



# STUDENT LIBRARIAN HANDBOOK



Here's how to create, operate, and maintain a Student Librarian program at your school!

- Student Librarian Tasks, Responsibilities, Rewards
- Student Librarian Job Application
- How to Promote Your Library
- Lunch & Break: Student Librarians Go to Work
- How to Manage Your Student Librarian Program

# We Are Student Librarians

## We Operate the Library >

- We manage security, doors, windows, lights, A/C, and computers.
- We manage good behavior and the observance of library rules.
- We manage checkout and book returns.
- We repair damaged books.



## < We Help Other Students

- We find the right book for their reading level and interest.
- We read to and share books with younger students.
- We find the right reference books and materials.

## We Organize the Book Collection >

- We stamp, color-code, and glue card pockets into books.
- We shelve books in an appealing fashion—covers facing out, special interest and series books grouped together.



## < We Improve the Library

- We add posters, murals, and student artwork that celebrate books and reading.
- We create book displays based on an author, theme, or event.

## We Keep the Library Tidy >

- We re-shelve returned books and library materials.
- We tidy the books on the shelves.
- We keep the library clean—sweep the floor, wipe down shelves and book covers.



## < We Promote the Library

- We create shared activities and competitions in the library, especially during school literacy events.
- We support the library at school and in our community.

# Student Librarian Tasks and Responsibilities

## Library Room

Make sure that the library is in order:  
Open and close windows, curtains, blinds.  
Turn lights, A/C, and computers on/off.  
Maintain good behavior of library users.  
Keep furniture and cushions tidy.  
Clean shelves, books, and furniture.  
Sweep the floor and empty the rubbish.

## Book Collection

Know the library layout and where different sections are located.  
Keep color-coded books grouped together.  
Keep series books grouped together.  
Keep books displayed face-out or face-up.  
Keep bookshelves tidy.

## Checkout System

Use the library checkout system to issue and receive returned books.  
Handle book reservations, overdue books and fines, and loan limits.  
Put books needing repair aside for mending.  
Apply labels and color-coded dots to books.  
Help protect library books through proper book handling.

## Assist Library Patrons

Locate suitable books for different grades and reading levels.  
Locate and use reference tools: dictionaries, thesauruses, atlas, and encyclopedia.  
Recognize parts of a book, such as contents page, index, glossary, bibliography.  
Interact positively with others by helping, listening, and answering questions.  
Direct younger readers to the right books.  
Read and/or discuss books with peers.  
Assist librarians and students with internet, photocopier, and printer use.



### Student Librarian Team

Create clearly defined tasks and simple operation.  
Organize flexible rosters and share tasks equally.  
Ensure there is ongoing supervision by teachers and /or library staff.  
Schedule training time for new Student Librarians.  
Timetable regular meetings with the Librarian/Teacher with library responsibility and the Library Team.  
Discuss activities and upcoming events, make suggestions, ask questions.  
Periodically review and update the Student Librarian program.

### Promote the Library and the Collection

Make literacy posters and wall charts.  
Create book displays based on an author, theme, or event.  
Write and/or illustrate reviews or recommendations.  
Contribute to a library newsletter, blog, or library page on school website.  
Talk about good reads in class, during a library visit, or at assembly.  
Help to run library competitions and events, such as quizzes, author visits, Literacy Week, book fairs, and Reading Month.  
Be a library guide for school visitors.

### Improve the Library

Help the Library Team choose new resources for the library.  
Recommend book titles and authors in all genres.  
Use a Suggestions Box to get ideas and opinions from students.

Student Librarian team members (below) at Jones Beupierre Primary School, Dominica



# Student Librarian Job Application

(This is a sample. Download the Word doc at: [www.handsacrossthesea.net/StudentLibrarians.htm](http://www.handsacrossthesea.net/StudentLibrarians.htm))

**Position Description.** You will be part of the team running the library: issuing books and receiving returned books, helping other students use the library, shelving books, tidying the library, and promoting the library, books, and reading.

**Personal Qualities.** You must be reliable, careful, friendly, hard-working, like helping people, good at keeping books in order, able to work without supervision, be a good listener and communicator, and love books and reading.

**Benefits of the Position.** You will gain valuable work experience, new skills, librarian training and certificates, get the chance to take responsibility, receive appreciation from teachers and students, know the satisfaction of doing a good job, and be first to read the new books.

**Expected Outcomes.** You will help make the library an excellent environment for reading and learning, keep the checkout system operating and the bookshelves in order, help other students use the library, and keep the books displayed properly and accessible to all.

I agree to meet the following expectations as a Student Librarian:

- Show up for my shift on time.
- Wear a Student Librarian badge and leave it in the library when my shift is done.
- Encourage students to follow the rules of the library.
- Return books from the Book Return box to the correct place on the shelves
- Check books in and out to students and teachers.
- Tidy the shelves and library furniture, and keep the library clean.
- Encourage all students to read and support the library.

I also agree to the following statements:

- I will uphold the library rules.
- I will always do my best.
- I will always be honest.
- I will help make the library a positive environment for everyone.

I sign this contract knowing what is expected of me as a Student Librarian.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for Applying: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Book and Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference (teacher): \_\_\_\_\_

Reference (parent or guardian): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Lunch and Break: When Student Librarians Go to Work

## Keeping the Library Open During Lunch

Student Librarians are the solution to keeping the library open during lunch. Tips:

- Be cheerful and approachable to everyone using the library, so that they see it as a friendly place to visit
- Encourage students to follow the library and bookhandling rules.
- Help students find the right book.
- Run the checkout desk for books being borrowed and returned.
- Remove books from the Returns Box and sort, so the books are ready to be shelved.
- Put any books needing mending aside to be repaired.
- Sort the books by their color-coded dots and shelve the books in the correct section. Put series books, such as *Magic Tree House* and *Nancy Drew*, together.
- Straighten up and tidy the books on the shelves.
- Fill any empty spaces in the face-out book shelf displays.
- Read a suitable story book to the younger students.
- Ten minutes before closing time, remind students in the library that they need to get ready to leave.
- Spend the last few minutes of lunchtime having a quick tidy-up to finish your duty; put chairs, tables, cushions, and reading corner floor mat in order.
- Collect the rubbish, sweep the floor, dust the books and shelves as needed.

Student Librarian team, Belmont Government School, St. Vincent



# Student Librarian Rewards Are Part of the Job

**Student librarians are positive role models** for everyone. Student Librarians receive acknowledgement and positive reinforcement from the Principal, teaching staff, the Librarian, and the Library Team. Student Librarians are recognized at assembly and through certificates,

awards, and badges, and may receive small prizes (such as stickers, pens, or books) in addition to book-borrowing, photocopier, and internet privileges. And the more that Student Librarians know, the higher their job satisfaction and rewards.

## Bronze Level Skills

- You must know the library layout.
- Maintain order in the library (furniture in place and rubbish removed).
- Tidy library shelves (books upright or some face-out).
- Shelf returned books.
- Choose books for most eye-catching face-out display.

## Gold Level Skills

(includes Silver and Bronze Level Skills)

- You must be confident in shelving resources in all areas of the library, including doing a shelf check.
- Deal with overdues and reserves.
- Be an issuing/returns monitor for a junior class.
- Use a print reference resource (such as an encyclopedia or dictionary).
- Create a display for the library and help change displays.
- Promote books to fellow students in class or assembly.

## Silver Level Skills

(includes Bronze Level Skills)

- You must be able to issue and return a book.
- Open and close the library.
- Check shelves for books in need of repair.
- Write a review of a new book for display in the library.
- Read to students at lunch-time.
- Be a library guide for visitors to your school.



# How to Promote the Library

**One of your challenges** as a Student Librarian, Librarian, or Library Team member is helping your students, teachers, and community appreciate the fun and the benefits of reading and the library. Every school has a unique culture, and you'll need to adapt the ideas below to your school. Remember to discuss each idea with the Principal, and to ask for participation and feedback from teachers.

## Peer Invitation

Keep students informed about the resources and activities of the library. Ask the Principal for a day when Student Librarians, the Librarian, or the Library Team can host the assembly, spotlight the books and resources available in the library, and motivate students to visit the library.

## "Mobile" Library

If students are reluctant to visit the library, take the library to them by setting up mobile lending areas at strategic locations around the school. Members of the library can check out books, and new students can join the library. Be sure to include notices of library events and activities.

## Dramatic and Artistic Presentations

Organize special library presentations around a theme, such as Independence, Black History, or a Religious Holiday. Presentations can take place in the library, if the space is large enough. Invite students to do readings of favorite books, act out a skit, or share artwork.

## Engage the Parents

During PTA meetings, Student Librarians can perform a dramatic presentation about the benefits of literacy and the importance of en-

couraging children to read. Student Librarians, the Librarian, or Library Team members can also speak about the school library.

## Enlist the Teachers

Keep teachers abreast of library activities and ask for their participation. Explain to teachers what types of resources are available to assist them in planning lessons. Create a reading list for teachers featuring books in the library. Ask them to have students visit the library to check out books and write book reports. The

Librarian and/or Student Librarians can help mark the book reports if the task is too much for teachers.

## Reading Competitions and Story Time

Hold monthly reading competitions with prizes (ranging from a week of free lunches to books and school supplies). To encourage participation, ask students for ideas for other competitions (students can contribute ideas through the library's Suggestion Box). Invite older members of the community to the library for story time and to share their folklore tales. Invite local writers, artists, or storytellers to read to and

speak with parents and students.

## Media Outreach & Workshops

Create your library's Facebook page and showcase the resources and activities of the library. Create a newsletter featuring students' work, library resources, and upcoming workshops. Keep students engaged with creative and fun workshops on topics of interest, such as poetry or rap lyrics, fashion, sports, and popular public figures. Workshops can be free or the library can charge a small registration fee to help support the library.

Ask the Principal for a day when Student Librarians, the Librarian, or the Library Team can host morning assembly, spotlight the books and resources available in the library, and motivate students to join and visit the library

# How to Manage the Student Librarian Program

## **My Student Librarian program is very simple.**

I allow any interested student in Grade 3 or above to fill in the application form for Student Librarians. This gives students who do not usually get a chance to lead an opportunity to do so. I have found that students do well and seem to really enjoy this opportunity (I have only had to remove one student from the position).

Students are waitlisted in order of when they return their applications, which encourages them to turn it in promptly. I don't have a deadline to turn it in because I want to encourage any student to become more involved in the library, and it is easy to just put them at the bottom of the list. I post the list in the library and they enjoy coming to look at whose turn it is and figure out how long until it's their turn.

A student's responsibilities are to come in first, take out their class folder, and call students in to return their books and do the check-in paperwork. Depending on the library activity that day, Student Librarians can read aloud to their class or reshelve returned books. After the activity is over they check

books out for their classmates. When every student is done, the Student Librarian can choose their book and make sure the library is tidy. As a reward, I give them a lollipop for their work and a name tag sticker to put on their shirt for the day. Neither of these things are necessary, but they are fun.

I have Student Librarians change every week, and they are only responsible for their own class. I do it this way because that is the easiest to arrange with my teachers, and should allow for them to continue the program when my Peace Corps service is over. I hold a training session for Grade 3 students and just do a 10-minute review for all the higher grades. Training everyone how to check in and out equips the students to run the book checkout on their own.

The Student Librarian program has been very successful at my school—the students are now much more involved in our library.

—*Signe Midelfort-Vognar*  
U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer



Training and graduating a team of Student Librarians at Millet Primary School, St. Lucia



For more ideas on managing your Student Librarian program, read the advice of Melisa Hippolyte, a Grade 4 teacher at Vide Bouteille Primary School on St. Lucia, in the "Best Practices" section of the Hands publication *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K-3)*.