive to offer an assortment of content that reflects ISP's diverse community and also offers a window into the greater world beyond our walls.

ISP School Librarians collaborate with teachers, student services, and learning coaches to integrate critical literacy skills into the curriculum, including reading, digital intelligence, research, and information fluency.

Revised October 2022

Library Ethics

School Librarians at ISP are members of the American Library Association. As such, we follow the association's [Code of Ethics](#), which outlines the values and ethical responsibilities of an ALA librarian. This framework includes statements on intellectual freedom, recognizing and dismantling personal and structural biases, enhancing racial and social justice in the library, and protecting library users' right to privacy.

Organizational Structure

Staffing

Our staff is composed of certified teachers and/or certified librarians, who practice their own continuous learning through active participation with library associations including American Association of School Libraries and Future Ready Librarians, as well as with relevant educational associations including the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE), Tri-Association, and the Association of American Schools in South America.

Each school library has on staff a minimum of one Teacher Librarian and an Assistant Librarian (a certified librarian) or Library Learning Assistant. The Teacher Librarian leads, plans, and organizes academic related activities with homeroom teachers or departments, including but not limited to curricular planning and classroom instruction. Additionally, the Teacher Librarian is responsible for managing collection development, library budget, and this policy. The Assistant is responsible for day to day clerical and office tasks. Library programming development and execution is shared by all library staff.

Substitutes

The Assistant Librarian or Library Learning Assistant will act as a substitute when the Teacher Librarian is unavailable for library instruction. Division administrators will assign a permanent sub to support the Assistant in this instance. Substitutes will be provided with information and access to library systems to ensure continued access to materials for the community.

Library Hours & Closures

Monday through Thursday, from 7:30 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Digital school library materials (such as SORA and Tumblebooks.com, etc.) are available to the community 24 hours a day, every day.

The school library will be closed on official school holidays and as needed for regular library maintenance, such as processing of new books, taking inventory and remodeling. In the instance the library is closed for library maintenance, the librarians will inform the school divisional administrator(s) at least one week in advance.

Volunteers and Student Teachers

Volunteers and student teachers are subject to the approval of the Head of School, and must adhere to the school's policies on Child Safety and Diversity & Inclusion. Contact the Teacher Librarian in the division of interest to request the opportunity to volunteer or for student teaching.

Participants are kindly asked to consider the following agreements:

- All volunteers are required to participate in a training with the Teacher Librarian
- At least one hour of support per visit
- Timing of visit must be aligned with the Teacher Librarian

Food and Drink

The library asks that all food and drink be enjoyed outside of the library classroom. Water in sealed containers, such as water bottles, will be permitted.

In the instance of special events on campus, such as staff meetings or PANAMUN, exceptions will be made. In these special circumstances, food and beverages may be enjoyed in the library in designated areas. Meeting host(s) must seek permission from the school librarian prior to the event and take(s) full responsibility for clean-up and any potential damage that might occur.

Student Aides and Internship Program

Elementary School

Student aides in grades 4-5 are welcome to request time to support school library needs. Students will be trained by the Teacher Librarian and supported by the Assistant Librarian. Approval is required from the homeroom teacher for the student to support the library during class time.

Middle School and High School

The Middle and High Schools' library offers several pathways for students to take an active role in the operation of their school library. Students can act as an aide, supporting the Library Learning Assistant in tasks such as book maintenance, on an as needed basis. Student aides offer their time before school or during breaks.

Students can also participate in a longer term library internship, where they will learn the ins and outs of how the library operates and will act as advisors in collection development and programming. The internship program changes each year and is developed with interested students to ensure the most value and engagement. Student interns are usually in grade 11 or 12 and utilize time during their free block(s) and/or during breaks.

Collection Development

Overview

The school library collection at ISP is one of the largest child and youth libraries in Panama, offering more than 9,000 books (physical, electronic, and audio), periodicals, and laptops. To support the needs of our young researchers, the school library also offers access to academic research databases and reference services with professionally trained librarians.

Selection Procedures and Tools

The school library's philosophy for selecting materials is driven by the desire to design a collection that both meets the academic needs of students and staff, as well as community demands for non-academic reading material in order to encourage a lifelong love of reading and support social-emotional development. This policy is

informed by the American Library Association's [Bill of Rights](#) which guides librarians in the selection of print and digital library materials. The Bill of Rights encourages librarians to fill their libraries with materials that represent "all points of view on current and historical issues" (ALA, 2019). Furthermore, it encourages librarians to challenge censorship in order to fulfill their responsibility of providing library patrons with equal access to information.

Tools for selection used by librarians:

- Examine book reviews from School Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly, Kirkus, Booklist, NY Times Notable Reads, and Goodreads
- Attend publishing and education industry webinars discussing trends in children and young adult literature and nonfiction titles
- Review annual book awards lists for essential titles to add to the collection, including the American Librarians Association awards, Mathical Book Award, Caldecott Medal Awards, and many others.

ISP librarians examine their own personal biases and beliefs to ensure that new items are selected objectively and the collection is well balanced (ALA, 2021; ALA, 2019).

Selection is based on the following factors, which help to establish the potential for use of the material:

- Subject - which subjects are most in demand by students and teachers?
- Curricular needs - in which school subjects does the library lack content to support researchers?
- International Baccalaureate - in the High School, follow the recommendations from the IB in building the collection
- Diversity of collection - what/who is represented in the collection and in future purchasing? Do purchasing plans match ISP library's diversity and inclusion criteria?
- Audience - does the material subject matter and reading level match that of the intended audience?
- Reviews and awards (noted previously)
- Trends in social media that influence the reading interests of the community, including #BookTok on TikTok and #Bookstagram on Instagram
- Requests from community members

- Local laws and school policies - is the selection in line with MEDUCA guidelines and ISP's Child Safety policy?

Types of Materials

In response to the growing need for on demand and remote access to library resources, the emphasis on offering ebooks, audiobooks and digital subscriptions has grown significantly. Types of materials offered by ISP's school libraries include books, both physical and digital (ebook, audiobook); library research databases, which are digital collections that aggregate information from academic journals, newspapers, books, and other scholarly research; and, finally, digital magazines and newspapers which are offered via web browser and mobile applications.

Acquisitions

Acquisitions is the process by which ISP libraries find, order, pay for, receive, and process new materials that have been selected for the collection. ISP works with several service providers for acquisitions.

- Follett - The largest provider of school library solutions in the United States serving schools worldwide. They provide ISP with the following acquisition tools:
 - TitleWave - An online store where we order physical books, can find reviews, award winners, and other curated lists of must-have titles for the physical library. Titlewave also provides labeling services with book orders that saves time for librarians.
 - Destiny - The Library Management System used to process new books and remove books from the collection. Destiny is also where ISP librarians manage library users and anyone in the community can search the physical catalog.
- Amazon.com and IndieBound.com - ISP libraries use online book stores for urgent book needs, usually for classroom library collections or special initiatives like World Read Aloud and Literature to Life.
- Overdrive - ISP uses SORA by Overdrive, a mobile application and web based software, for reading ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines. In the Overdrive Marketplace, ISP librarians can acquire new titles to add to the digital collection.

- Tri-Association - The Tri-Association has organized a consortium of schools in Latin America to provide access to the library research database EBSCOhost at a discounted rate.
- Dotlib - Service provider for library research database JSTOR.
- Cengage - Service provider for Gale library research databases.
- The New York Times Company - Provides whole school subscription services to the digital newspaper.
- Direct order from publishers - For large orders of 50 or more copies of the same book, ISP librarians will sometimes order directly from the publisher in order to receive the best possible price.

Donations

Librarians operate under a strict code of ethics in using school funds and accepting gifts and donations to the library. Donations are gladly accepted, but must meet the following criteria:

- Book must be in "Like New" condition
- Hardback books are preferred, paperbacks accepted
- Books that show signs of damage or mold should be recycled
- Mass market paperbacks, textbooks, and workbooks (intended to be written in) should be recycled
- Books that are donated should be intended for child or young adult audiences
- Adult books appropriate for young adult readers will be closely reviewed and considered

Once books have been donated the library claims total ownership and the right to use the materials as best fits the needs of the community. This could result in library use, classroom library use, book sale, or disposal. Persons who donate books to the library should not expect any sort of reciprocation from the library.

Removal (Weeding)

Overview

Assessing and evaluating the value of the school library and its collection requires a complex mix of data collection and analysis. Librarians evaluate to determine how well the collection meets the demands of the community and they assess to determine how

well the purpose of the collection is met by the materials it includes. Evaluation is continuous and takes place daily with evidence being collected for a later more formal collection inventory.

A larger evaluation and assessment will also take place in the form of a formal inventory and audit process, every three to five years. The inventory helps to collect data on material usage statistics, while the audit is meant to collect data on certain criteria the materials must meet to remain in the collection. During the audit, ISP librarians look specifically at how the collection meets the academic needs of ISP's curriculum, and also at the diversity and inclusion of the collection (using [Karen Jensen's guide](#) to establish specific criteria for our school context).

Removal Process

The process of removing materials from the library is called weeding. Weeding is completed during inventory and auditing. Criteria for removal from the collection is guided by the [CREW method](#) (Texas State Library and Archives Commission).

Additionally, removal of a book must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Material no longer reflects ISP's core values or the library mission statement
- Material has not circulated for 5 or more years (fiction) or 10 years (non-fiction)
- Material is no longer relevant to academic or community needs
- Material suffered irreparable damage
- Material is considered lost
- Material becomes outdated and inaccurate

Before materials are removed from the collection, a select group of academic staff, including curricular coordinators and Head of Departments, will have the opportunity to review materials to ensure they are no longer needed to support learning.

Challenged Books (Request for Removal policy and form)

The school library's collection development policy defines the careful selection of materials to best meet the needs of the school community. In instances when a member of the community does not agree with one or more selected items in its print and/or digital collection, the library invites the community member to participate in a process to request reconsideration of the resource. Reconsideration is defined as a review of the challenged resource that will result in a decision to retain the resource in

the collection, limit access to the resource, or completely remove the resource from the collection.

Please note before requesting reconsideration that ISP School Library follows the principles of the [Freedom to Read](#), as outlined by the American Library Association.

"We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to [make] it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings...It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority...It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large...It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression...We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations...We do so because we believe that [knowledge is] worthy of cherishing and keeping free...We believe...that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society." (ALA, 2004)

In the instance that one or more members of the community is requesting to remove or limit access to material(s), the teacher, librarian, or other academic staff member should provide the community member with access to the [Request for Reconsideration form](#) and inform them of the following process steps:

1. Once the form is received by the school librarian it will be evaluated in a community review. The reconsideration process is overseen by the school librarian with participation from the Coordinator of Innovation, school administrator (principal, assistant principal and/or instructional coach), two classroom teachers and/or counselor, two students, and two parents, comprising a Reconsideration Committee.
2. During the review process the material will remain accessible and in the collection.
3. The community review process requires all participants to read in-full and understand the context and content of the material. Specific action depends on the type of material.

4. The Reconsideration Committee will have three weeks in which time they will:
 - a. Review the material (see step 3);
 - b. Conduct research of third party reviews of the material;
 - c. Ensure if and demonstrate how the material conforms to the Collection Development policy, or not;
 - d. Meet to discuss the material, share opinions, and make a final recommendation for how to proceed; and,
 - e. Complete [Reconsideration Recommendation Report form](#) and submit it to the Head of School for final approval.
5. The approved Reconsideration Recommendation Report will be shared with the community and implemented. If not approved, the process will begin again with new administrators, teachers, students and parents participating in the Reconsideration Committee.
6. The decision may be appealed only one time to the Head of School, with the Board of Trustees providing process oversight.

Circulation

Overview

This section includes information about access to materials for community members, including checking out and returning books.

Elementary School

- Kinder and 1st Grade: Will start checking out books in the second quarter. Children may check out one book.
- 2nd Grade: One book.
- 3rd to 5th Grade: Up to five books.

Duration: Students may check out books during library class time for one week until the following library class. Books may be renewed or checked in before the next class during the student's morning recess.

Parents can check out up to 10 books for two weeks and renew them by sending an email to Nuri Muñoz nmunoz@isp.edu.pa or Menitza Gonzalez mgonzalez@isp.edu.pa.

Middle School and High School Library

- Books: Up to five (5) resources may be checked out for 21 days with unlimited option to renew.
- eBooks, audiobooks, and magazines: Up to three (3) resources may be checked out at a time for up to 21 days with unlimited option to renew.
- Chromebooks: One (1) item may be checked out for the duration of the school day only.

Overdue Materials

Overdue materials are assessed on a quarterly basis and notices are sent to community members with overdue materials. At that time the community member will have the opportunity to renew or return the material.

Fines

Fines will be assessed only in the case of lost or damaged materials. There are no fines for overdue materials.

Budget

Overview

Books and physical supply purchases are managed by the Innovation Coordinator. ISP Libraries are funded jointly.

School Library vs. Classroom Library

Digital tools, Destiny, Sora, etc, are funded via the EdTech Licenses and subscriptions budget.

Classroom Libraries are funded by division budgets and managed by classroom teachers.

Local Suppliers

- Office Depot
- Ultracom

- Vendella

Offshore Suppliers

- DEMCO
- School Supplies
- Lakeshore
- Follett

PTA Grants

When available, Teacher Librarians working in partnership with community members will request PTA grants to support the development of special collections within the school library. Specific instructions on applying for grants are available in the PTA Handbook.

Library Programs & Out of School Partnerships

Overview

The school library thrives on community engagement and so programming is designed with the community in mind, often with community involvement and with partnerships outside of the school. Programming is considered for the unique audiences and specific skill goals in either Elementary, Middle and/or High School.

Elementary School

Read Aloud, Battle of the Books, Book Fairs, Puppet show and Special Guests are activities where we can share life experiences and connect with different groups within the school community. These activities are part of our students' literacy learning and are programmed during the course of each school year. This helps involve all members within our school community to participate and promote student engagement.

Book Fairs: In partnership with a publisher, such as Scholastic, Etica, Editorial del Naranjo and Tintaleo, students and parents have the opportunity to purchase new books for their home libraries. Teachers can also use this opportunity to discover new books to add to their classroom library. Fairs occur once or twice a year and will be announced in a divisional email and the Dolphin Dispatch.

Bringing Literacy to Life: This is an annual activity to promote reading with the help and kind contribution of Readers who are our esteemed parents, grandparents, teachers, learning assistants, publishers, or authors.

Battle of the Books: BOB is a reading program competition created by American's Battle of the Books to engage students in a cooperative learning process. This program starts at the beginning of each school year in third grade.

Middle School and High School Library

Book Club: This student run High School club selects short novels, poetry or essay collections, for a more analytical approach to literature love. The club meets one to two times per month during lunch block. Contact your librarian to learn how to join or set up a new club in the Middle or High School.

Author Visit(s): Each year an author is invited to visit the school to inspire writers and readers across campus through in-person or virtual talks, workshops, and more.

Games and More: Students are encouraged to select from a collection of stimulating games at their leisure during lunch, break or before school.

Additional programming is often added and announced on the library's Instagram channel [@isplibrary](#).

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Abbreviations

- BOB: Battle of the Books
 LA's: Learning Assistants
 PTA: Parents-Teachers Association
 RA: Read Aloud