A SNAPSHOT OF A SCHOOL LIBRARY DURING COVID-19

STUDENTS NEED SCHOOL LIBRARIES CAMPAIGN

BIOGRAPHY

MADISON DEARNALEY

Madison Dearnaley is part of the *Students Need School Libraries* campaign leadership team and is the website coordinator for the campaign. Madison has compiled these responses from campaign members for *ACCESS* readers.

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ABSTRACT

The spread of COVID-19 dramatically changed the way schools and school libraries ended Term 1 and faced the start of Term 2. The *Students Need School Libraries* campaign asked school library teams to share what tasks they had focused on during this crisis and how they were continuing to support their school communities.
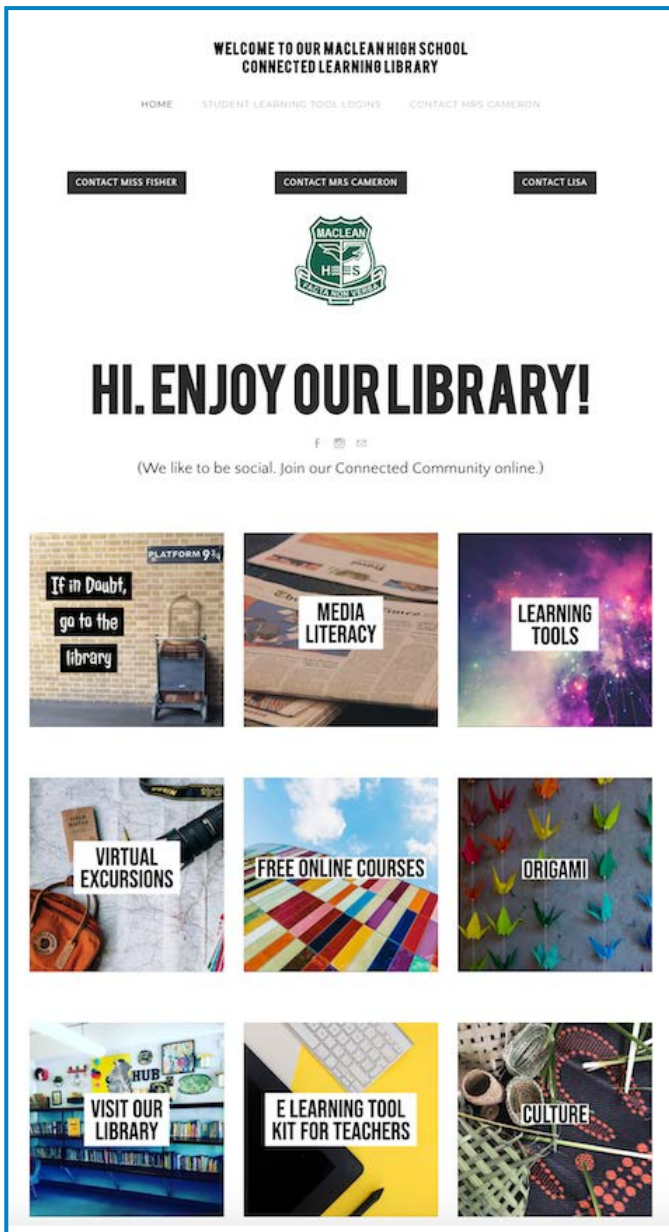
INTRODUCTION

With the spread of COVID-19, schools have been thrown into a new style of education. Each state and territory and indeed each school has faced a different day-to-day reality, which seems to change each week. Now, with the immediate focus on a need for online learning and distance learning, school library teams are reaching out to students and teachers alike to ensure they are prepared. The *Students Need School Libraries* campaign asked school library teams to share what they were doing during COVID-19.

Here are just a few of the things school library teams are doing for their schools.

"Recreating our Library Community Online: library website — designed to support students, families, teachers and capture key areas of the MHS library such as origami, Harry Potter Fandom. It also links into Wellbeing and Careers websites online, which are located in the library at MHS. Our goal was to represent what we provide for our students, in a connected online space. https://mhsconnectedlearninglibrary.weebly.com/"
— Belinda Cameron, teacher librarian at Maclean High School in NSW

"Towards the end of term when we had fewer and fewer students, we remained open. We continued to encourage reading and allowed unlimited borrowing. We suspended all overdue notifications and changed the due back date to late May.

"Teachers were encouraged to use our spaces for their classes as we have large, open areas which are perfect for physical distancing. During the next few weeks the librarians will work swiftly to process, cover and catalogue new books for further borrowing. We will prepare parcels that students can collect should they wish to.

"Our ACCESSIT library portal allows students to browse the catalogue and place items on reserve. They also have access to numerous databases for conducting and continuing their research and satisfying their curiosity. We have been able to add new databases and have taken advantage of the free trials on offer for eBooks and audiobooks. We want to give students access to the best resources and we want them to know that we are there for them."
— Library team at Cabra Dominican College in SA

"Due to personal circumstances I was able to volunteer to supervise/teach the students of essential services parents that remained at the school. The number was small, about 10–14 and the library is large enough to allow for students to spread out. This allowed other staff to focus on getting their online learning up and running. The students were happy, content, extremely well behaved, patient and showed resilience. They were all in a very familiar space that they know as a comforting, relaxing space. And they were thankful. I got to know students on a much deeper level and I was thanked every day."
— Teacher librarian in WA

"We have been working from home since 26 March 2020. The whole school is using Microsoft Teams and I have set up a Library Team with the following channels: archives; catalogue maintenance; ClickView training; genre and reading lists; Infiniti support. I have also set up a staff book club on Teams."
— Janine Boyle, library coordinator at Mater Dei College in WA

"Ensuring all families know how to access our digital collection and other wonderful resources such as the Story Box Library. Supporting staff as they learn new technology and providing one-on-one onsite and digital tutorials. Ensuring that any student who came in to collect a laptop or iPad also walked out with an armful of books. Recording staff reading picture books to share with families. Navigating the copyright information to ensure that there are no breaches during this time. Created a school library website. Have made sure all families can access our digital collection."
— Teacher librarian at a primary school in the ACT

"I have focused on ensuring that both students and staff have clear and precise information on how to access all the e-resources available in our school library. I also shared information regarding free resources, including weblinks to JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* books and David Walliams' audiobooks. Our library team also created visual guides to book titles, which we sent out as a one-page document, to entice readers."
— Rhonda Bruce, teacher librarian at St Johns College, Dubbo in NSW

"Lots of online trials and being available as much as we can 24/7. This has given us time to promote our online learning platforms. Providing one-to-one assistance for staff who are not confident with IT. More use of our online platforms. One parent's comment was that we were stars providing her daughter with not only books but help to move forward with her learning because she was given ideas but, more importantly, she felt we cared."
— Teacher librarian at a state high school in WA

"I have created online book clubs. I have started social media pages for our school library. I have created a range of 'how-to' videos, so students and parents know how to access the library catalogue from home, request books, access ClickView, and request to join a book club. I've also been sharing help videos with teachers as they learn a range of new skills to teach students online."
— Library aide, independent school in QLD

Year 7–12 Book Club
Open to all students from Year 7–12, the Year 7–12 Book Club meets once a week, currently via Zoom, to chat about what we are reading, our favourite books and books we are writing ourselves.

Year 5–6 Book Club
In the Year 5–6 Book Club we talk about the books we are reading and try our hand at some cool book crafts. We are also meeting via Zoom each week.

Readers and Reviewers Group
The Readers and Reviewers Group loves to read books! On our group page we share the books we are reading and write mini reviews. We love to make recommendations to each other. Open to Year 8–12.

Year 3–4 Book Club
The Year 3–4 Book Club loves being read aloud to. We take a look at new books, colour in, talk about what we are reading and do fun activities.

"Buying more books and getting them processed and covered quickly. Encouraging students to borrow as many books as they wanted, especially trying to get them out of their comfort zone and choosing non-fiction books and fiction books that they might not be familiar with. Finding class sets of books for teachers so that students can participate in whole class book clubs. Organising at home access for kids to our online encyclopaedia subscription. Sourcing and distributing guidelines to teachers regarding reading books aloud, whether they are streamed or videoed. Establishing protocols for returning and borrowing books for after the school holidays."
— Library team at a public primary school in SA

"I set up an online book club for our school as well as providing the service of allowing our students to borrow books from the library which we will be sending out in the mail to them."
— Sabrina Prisco at Underdale High School in SA

"Supporting teachers to upskill on technology; leading and collaborating on digital resourcing; ensuring students can access digital materials the library controls. Major PD delivery for teachers in Microsoft Teams; upgrade access to digital systems and new resource collections; structured plan for library staff duties during changed delivery mode."
— Library team at an Independent school in QLD

"We've moved all our library lessons to an online format via the school's learning management system. We are creating videos of books, so we are still reading to our students, thanks to the new copyright allowances. Students can borrow from our ebook collection and access help and information from our LibGuides."
— Library team from independent school in QLD

"We want to ensure students and staff continue to access our quality library services in an online environment, so that our community has books and other resources for academic and recreational reading.

"We are very busy providing access to quality online resources through our LearnPath Guides, including databases, ebooks, articles, ClickView videos and websites, chosen to resource specific units of work and assessment tasks. To assist students with using the LearnPath, I create videos of lessons that unpack research tasks and provide information for research and referencing skills. I create videos of reading aloud picture books and incorporating three level reading guides. We also provide access to books through our Drive Through Books service, where students can request specific titles, or an interest area, and library staff deliver book bags to the car, or have them ready for collection. Students are also using Sora for ebooks and audio books, with library staff providing assistance where necessary. We have continued our Library Fun activities by setting up a Teams group for interested students. So far, we have had our usual Friday Kahoots and Book Clubs in this way, promoted the Premier's Reading Challenge, shared book-related competitions, a quarantine reading challenge and online games including chess, in preparation for our Chess Challenge that will happen when school resumes. Library staff have completed the usual admin tasks such as the usual cataloguing and processing, and also had time to tidy up the library catalogue."
— Debra McGhee, St Teresa's Catholic College, QLD

Students Need School Libraries

You can **READ** more about what school libraries are doing for their schools during COVID-19 on the *Students Need School Libraries* website. You can also **SHARE** what you or your library team have been doing.

https://studentsneedschoollibraries.org.au/covid-19/