

Praise for *The Networked Librarian*

‘Essential reading for every school, teacher and leader.’

Anthony Seldon, author, historian and educationalist

‘Good school librarians are at the very heart of a school. What defines them, aside from the passion they have for their work, is their ability to build relationships, to collaborate and to be positive agents of change for students, staff and the wider community. This wonderful book is not just a call to arms or a celebration of and for the profession, it is a highly pragmatic guide that is a must-read for librarians, educators and school leaders everywhere.’

Dr Richard Gerver, President of the School Library Association

‘*The Networked Librarian* forms a comprehensive handbook that would be valuable for new school librarians starting out in the field, or for more seasoned library workers looking to target specific areas of their practice for professional development. Structured through the lens of leadership and management, the book integrates theoretical work and hands-on potential scenarios to offer practical advice for working with every possible school stakeholder. A valuable addition to school librarian literature!’

Dr Alison Hicks, Lecturer and Programme Director, Library and Information Studies, UCL

‘Sarah has been a long-term friend of the National Education Union and has shared her immense knowledge and experience with our Librarian Members’ Network, who have been inspired by her insightful, practical and positive CPD sessions. We wish Sarah every success with this new book and look forward to continue working with her in the future.’

Cara Batt, Professional Development Support Officer, National Education Union

‘*The Networked Librarian* is an invaluable resource for all school librarians who want to develop collaborative relationships and engage more widely. Starting with the importance of teamwork, Sarah Pavey draws on academic theory and practical experience to show how communication with stakeholders – students, parents, teachers and senior leaders – can put the library at the heart of teaching and learning in schools and can foster wider connections with public and academic libraries, community organisations and online networks that will ultimately enrich our students’ learning experience as well as our own professional development.’

Nick Cavender, Chair, CILIP School Libraries Group

‘True collaboration is at the heart of successful school library programs, from designing instructional strategies to working with colleagues within and beyond the school. As Sarah Pavey most eloquently states, “interconnectedness brings about immense benefits for the school, and for us as school librarians”. Pavey sets out comprehensive strategies for school librarians to become true “networking agents”, clearly explaining theoretical frameworks and practical strategies and illustrating them with realistic scenarios. A must-read for all school librarians!’

Anita Brooks Kirkland, Chair, Canadian School Libraries

‘A must-read for school librarians everywhere and beyond! Explaining the importance of relationships, communication and networking for school librarians giving practical examples throughout putting the theory into the school library context. All with the aim of improving student learning and supporting the school’s mission; including sections on working through change, dealing with difficult people and working with senior leaders, governors, inspectors, carers and other members of the school community.’

Val Sawyer, Principal Librarian, Education Library Service, Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries, Nottinghamshire

‘*The Networked Librarian* is an invaluable guide for school librarians, emphasising the transformative power of collaboration. It brilliantly underscores the librarian’s pivotal role in fostering connections, collaboration, and co-creation within the school community. This book encourages school librarians to see themselves as leaders, enabling them to deal with change and become masters of communication. A must-read for library specialists, it inspires a dynamic approach to librarianship, empowering school librarians to elevate their role as catalysts for positive change within educational environments.’

Elizabeth Hutchinson, trainer and adviser at Elizabethahutchinson.com

The Networked Librarian

Every purchase of a Facet book helps to fund CILIP's advocacy,
awareness and accreditation programmes for
information professionals.

The Networked Librarian

**The School Librarian's Role in
Fostering Connections,
Collaboration and Co-Creation
Across the Community**

Sarah Pavey

© Sarah Pavey 2024

Published by Facet Publishing
c/o British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
www.facetpublishing.co.uk

Facet Publishing is wholly owned by CILIP:
the Library and Information Association.

The author has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as author of this work.

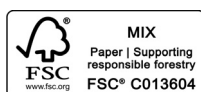
Except as otherwise permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, with the prior permission of the publisher, or, in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of a licence issued by The Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to Facet Publishing, c/o British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB.

Every effort has been made to contact the holders of copyright material reproduced in this text, and thanks are due to them for permission to reproduce the material indicated. If there are any queries, please contact the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-78330-620-6 (paperback)
ISBN 978-1-78330-621-3 (hardback)
ISBN 978-1-78330-622-0 (PDF)
ISBN 978-1-78330-623-7 (EPUB)

First published 2024



Typeset from author's files by Flagholme Publishing Services in
10/13 pt Palatino Linotype and Open Sans.
Printed and made in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY.

Contents

About the Author	ix
Foreword – The Network is the Message, by Sheila Corral	xi
Acknowledgements	xix
Abbreviations	xxi
Introduction	xxiii
1 Understanding the Dynamics of Working Relationships	1
Defining teams	1
Preparing to work as a team in practice	2
Applying theoretical models in practice	7
2 Working Through Change	29
Adapting to change	29
The Change Curve	31
Implementing change	35
3 Communication	53
Choosing the correct communication channel	53
Encoding and decoding	55
Verbal communication	55
Tone of voice and listening skills	58
Body language	60
Cultural differences	61
Understanding the dynamics of conversation	62
Communication styles	64
4 Dealing with Difficult People	73
What is challenging behaviour and why does it arise?	73
Working through conflict	76
Managing a difficult meeting	82
Types of behaviour	86

5 Librarians as Leaders	93
What is leadership?	96
Why is leadership important?	97
Leadership in practice	102
Leading a library team	107
Leading other teams	110
6 Working with Students	113
Adapting communication style for student interaction	114
Ensuring a safe and welcoming environment	117
Working with student library helpers	120
Behaviour management	122
Working with students who have special educational needs	128
7 Working with Teachers	133
Why is collaboration with teaching staff important?	136
Overcoming barriers to collaboration with teachers	137
Teacher-librarian collaboration in practice	141
8 Working with Senior Leaders, School Governors and the Inspection Team	147
Senior leadership teams	147
School governors	154
School inspectors	159
9 Working with Parents, Guardians and Carers	163
Why is it important to work with parents, guardians and carers?	163
How can we be involved with parents, guardians and carers?	166
Parents as volunteers	171
Parents as advocates	175
Communicating with parents	176
Dealing with difficult parents	177
Effective parent teams	180
10 Working with Other Members of the School Community	183
Working with support staff for student achievement and wellbeing	184
Working with support staff for effective library management	193
11 Building Networks	205
Competencies for networking	205
Creating networks within our schools	209
Creating and using external networks	217
References	229
Index	237

About the Author

Sarah Pavey has worked as a school librarian for over 20 years and now has her own education training and consultancy business SP4IL. With degrees in biochemistry and information science she is an established author and a regular speaker at conferences for both school libraries and on wider education issues. She holds fellowships with CILIP and the Royal Society of Arts. She is also a member of CILIP national committees for school libraries and information literacy. Her training courses, both home and abroad, on a range of topics including team leadership, are practical and acclaimed for being rooted in theory. Currently Sarah is working with university colleagues from five European countries as part of an Erasmus project developing a database of online resources and picture books for teaching information literacy competencies. Sarah is also an accomplished musician, having played at venues from the Royal Albert Hall to various village halls with her ceilidh bands and folk groups.

Foreword – The Network is the Message

Collaboration is back on the agenda for school librarians, but with a new look and feel. Networks and networking are the keys to success for the school librarian in the 21st century. Sarah Pavey's new book is a timely reminder that the service model for libraries has changed and so have the core competencies of library work. Librarianship today involves more than developing collections, organising information, delivering services and managing facilities. Our profession is all about making connections, designing interactions, building trust and forming partnerships – in other words, librarianship is about *facilitating* and *managing relationships*. But librarians in education must now engage in these activities on a much larger stage than before, working across institutional boundaries, reaching out to local communities and putting relationships with learners, colleagues and other allies at the centre of their practice. *The Networked Librarian* gives us the blueprint for success in a continually evolving educational landscape.

Collaboration is often claimed as a core value of librarianship. University librarian Jim Neal says, 'Cooperation is part of the professional DNA of libraries' (2022). And indeed we have a long history of libraries and librarians co-operating through resource-sharing and information networks. In the past our culture of collaboration was a strategy of last resort when there was no other way to get hold of hard-to-find material. Then we found there were everyday tasks that could be performed at a higher standard and lower cost by working with others via co-operative cataloguing and purchasing consortia. Librarians in education also realised the benefits of collaborating with subject teachers, and not just in support roles as reference specialists or information consultants – teaching librarians expect to be accepted as professional peers and equal partners in the learning process from curriculum design to classroom instruction and assignment help.

A huge amount has been written on teacher-librarian collaboration with work published in magazines, books, journals, conferences and other outlets. The literature contains notable scholarship that has gained attention beyond

the school library arena, particularly the taxonomies and models of David Loertscher and Patricia Montiel-Overall, which have evolved and developed over several decades with support from professional associations and government agencies (Loertscher and Zepnik, 2019; Montiel-Overall and Grimes, 2013). Scholars have also discussed building relations with school principals and administrators to facilitate involvement in lesson planning and curriculum development. Others report collaborations with public libraries to mitigate summer learning loss and partnerships with local universities to facilitate student transition to higher education. There is much to value and use in this body of work, but it doesn't tell the whole story – hence the need for a new book that gives us a fuller picture and a fresh perspective on both the Who and the How of collaboration.

For despite all the insights provided by research and reflection over the years, different sources tell us that librarians continue to have mixed results with their collaborative efforts, especially when trying to collaborate with people in other professions and disciplines like teachers, technologists, scientists and even humanists. Various reasons have been offered for this state of affairs ranging from skills deficits and capacity issues to our professional insularity and transactional mindset. The abilities required for collaboration tend to be poorly covered in professional competency statements, scattered around under multiple headings and also inaccurately labelled in the library literature as 'soft skills', indicating fundamental gaps in understanding that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Another concern is that in many cases current library partnership plans are too limited for the situation we find ourselves in today.

So the task for our profession is not just about getting better at what we are currently doing (or trying to do). We need to rethink both *who* we routinely work with and *how* we work with others. As other professions have recognised, this is about *Working Differently Together* (Dodkin, 2021), which makes the requirement for competency development and up-skilling more urgent as librarians become involved in new relationships and new ways of working, including taking on new leadership roles. Because the world has moved on and many of us are still playing catch-up. We now live, work and play in a *network society*, where the internet serves as both the technological basis and the organisational form for our global knowledge economy (Castells, 2001). Services in all sectors have evolved from standalone operations to networked organisations. By invoking the network paradigm, Pavey successfully recasts the narrative for school librarians and explains clearly how they can make vital connections and develop new collaborations to facilitate meaningful co-creation involving their whole community.

Networks have always been part of our personal, social and working lives, but they have now moved centre-stage. Networking enables you to connect with colleagues who share your interests and forms that vital first step towards identifying contacts with partnership potential within or beyond your institution. In the network society, collaboration is no longer an option, a strategic choice when we don't have the resources to do things on our own or realise that we can do things better by working with others. Collaboration is now a necessity, an operational imperative in a world where personal computing, networking technologies, internet access and online services have combined to create a *participatory culture* that has shifted the way we do things and the way we think about things from individual to collective activity. Society has moved from an ethos of 'doing it yourself' to one of 'doing it together' (Jenkins, Ito and boyd, 2016). Librarianship was once defined as 'managing information resources for people' (Line, 1996), but now it is about *managing information resources with people*.

Multi-partner collaborative relationships that cut across institutional boundaries are now the norm in industry, government and education. Business leaders, public-sector managers and community organisers know that networks and networking are the way to get things done in the sharing economy. Network competence and networking skills have become must-have capabilities for organisations and individuals. Professional success in all sectors of society depends on knowing how to create and use operational, personal and strategic networks (Ibarra and Hunter, 2022). Technology advances and cultural changes have radically altered the context for our work, requiring us to deepen, broaden and scale-up our collaborative practices – closer working with more partners across a wider array of activities and tasks. This looks like a challenging assignment, especially for solo librarians, but sole practitioners can arguably gain the most from sharing their responsibilities, tasks, knowledge, authority and power with a diverse range of stakeholders serving as co-workers.

Many librarians are moving in the right direction by using social media to connect with students and teachers, share library and learning resources, collaborate on projects with colleagues, and build community around particular issues. However, becoming a *networked librarian* involves a lot more than knowing how to use social networking sites to engage students and enhance learning. Social networking is more than individuals or groups connecting and interacting with each other through online platforms. The web has given us new tools, but old techniques are still crucial, including in-person and face-to-face communication and conversations. Participatory culture has turned work, learning, media, research and politics into egalitarian social practices that blur traditional boundaries between work and

play, learner and teacher, consumer and producer, citizen and expert, private and public.

Savvy librarians are already using participative practices such as co-design, crowdsourcing and hackathons to involve students, researchers and citizens in projects, processes and programming in both physical places and virtual communities. Edit-a-thons, gamification and makerspaces are other examples of the way that imaginative librarians are embedding learning in participative events and social venues that engage and empower participants, while also developing their own interpersonal and collaborative abilities. We see the same shift towards socially engaged practice in the participatory pedagogies adopted in many educational institutions, including constructivist, co-operative, collaborative, community-centred, connectivist and constructionist learning in classrooms, in library learning environments and in settings beyond school boundaries.

School and public library spaces are functioning as hubs of *connected learning* that is peer-supported, interest-driven, academically relevant, production-centred and openly networked around a shared purpose (Ito and Martin, 2013). Innovative school librarians are looking beyond their established networks of contacts to cultivate partnerships for learning in the wider community and not just with public and higher education libraries. They are initiating collaborative relationships with government agencies, non-profit organisations and social enterprises, teaming up with social workers, family hubs, recycling programmes, community arts projects, cultural institutions and science centres in order to facilitate broader and deeper student learning and promote community health and wellbeing.

These are 'radical collaborations' that 'demand the blurring of lines among the educator, student, and community partner as everyone in a learning community functions as both a learner and a teacher' (Harada and Coatney, 2020). The term *radical collaboration* comes from the field of design thinking and is used to denote boundary-crossing teamwork that uses diverse perspectives to solve problems, improve products or co-create knowledge. As education at all levels moves from student-centred to community-centred approaches for lifelong learning and global stewardship, educators – including librarians – need to extend their networks of collaborators beyond their traditional partners and be prepared to reach out to the unfamiliar or even uncomfortable to achieve more together than they could separately by leveraging collective strengths.

The Networked Librarian adopts an expansive view of school library collaboration without neglecting the central issue of librarian–teacher collaboration. Pavey devotes a whole chapter to the issues and challenges of forming, nurturing and sustaining relationships with subject teachers, but she

makes it clear that teachers are only one group of many that school librarians must enlist, engage and encourage to play their part in facilitating the intellectual, social and emotional development of students. Other chapters cover working with students, with school leaders and governors, with parents and families, and with the many other members of the school community who support and help students (classroom assistants, learning mentors, specialist counsellors, cover supervisors, building managers, finance officers and so on), as well as reaching out to the local community and professional colleagues.

But in order to develop any form of collaboration, radical or otherwise, you have to initiate and create a relationship – which is why library thought leaders have been asserting that ‘we are in the relationship business’, which in turn means giving more attention to *communication* as ‘the fuel that drives relationships’ (Weisburg, 2022). This brings us back to the notion of *network competence*, a concept that originated in the business world, but has now been defined as a generic competence and graduate attribute for students at European universities. Network competence has individual and organisational aspects and is ‘significantly more demanding and disciplined’ than networking skills (Ala-Luukko and Pirnes, 2007). It includes both the ability to initiate, manage and use a portfolio of interpersonal and interorganisational *relationships* in pursuit of personal and organisational goals *and* the ability to improve your position in a network regarding access to resources and activities.

So, proficiency in our emergent connected, collaborative, co-creating environment requires both technical and behavioural abilities, covering communication and interaction, groupwork and teamwork, co-operation and partnership, change management and conflict management. Irrespective of whether we regard these competency areas as ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills, or ‘scientific’ and ‘humanistic’ knowledge, the future success of school libraries undoubtedly depends on giving proper attention to interpersonal capacity in the education, training and development of school librarians. This is where Pavey’s book really breaks new ground and makes a major contribution to the literature on library collaboration. By opening the book with five chapters covering the theory and practice of group dynamics, change management, communication styles, human behaviour and team leadership, Pavey sends a clear signal that we cannot go on treating interpersonal abilities as taken-for-granted skills of library practitioners.

The Networked Librarian offers a refreshing perspective on collaboration for school librarians, informed by theoretical models and enriched by practical examples, all drawn from first-hand experience. By casting her net wide, Sarah Pavey provides a more rounded picture of the multiple productive

relationships that school librarians can and must facilitate to enable student learning, growth and wellbeing in the 21st century. She also explains how to go about creating successful working relationships from the ground up, offering us a primer on the basics of communication and teamwork, along with advice on navigating change in the workplace and dealing with disruptive behaviour in groups. There are many publications on collaboration for school librarians and a few also on communication, but this book is the first to integrate these foundational elements of library work into a readymade toolkit for practitioners in the network world. I commend it to all who care about the future of school librarianship.

References

- Ala-Luukko, L. and Pirnes, H. (2007) Network Competence. In Kallioinen, O. (ed.) *The Competence-Based Curriculum at Laurea*, 76–89, Laurea Publications, www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/114668.
- Castells, M. (2001) *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*, Oxford University Press.
- Dodkin, L. (2021) *Working Differently Together: Progressing a One Workforce Approach*, Health Education England, www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HEE_MDT_Toolkit_V1.1.pdf.
- Harada, V. H. and Coatney, S. (eds) (2020) *Radical Collaborations for Learning: School Librarians as Change Agents*, Libraries Unlimited.
- Ibarra, H. and Hunter, M. (2022) How Leaders Create and Use Networks, *Harvard Business Review*, Fall special issue, 90–7.
- Ito, M. and Martin, C. (2013) Connected Learning and the Future of Libraries, *Young Adult Library Services*, **12** (1), 29–32, http://leonline.com/yals/12n1_fall2013.pdf.
- Jenkins, H., Ito, M. and boyd, d. (2016) *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce, and Politics*, Polity Press.
- Line, M. B. (1996) What Do People Need of Libraries, and How Can We Find Out?, *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, **27** (2), 77–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00048623.1996.10754961>.
- Loertscher, D. V. and Zepnik, J. (2019) Coteaching Revisited: The Replication Study, *Teacher Librarian*, **47** (1), 40–7, <https://researcharchive.canadianschoollibraries.ca/2020/08/10/coteaching-revisited-the-replication-study>.
- Montiel-Overall, P. and Grimes, K. (2013) Teachers and Librarians Collaborating on Inquiry-Based Science Instruction: A Longitudinal Study, *Library & Information Science Research*, **35** (1), 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2012.08.002>.
- Neal, J. (2022) Message from IRRT [International Relations Round Table] chair, *International Leads*, **37** (1), 4–5,

www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org.rt/files/content/intlleads/leadsarchive/202203-rev.pdf.

Weisburg, H. K. (2022) *The Art of Communication: A Librarian's Guide for Successful Leadership and Advocacy*, Libraries Unlimited.

Sheila Corral
former Professor of Library & Information Science,
University of Pittsburgh

Acknowledgements

My thanks to all the school librarians who have written about their practice and shared to the information community without whose contributions this book would not have been possible. Also to all the training companies I have worked for enabling me to understand the theory of team development, team management, communication skills and networking strategies and learn to transform this academic knowledge into practice.

Thank you too to Sheila Corral for an excellent foreword, to my very patient publisher Pete Baker at Facet and his amazing editing team.

Abbreviations

AASL	American Association of School Librarians
ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ADKAR Model	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement Model; a change model
ALA	American Library Association
CILIP	Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (UK)
CPD	continuing professional development
EAL	English as an additional language
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
LMS	library management system
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
MILA	Media and Information Literacy Alliance
OCB	organisation citizenship behaviour
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills; the UK schools inspection organisation
PDCA	plan-do-check-act: a change model comprising plan, do, check, act
SEN	special educational needs
SENDCo	special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator
SLA	School Library Association (UK)
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TLC Model	Teacher and Librarian Collaboration Model; Montiel-Overall's continuum of collaborative practices

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, the role of a school librarian extends far beyond managing books and resources. We have transitioned from being mere custodians of books to becoming facilitators of knowledge, information literacy and innovation. We hold a pivotal position in fostering connections, collaboration and co-creation across the entire school community and beyond. Whether you are a solo librarian or a line manager, in this book we will discover the value of these endeavours and find practical insights and strategies to help us develop along the pathway to becoming a networked librarian.

One of the primary focuses of the book is the importance of collaboration and team building. It recognises that school librarians can accomplish far more when they form effective teams, whether they are working alone or leading a group. By harnessing the power of collaboration, we can tap into the diverse strengths of team members, resulting in enhanced creativity, improved problem solving, and a more enriched learning environment for students. Collaboration is the key to unlocking the full potential of the school library and its services! The impact of effective team building extends beyond our library, as it fosters a culture of partnerships throughout the school. Our students benefit from interdisciplinary projects and a holistic approach to education, while our teachers gain access to additional resources and support, leading to innovative teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

Drawing on the theory of group dynamics, team roles and dysfunctions through vignettes and real-life examples, we see how these models manifest within a school library context in practice. By identifying these aspects and effectively managing situations that arise, we can navigate the challenges and foster positive outcomes to create great teams with real impact on teaching and learning. Even a solo school librarian is deeply involved in teamwork. We partner and interact with various individuals and teams across the school. We may lead or be part of a library team. This book takes a comprehensive approach by exploring the perspectives of librarians as both leaders and members within different teams. There is something for everyone.

These days librarians often find themselves in leadership roles, whether leading a team of library staff or chairing committees within the school. Being a leader is not the same as being a manager, as this book will illustrate. Many international school librarian organisations advocate that leadership should be a core element of any job description. This book provides insights into essential leadership qualities, such as delegation, continuing professional development (CPD), staff progression and appraisal. By honing our leadership abilities, we can inspire our teams to excel, fostering a culture of growth and continuous improvement. The impact of effective leadership reaches far and wide. We can become catalysts for change, driving innovation, and advocating for the library's role in achieving the school's broader goals. We can influence decision-making processes, ensure the alignment of library services with the school's mission, and raise awareness of the library's contributions to the educational community.

However, in this book we will also learn about the importance of librarians as members or leaders of other teams within the school community. We might take charge of a cross-curricular project on the introduction of technology such as e-books. This position calls for collaboration with different stakeholders, for example, teachers, managers, parents, support staff and community members. This book provides practical guidance on how we can engage effectively with these diverse groups, adapt their communication styles, and understand their values and priorities. By recognising the unique dynamics of each team and applying appropriate strategies, we can build strong relationships, facilitate collaboration, and promote a shared vision of education within the school community.

Furthermore, the book acknowledges that change is a constant in the educational landscape. School librarians must navigate through these changes with agility and resilience, ensuring that they remain at the forefront of educational innovation. By understanding the personal and professional impact of change, school librarians can adapt, embrace new opportunities, and facilitate a smooth transition for their school community. Change is an inevitable part of working in a school environment, often imposed without warning. As school librarians we are often confronted with unexpected shifts whether that is due to a change of line manager or just a sudden commandeering of the library space for a meeting and all the upheaval that involves. Advice in this book equips librarians with tools to navigate change successfully. By understanding the personal and professional impact of change and embracing it as an opportunity for growth, we can minimise stress and facilitate progress (yes even a room takeover!). Our embracing of adaptability and resilience have a significant influence on the school community. If we manage change effectively, we can ensure that the library

remains at the forefront of educational advancements. We can inspire students and teachers alike to embrace new technologies, teaching methods and learning opportunities, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and adaptability no matter what the challenge imposed at short notice.

Effective communication lies at the heart of successful collaboration as we converse with various stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents and support staff. By being adept, understanding and adapting the intricacies of communication styles, including verbal and non-verbal cues, and active listening, we can foster stronger relationships, promote collaboration, and convey the value and importance of our work successfully. Students feel heard and understood, teachers receive tailored support and guidance, and parents are engaged and involved in their child's educational journey. Furthermore, the library becomes a hub of information sharing, where ideas are exchanged, and knowledge is co-created.

While collaboration and teamwork can be rewarding, it can also present challenges, particularly when dealing with difficult individuals. Here we will understand how to apply strategies to manage difficult situations assertively. We examine common issues that may arise with various members of a library team, students, teachers, managers, parents and support staff, providing real-life scenarios and resolutions. Additionally, we offer insights into behaviour management techniques and the importance of fostering positive relationships, even in challenging circumstances. By applying conflict resolution techniques and effective problem-solving skills, we can maintain positive relationships. Thus, we create a culture of respect and open communication, encouraging constructive dialogue and fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all members of the school community.

Engagement with students, teachers and parents is a cornerstone of the school librarian's role. The book delves into different ways in which we can build meaningful relationships, promote reading for pleasure and information, collaborate with teachers to enhance lesson planning and research skills, and involve parents in the library's initiatives. By nurturing these connections, we can create a vibrant learning community that supports student achievement and fosters a love of learning. We will discover practical approaches for building trust, planning the environment, and adapting to our unique challenges of only seeing students informally. Moreover, we explore virtual environments, a legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the importance of building relationships in a digital age through concepts like swift trust. These strategies can have a profound impact when developing our networking outreach. But we should reach out and build networks with other support staff too, such as our IT departments, special educational needs

and disabilities co-ordinators (SENDCoS), finance officers, compliance officers, building facilitators, catering staff and various professionals such as counsellors within the school ecosystem. By engaging with the wider professional community and local community, we can forge connections, share best practices and become influencers, ultimately raising the profile of our library services.

Building networks beyond the immediate school community is another essential aspect of our role as a school librarian. We then become gatekeepers and introducers, connecting students, teachers and community members with valuable resources, experts and opportunities. These connections expand our reach and influence, enrich the resources available to the school community, and open doors to new opportunities for collaboration and learning. By establishing connections with libraries, educational institutions and professional associations, we can access a broader range of resources, share best practices and stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field. Creating connections with bookshops and suppliers allows us to gain access to a wide range of books, digital resources and educational materials. We can stay informed about new releases, negotiate discounts and receive valuable recommendations for quality resources. Collaborations with local businesses can result in partnerships that support fundraising initiatives, sponsor library events or provide unique learning experiences for students. Working with community organisations, such as museums, art galleries and environmental groups, allows us to expand the educational opportunities available to students. All these partnerships foster community engagement, encourage lifelong learning, and help students connect their classroom knowledge to real-world experiences. It is an exciting and rewarding process!

Networking with universities and other higher education institutions offers numerous benefits to school librarians. Librarians can tap into the expertise of university librarians, attend professional development workshops or conferences, and access research databases and scholarly resources. Collaborating with university faculty members can lead to joint projects, research opportunities and guest lectures that enrich the educational experience for both students and teachers. These connections enhance the librarian's professional development, provide valuable resources, and strengthen the library's role as an educational partner within the broader academic community.

So, by applying the insights and strategies presented in this book, we can cultivate valuable connections, foster collaboration and co-create positive experiences that benefit our wider school communities. With its emphasis on real-life examples and actionable advice, this book will help librarians striving to make a positive and lasting impact on education. We need to embrace our

role as networked librarians, and transform our libraries into vibrant centres of learning, innovation and connection, ultimately shaping the future of education. Yes, it is scary, yes, we may need to step out of our comfort zone, but it is so rewarding, and this book will show you how it is achievable in practice, no matter your situation. Be brave and enjoy the journey!