



# TALBOT HEATH SCHOOL “Honour Before Honours”

## APPROPRIATE MATERIALS/LIBRARY POLICY

**Date adopted:** 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Date for next adoption:** Spring Term 2026

**Reviewed by:** Senior School Librarian and Assistant Head Teaching & Learning

### School Aims

Talbot Heath School is founded in Christian principles and we welcome students of all faiths. We adopt an inclusive approach where all members of the community are united in the importance they place on principles, compassion and consideration of others. The school motto is ‘Honour before Honours’ and this underpins the whole community. As such Talbot Heath values and respects all students equally and aims to provide equality of opportunity wherever possible.

Talbot Heath is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The school fulfills its responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents: Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) and the procedures of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership. In addition, staff should be aware of the *Guidance on Political impartiality in schools*, published in February 2022, which sets out clear guidance on each school’s duties in relation to maintaining political balance in schools.

### Appropriate Materials/Library Policy Aim

To ensure that teaching resources and materials used at Talbot Heath are appropriate for the age of our students and are in keeping with the ethos of the school and safeguarding guidelines.

This policy provides guidance for staff when deciding what sort of material is acceptable for use whilst maintaining a balance between the protection of students and the desire for staff to use material they feel will benefit teaching.

It is intended to protect both students and staff and should be read in conjunction with the: Child Protection and Self Harm Policy, Sex Education Policy, Citizenship Policy, Curriculum Policy, Racial Equality Policy, Equality Opportunities Policy and the Homework Policy.

It also outlines a mechanism by which staff can judge materials and, if in doubt, the process by which they could request approval.

The policy applies to all parts of the curriculum and media such as lessons, NEAs, research, practicals, performances, visits and activities, and visiting speakers.

When selecting material/ speakers/ activities, staff should be conscious of the type of material/ task that may be of a controversial nature. Types would include those:

- Which may contain sexual swear words
- Which may contain sexual references
- Which may contain excessive violence
- Which could be offensive to protected groups, as defined by the Equality Act of 2010
- Which may be age inappropriate for some students
- Which may promote political partisanship

### Process

- If staff are in any way unsure about whether their teaching material or resources, or a suggested visit/speaker is appropriate, they should gain approval from the Middle Leader who line-manages their subject area, before teaching this material. Usually, the Middle Leader would consult with colleagues within the SLT, who (sometimes taking external advice) would reach a consensus.

### **Delivery and accuracy of material**

- The teaching of potentially sensitive material should be done with care.
- Students should be made aware of the origin of source / reference material used and, where appropriate, time should be given to discuss how the information is interpreted / question of origin discussed.
- When discussing current issues, accurate and up to date information should be used. Teachers must ensure that they update information before use.

### **Risks of extremism and the Prevent Duty**

Schools are subject to the Prevent Duty under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Talbot Heath will:

- Provide a safe space in which children and staff can understand and discuss sensitive topics, such as terrorism and extremist ideas, thus building resilience to radicalisation.
- Nonetheless ensure that where there are concerns that a student is expressing extremist views and is vulnerable to radicalisation, requirements of the Prevent Duty, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, are followed.

### **Talbot Heath Libraries**

The libraries provide access to high quality resources for students and staff across both phases of the school in order to support the school community in achieving excellence, both inside and outside of the classroom. They provide a means to access these resources through the library website. The libraries support reading for pleasure to encourage and support personal growth and character development. The continuing emphasis on independent learning and investigative approaches mean that the libraries have a role within the school, not only in provision of resources, but also in how to research effectively. The Senior library is always manned and because of its more informal nature it can provide a safe area, a listening ear and a breathing space for those who might need it. The Junior library can only be accessed with adult supervision and is not manned at all times, allocated slots are provided during fortnightly lesson times and weekly lunchtimes for pupils to visit.

### **Access and inclusion:**

- The libraries are inclusive and welcoming to all.
- The libraries will support all students, staff and other members of the school community through their services and resources.
- The libraries will maintain opening hours that provide access to students and staff throughout the school day.
- The libraries will promote, support and encourage reading across the school. This is currently being done by a range of activities including celebrating World Book Day, participating in WABA, the local book award with other local schools, a range of Book and Creative Writing Groups and by participating in the annual Readathon event. In addition, both libraries host classes participating in class reading activities, including English classes doing silent reading in the senior school.
- Students on reduced timetables use the Senior School library for their study periods, as do those who need to work outside of their classroom environment, e.g. to take tests away from the rest of their class. The senior school library provides suitable extracurricular opportunities for students.
- The senior school library will also maintain links with external groups, services and partners, which are fostered as appropriate, in order to enhance and support the library's effectiveness. These may include professional networks, public libraries, other schools, local businesses and institutions, vendors and publishers.
- The risk assessments for the senior school library will be reviewed annually, by the librarian.

### **Privacy:**

The Library will not disclose details of student loan histories or resource requests to outside parties. The Library will not disclose details of the same to parents or guardians unless:

- The item is more than one month overdue and the student hasn't offered a mitigating reason to the Librarian.
- There is a safeguarding concern, in which case all of the relevant information will be shared with the DSL and safeguarding team.
- An appropriate request is made under GDPR.

#### **Collection development and management:**

It is believed that the libraries across the school have a significant role to play in facilitating access to different perspectives and points of view and that library materials can offer a safe, monitored way to encounter and explore topics, challenging or otherwise. Reading widely fosters the development of curiosity, empathy and understanding

The Librarian will be responsible for the collection development in the Senior School library and will operate in collaboration with the Head of Junior School and Literacy Lead for the library in the Junior School and the SLT.

- The Senior School library collection is selected to complement and support both the curriculum and reading requests across the school, taking into consideration the suggestions and requests of staff and students.
- Factors considered during this selection process will include, but are not limited to: educational value, relevance to the curriculum and to independent research, accuracy, relevance to the community, representing the student voice and interests, accessibility, diversity, format and style.
- The Libraries endeavour to hold a collection of sufficient size and scope, in a variety of formats, to support the school. This will follow guidelines published by the professional School Librarians' Association and the librarians' professional body, CILIP. This includes a recommended replacement rate and stock age of less than ten years. This replacement rate reflects achievable levels once the stock is in an appropriate state of timeliness, interest, recent publication, good repair.
- The Libraries will not knowingly accommodate materials that are reasonably felt to be discriminatory or of an otherwise inappropriate nature, although exceptions may occur where independent study calls for these. In this case the Library will also supply materials which balance extreme viewpoints as it sees the value of providing materials which challenge established ways of thinking for 6<sup>th</sup> Formers. Similarly, materials of merit should not be excluded simply for containing challenging content, or for discussing adult themes because the opportunity to use them as discussion points will be lost. The loan of such materials will be in line with age recommendations.
- The Librarian will monitor budget expenditure and conform to deadlines from the Finance Department for budget requests for the following year. This might include additional funding for specific agreed projects as well as maintaining an awareness of general market trends for the resources it purchases.
- The stock of both libraries will be regularly reviewed for relevance, accuracy, condition and appeal. Items will be weeded and replaced or updated where necessary.

#### **Online provision:**

- Online access to materials in the library can be made via the school library website, this includes both physical and digital resources.
- A number of databases, online magazines, websites have also been purchased through subscription and made available to students and staff via the library website. These materials are purchased because of their very large information collections reflecting material which has been monitored for suitability and educational content in a timely way and often geared specifically to curricular material suitable for national exams.

#### **Donations:**

Both Libraries will be grateful to those who offer donations of material for use by members of the school. Donations may be added to collections across the school, including those in the Junior and Senior School

libraries, in boarding, or in the Archive Collection, either housed in the Mary Broad Library or in the Archive rooms in the school.

#### **Resource restriction:**

- Each library conforms to borrowing age restrictions. Junior School students, with the exception of Yr6, do not have access to Senior School material.
- The website shows recommended age appropriateness for individual library items. Fiction items are all marked for recommended age appropriateness. DVDs also follow British Board of Film Classification guidelines.
- Students are encouraged to manage their own reading choices and be aware of their own reactivity towards certain content. Library and teaching staff offer guidance and support, to help ensure that no child has access to age inappropriate material.
- The School libraries' primary service is to help students access age-appropriate materials. Staff may at times support student choices by providing context for books and articles which they may wish to borrow.

#### **Reconsideration of resource and borrower use:**

Any library stakeholder who has a concern about the inclusion of certain material in the library collections should, in the first instance, approach the Librarian. If necessary a formal reconsideration request may then be made. If there are concerns about multiple resources then separate concerns should be raised, in the manner specified above. A reconsideration process will follow which would include the Librarian and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Resources will not be removed from the Library during the reconsideration process. Following this process one of the following actions will be taken:

- The resource will remain in the Library, with no action taken
- The resource may have a guidance note added to the library catalogue and/or somewhere on the resource itself.
- The resource may be stored away from general student use and students directed to it by teaching staff.
- The resource will be removed from the collection.

The individual or organisation who made the reconsideration request will be informed in writing of the decision made. After a resource has been subject to this process, it will not be eligible for further reconsideration for a further three years.

#### **Overdues procedure:**

Borrowers are expected to comply with the prescribed lending requirements, including care and return of resources.

- The library will provide reminders and notifications about overdue loans via form tutors. If, at the end of the year, the material has not been returned to the library parents will be asked either for a replacement or for payment for a replacement which will include administrative costs. This will be added to their bill.
- The library may refuse to issue items if a student has a prior record of repeatedly misusing library materials. This can be reversed if the pupil shows more responsibility and awareness of these materials.

#### **Evaluation:**

The Librarian is consistently evaluating the effectiveness of the service, including looking for weaknesses and taking steps to correct them. Large projects and changes to procedures are presented first to line management who, as a member of SLT, will have a broader appreciation of how these will fit into the school procedures. In some cases, Heads of Departments/Faculties may also be approached.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be carried out by the Librarian, in consultation with line management and the Head of Junior School. A more formal overall review will be carried out annually.