International School of London

Library Policy

Date reviewed:
August 2025

To be reviewed:
August 2026

Mission statement

Since 1972, we have established a welcoming and inclusive community. Our diverse cultures and languages drive all our learning experiences.

We nurture creativity and curiosity to stimulate deep thinking. We foster insight, compassion and resilience to enable us to play a meaningful part in a changing world.

Vision statement

We celebrate our stories, our worth and our purpose to make a difference in a shared world.

At the International School of London, we believe in:

Empowering students to maximise their learning opportunities and to fulfil their potential.
Actively integrating cultural diversity in the curriculum.
Creating inclusive, vibrant and innovative learning communities.
Offering a diverse and extensive international programme that supports personal, social and professional growth.

ISL London takes account of the context both national and curricular within which it exists in supporting students who are identified as requiring additional learning support.

The school will abide by the Independent Schools Standards (England), the Equality Act 2010 and any other relevant statute or guidance in respect of its learning support practice and policy.

Contents

SECTION 1
Library & Research Centre Guiding Statements

Mission Statement
The ISL Libraries and Research Centre are welcoming and inclusive. Our cultures and languages are represented within our collection, as are every individual. We provide a safe space for students to use and explore resources that have been selected for them, and offer confidentiality, discretion and support to all.

All staff who work within the department are required to follow the professional ethics and practices of information professionals and are outlined in professional organisations in the UK and overseas (CILIP, SLA, ALA, IFLA as examples of these). The IFLA School Library Guidelines are the most comprehensive and covers in much more detail the information covered in this policy (Schultz-Jones & Oberg, 2015).
We believe that libraries are a home for the mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors as conceptualised in the seminal essay by Rudine Sims Bishop
"Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books." (Sims Bishop, 2015)
We believe that the Research Centre is the home for exploration within ISL, for students to be able to search and discover for themselves. We are the home of the Research Institute which allows MYP students to conduct their own original academic research with the support of Research Facilitators and Academic Mentors from University settings. We want to give every student at ISL the opportunity to discover new things of interest to them, to learn how to conduct a good quality academic search from credible sources and to be able to cite it correctly. Alongside this we encourage students to develop good practice in their use of artificial intelligence and associated technological advances and to use this good practice to support and enhance their learning.

Underpinning our policy and practice sit the Five Laws of Library Science by Dr Ranganathan. Ranganathan's work is a fundamental aspect of librarians' training and is an excellent cornerstone to any library policy, although it would now be pertinent to replace 'book' with 'books and online resources'.
The laws of Library Science are as follows: **Books are for use; Every reader his or her book; Every book its reader; Save the time of the reader; Library is a growing organism**. (Ranganathan, 2022)

Vision
We help our youngest students start their exploration into books and resources by introducing them to suitable story and information books.
We continue this exploration throughout the school by celebrating stories and access to information for all.
We celebrate the freedom to read and the individual choice of every reader.
We ensure that each student receives access to age-appropriate library spaces with relevant resources and support available to everyone.

Ethics and Practice
All Library and Research Centre staff adhere to the CILIP Ethical Framework in their day-to-day practice alongside other professional organisation frameworks and statements (IFLA, ALA, SLA, ALIA, etc)

SECTION 2

Description of the School and Library

School context

- 54 student nationalities
- 40 staff nationalities
- 24 languages taught in school
- A large percentage of staff and students are bilingual or multilingual
- Over 50 years IB experience
- 70% of students score above the world average at IBDP
- Award winning Transitions Programme
- IB PYP, MYP, DP Programmes offered

Staffing
The Library and Research Centre department is staffed by two qualified librarians, and the department incorporates the main library at 139 Gunnersbury Avenue, the DP College Library at 15 Gunnersbury Avenue and the ISL Research Institute.

The main library serves staff and students from EC1 through to Grade 10, while the DP Library provides support to staff and students in Grades 11 and 12.

Demographics
Enrolment by grade/division
Current enrolment figures by division are*:

- EC: 9
- PYP: 102
- MYP: 131
- DP: 64

*(*Figures correct September 2025)*

Library membership
All students and staff have automatic membership of the library upon enrolment/employment.

A new library management system was implemented for rollout in October 2023 which automated the addition and removal of borrower records, alongside a range of other functions, which were previously updated manually.

SECTION 3

Library Operations

Main Library
Staffed from 8.30am -3.30pm daily for student use. EC1-Grade 5 students will have weekly lessons and Grade 6-10 students will use the library independently at break and lunch times, and in class time if booked in by teachers. The library staff also visit classrooms to work with staff and students as required.

College Library
Open while the college is open to students.

Programming
Younger PYP students enjoy a weekly library lesson and storytelling session where they exchange their library books and enjoy time browsing books with a librarian leading the lesson.

Older PYP students also have weekly lessons with a librarian. These lessons are based on a combination of book exchange time, reading and developing research skills in preparation for the PYP Exhibition alongside some storytelling sessions.

MYP students get to use the main library more independently in their break times, but also during lessons when booked by teachers. They also work with the librarians across the curriculum as and when required both independently and when organised with teachers.

DP students have their own separate library and study space at the Diploma College which caters for their more specific needs and is always open to them. This library has regular librarian support and is staffed most of the time.

Special Events
The annual Book Fair runs every March around the date of World Book Day by the Assistant Librarian and with the help of a group of parent volunteers. Any other events, for example, author visits will be booked in line with calendar and budgetary planning.

Special events for the Research Institute are run on a semi-regular basis, depending on the focus of the research and the interests of the students in the group. These events usually involve students taking a morning or a day of timetable to work with their academic mentor visiting from a university but also have included visits to conferences and online webinars to present their research.

Behaviour Expectations
Students are responsible for working with library staff to develop an agreed set of rules and behaviour expectations. These expectations are revisited sporadically throughout the year as needed and are based on the behaviour expectations of the school.

Circulation Policies
The circulation policies have been significantly relaxed. Students have a wide range of needs and requirements in terms of how many books they wish to borrow, what they need access to, how long they might take to read a book, etc. To reflect this, the youngest students who are learning about the circulation process of libraries continue to borrow and return 1 book each week. As students become more independent in their reading, around Grade 3, borrower limits are relaxed, although students are limited to borrowing 1 item at a time in some popular collections, e.g. graphic novels.

This allows for each student to make an individual choice about how many books they would like to borrow at a time. The loan period has also been relaxed to reflect that many students might take longer to read a book, and it is important that they don't feel hurried in their reading. If a book is requested by another student, the borrower is sent a message to ask if they have finished with it and with a reminder to return it at their earliest convenience. Towards the end of each term, messages are sent to all students with a complete list of any books they currently have on loan with a reminder to return any resources they have finished reading.

SECTION 4

Procedures

End of Year
A few weeks before the end of the academic year, notices are sent to all students who have books on loan to remind them that they are to return books that they have finished with, and to check at home for any books that they can't find.
For students who are leaving the school:
Reminder notices are sent to students to return all books before the end of term with a list of the costs of the replacement of the items.
For returning students:
Students are encouraged to return any items that they have finished with but are allowed to borrow books for the holiday.

Lost Materials
If a book cannot be found while on loan, it is marked as LOST on the Library Management System so that there is a record that it was misplaced by the student. These books are often found later, either by the student (or family) or in school, at which time the book is returned on the Library Management System and returned to general circulation by being scanned in the Check-in screen which will mark it as AVAILABLE.
If a book cannot be found while it is not on loan, it is marked as MISSING on the Library Management System so that there is a record that it is not currently where it

belongs. If it is found in a mis-shelved location or returned by a student who did not follow the borrowing procedure correctly, it will be returned to general circulation by being scanned in the Check-in screen which will mark it as AVAILABLE.

Overdues
The ISL Library and Research Centre does not charge students for overdue books and has relaxed all return dates. If a book has been on loan for several weeks, students are encouraged to return it unless they are still reading it, in which case it can be renewed. If a book has been requested by another student or staff member, then a message will be sent to the student with the overdue book to ask them to return it as soon as possible, as someone else is waiting for it.
For EC1-G2 classes, a list of loans is provided to the teacher every week to assist teachers, children and parents with keeping track of loans. For students older than G2, they are provided with their own list of loans as a step towards being more independent in their book selection, borrowing and returns.

Lists of items on loan are circulated to teachers for EC1-G2 classes and to individual borrowers from G3-12 towards the end of every term as a reminder to return all items that are no longer needed.

Disposal
Books and other resources are regularly deselected and disposed of from the collection. The CREW method (Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding) is one of the methods regularly referred to by ISL Library staff during any selection and deselection procedures. This is a particularly useful method as it “makes it easier to routinely remove outdated and unused materials from the collection while also learning where the collection has gaps or needs new items” (Larson, 2012)
These reasons are (but not limited to): damage, contain outdated or damaging information or terminology, no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students, the availability of more suitable material or the needs and demands of the community of users. Further details on collection development, evaluation and weeding can be found in Section 7.

Stocktake
The ISL Library staff regularly conducts stocktake on parts of the collection. Given that the collection is spread across 2 libraries and is also used in other areas of the school, this stocktake is not generally conducted as one event or at a set time in the school year, rather a small section of the catalogue is identified and worked on before having a stocktake run on it. This work is fitted in between other commitments and duties throughout the school year and allows it to be done with minimal disruption to any other library use or availability of the general collection.

Classification
There are a range of classifications used across the collection as follows:

Fiction:

First letter of author surname e.g. B	Picture books in the main library
First letter of author surname and a small purple sticker	Early Fiction (Purple section) short chapter books

e.g. ● B	
JF and first three letters of author surname e.g. JF BLA	Junior Fiction – novels suitable for all primary students
SF and first three letters of author surname e.g. SF SHU	Secondary Fiction – novels suitable for all secondary students
YA and first three letters of author surname e.g. YA ACH	Young Adult – novels suitable for Grade 8 and above
A and first three letters of author surname e.g. A ADA	Adult – novels suitable for Grade 11 and above
Name of language	Books in other languages

Non-Fiction:

Simplified DDC – 3 numbers only e.g. 500	Information books for EC-G2
Mostly simplified DDC – 3 numbers with some limited numbers after decimal point e.g. 551.1	Information books in Main Library *Some items have older labels with additional numbers after decimal and in some cases also author surname suffix. These are being phased out.*
Mostly simplified DDC but with some additional numbers where needed e.g. 943.23	Information books in Diploma Library
Name of language	Books in other languages

Graphic Novels:

GN JF	Graphic novels suitable for Grade 2 and above
GN SF	Graphic novels suitable for Grade 6 and above
GN YA	Graphic novels suitable for Grade 8 and above

Cataloguing

Books published in English are catalogued using Z-Cataloguing and SCIS data enhancement in Oliver v5.

Books published in any other language are going to be catalogued during academic year 2025-26 with a bespoke bilingual catalogue record which is being designed in-house by the librarians. This will allow for books to be searchable in their language of publication and in English to allow for maximum accessibility to students and to reflect the equity of languages at ISL.

SECTION 5

Budget

Budget Categories

The current library budget is split into 3 – PYP/MYP Library, DP Library, Research Institute. These budget lines include curriculum subscriptions which are administered by the Head of Research Centre. A request for an additional budget line for curriculum subscriptions has been submitted for consideration.
Teacher and professional development resources are not itemised in any budget and so these items are currently covered from one of the existing budget lines. There is a strong argument for creating another separate budget line for professional resources and this proposal has been submitted for consideration.

Book Ordering

Some books are purchased from Heath Educational Books. This supplier offers an excellent discount to ISL thanks to a long-standing relationship. This supplier has an IB store and a showroom to visit in Surrey if required. Books are purchased with no processing as this is done in-house.

Occasional orders for books are placed through the ISL Amazon business account. This is mainly for one-off and urgent items that would not arrive in time from the regular supplier and is not the preferred option.

Database Renewals

All databases are renewed annually via the provider. In some cases, the provider is a different company to the owner of the service, for example, JCS Online. When the renewal quotation is sent to the Head of Department, the cost is assessed against usage before a decision is made about renewing it.
Many of the ISL database and online subscriptions are managed through the Library & Research Centre budgets and administered by the Head of Research Centre.

Budget cycle

The ISL budget cycle runs from September – August with an expectation that all materials and resources will be purchased before the end of the school year. The budget proposal is submitted in April/May for the following academic year.

SECTION 6

Library Curriculum

Standards, Scope and Sequence

The librarians draw on good practice, guidelines and standards from a variety of sources to provide students with the best support possible. These sources include CILIP (UK), SLA (UK), ALA (US), ISTE, IFLA and the Australian ALIA. Library Lessons and other curriculum planning are developed using ideas from the above sources alongside the AASL crosswalks, resources shared on professional librarian forums, and often in liaison with classroom teachers.

Academic Integrity
The ISL academic integrity policy is reviewed annually and is available to view via the Policies section of the school website (www.isllondon.org)
ISL London Academic Integrity Policy. The librarians refer to this policy regularly within their work and often draw attention to the content of the policy when working with students and staff.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)
AI is transforming the way we live, work and study. Using AI responsibly requires a combination of well-thought through choices and an understanding of the ethical implications. The librarians are playing a significant role in the understanding of these issues and work with staff, students and parents to develop this further across the school.
With such a disruptive technology comes a wide range of considerations. The safeguarding of students is paramount to every decision made, and the speed with which the technology is developing is creating a level of challenge not seen with many previous tools. To this end, the librarians are undertaking regular training and developing their own levels of understanding and expertise to inform their practice within a school setting. The ISL Artificial Intelligence guidance is due to be published in late 2025 and will be available within the Policies section of the school website.

Inspections and Accreditation
During visits from Ofsted, IB or CIS, the department will provide a portfolio of information including a copy of the library policy, links to recent or current work within the curriculum, Learner Profile, ATLs, Exhibition support, Personal Project support, Extended Essay support, reading lists, evidence of promotional work, and anything else requested. The staff are expected to meet with inspectors, discuss their work, safeguarding role, or anything else deemed to be of interest.

SECTION 7

Collection Management

Collection
The primary language of the collection is English, with small collections in other languages representative of the student population and home language programme. This programme varies in terms of the scope of the number of languages based on a highly mobile student group and so some language collections are more comprehensive than others. These small individual collections make up a significant percentage of the full library collection due to the number of languages incorporated. The multilingual collection is also supplemented by additional resources held in classrooms where the teachers and students also have access. There is also an ebook, audiobook & integrated online magazine collection available to all students and staff.

Selection
Responsibility for the selection of both print and non-print resources rests with the Head of Research Centre but is facilitated by Library & Research Centre staff, other school staff and students. Any member of the school community can request/recommend purchases by completing the “Recommendation for Library Collection” online form.

Staff form: Microsoft Forms

Student form: Microsoft Forms

The Head of Research Centre will review any recommendations and donations, alongside other quality titles or subscriptions that have not been requested, but will add value to the overall collection, either by supplementing the curriculum or for recreational interest.

Every item considered for the collection should meet the following criteria:

- Based on curricular needs
- Accurate and age appropriate in its content
- Promotes diversity & representation
- Free of bias and stereotype
- Contributes to the representation of a variety of viewpoints
- Considered to be a current resource for the subject
- Appealing to the reader
- Cost effective

Supply/purchasing
ISL purchase from a variety of suppliers. Most books are purchased from Heath Educational Books, occasional books and other consumable items are purchased from Amazon and other suppliers are used for online resources and subscriptions. The eBook, Audio Book and online magazine library is Sora by Overdrive. The Library Management System used is Softlink Oliver v5.

Orders
Orders are submitted throughout the year. Database and subscription orders are submitted at the time of the renewal notice being received. Bulk and general orders are added to over time and submitted 2-3 times a year. Individually requested items that are more urgent are purchased at time of request.

Gifts and Donations
ISL Libraries can accept donated books, and this is a common practice, especially when families are relocating. There are some criteria in place for accepting donated materials, mainly centred around the physical condition of the title and the age suitability of the item.

- The Head of Research Centre is ultimately responsible for deciding whether a donated text should be added to the collection or not.

- If a donated title is already held in the library and an additional copy is not needed, the book will be offered to a classroom library or to one of the book swaps operating within the school.
- If a donated title is written in a language other than English, the appropriate Home Language teacher will be consulted as to its appropriateness (age and language) and for more information. In cases where the teacher can use it in their lessons, it can be offered to them. If the teacher agrees that it would be a good addition to the library collection, it will be added.
- Any donations not in a good physical condition will be disposed of or used in a different way, e.g., for art and craft activities, etc.
- Any donations in good condition but not needed within the school environment will be donated to charity or sold to a second-hand book trader.

Deselection and Weeding
Responsibility for the deselection of items remains with the Head of Research Centre. Review of stock is an ongoing process and happens all year round using the CREW method (Continuous Review Evaluation Weeding). There are a variety of reasons for deselecting and weeding items including saving space, saving time, and making the collection more appealing. Offering a carefully curated collection enhances the library's reputation for reliability and currency of sources. It also ensures that those responsible are continuously reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, and this will change over time. While some professionals meet resistance or negative reactions to weeding, it is vital that the person or people responsible for the collection have the final say on this process as they also have a good overview of the entire collection, needs of users, demand, currency of information and how every single resource contributes (or not) to the quality of the overall collection. If an item is undergoing review due to a challenge procedure, the item will remain in circulation until the process is complete, and a decision has been taken.

When items are identified for potential removal, the MUSTIE guidelines are followed:

M = **M**isleading
U = **U**gly
S = **S**uperseded
T = **T**rivial
I = **I**rrelevant
E = May be obtained **E**lsewhere

A more comprehensive set of guidelines can be found in the CREW Weeding Manual (Larson, 2012, pp. 19-22) under the following headlines:

Poor Content
Materials/Books of Poor Appearance
Unused Materials
Checklist of Weeding Factors

Challenging a Resource

- Any concerns regarding a resource in the ISL Research Centre collections shall be reported to the Head of Research Centre in writing via email
- The Head of Research Centre will respond within 10 working days with further information on the resource and its place within the collection.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Head of Research Centre will forward the MS Form for assessment and review of a library resource.
- If the formal request for assessment and review has not been received within 2 weeks of the date sent, the case will be considered closed.
- Access to any challenged resources will not be restricted during the review process.
- Upon receipt of completed challenge documentation, the Head of Research Centre will convene a committee comprised of the Head of Research Centre, two primary teaching representatives and two secondary representatives.
- The committee will meet to discuss the resource and will provide a report including a recommendation on the committee's decision. This report will refer to reviews and age recommendations about the item if this information is available.
- If a challenge is not upheld, further challenges on the same title will not be accepted for 3 academic years
- If a challenge is upheld, the title will be removed from the library catalogue or moved to a different section of the library if appropriate. For example, an item might be moved from Secondary Fiction in the main library to Adult Fiction in the DP Library.
- Only members of the school community (current students, staff, parents) may raise a challenge to any resource held within the ISL Libraries

Microsoft Forms

Instruction for and Responsibilities of the Review and Reconsideration Committee

- The committee shall consist of the Head of Research Centre, two primary representatives, and two secondary representatives.
- The committee shall meet within 2 weeks after the formal challenge has been brought to the attention of the principal.
- The committee shall review the challenged resource and come to a decision as to whether it conforms to the school policy on the selection of library resources and to selection criteria.
- In examining the challenged resource, the committee shall consider the following:
    - critical reviews of the resource in question
    - an opinion of the whole resource, rather than on passages or sections.
    - the value of the resource within the context of the educational programme of the school
    - the views expressed by the person who has challenged the inclusion of the resource in the collection

- The content of the written report may be discussed with the complainant if requested, but the report must be retained by the school as a confidential document, with a copy to be provided to SLT.

SECTION 8

Library Space, Usage, and Scheduling
Priorities are different in each of the library spaces.

Main Library
EC1-Grade 5 classes have their weekly library lessons in this room.
MYP students access this library during morning break and lunchtime independently.
The Research Institute club takes place in this library once weekly after school.
The Dungeons and Dragons club meets in this library once weekly after school.
There are a limited number of timetabled lessons in this library due to space constraints elsewhere.
The rest of the time, the library is available for lesson and event booking and is used by the library staff for other library and routine tasks.

College Library
Grade 11-12 students have access to this library all day every day.
Under normal circumstances, no other lessons are booked in this space, but occasionally there are timetabling limitations which mean that the room is then used and booked for the year at that time. In addition, a small number of students will occasionally attend lessons with a teacher who is off-site, and so these students attend their online lessons from the library using headphones with their devices.

Professional Development Opportunities
A wide range of PD opportunities are available to the librarians at ISL.
Both librarians hold up to date IB Librarian's certificates and attend relevant in-house and whole-school training.
Many good quality free and affordable online opportunities are available. The library staff register for and attend regular online sessions. These provide an excellent opportunity to upskill and learn in a flexible way, but also to extend the scope of the training beyond the traditional sessions and the conventional remit of librarians. This allows for personal and professional interests to be extended very effectively. There are also more flexible opportunities to present and train others within online platforms and this is being actively pursued to further develop the expertise within the department.

Review
A workflow analysis was conducted in April 2022 within the department and in conjunction with HR and SLT to assess whether the current staffing level is adequate and appropriate for the range of competing of demands placed on the staff in post. There are several areas that would run more smoothly with a higher staffing level, but the current staffing level is generally deemed to be adequate. Regular workflow analysis reviews should take place in future to assess whether the staffing level and areas of expertise continues to be adequate for the levels of responsibility and range of tasks within the department.

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At ISL London, Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.