# **Please read and delete this section before sending your letter:**

*This letter template has been designed for families, parents, teachers or learning professionals to advocate for their school’s library. Throughout, there are sections highlighted for you to edit with more information about your specific library and circumstances.*

*If you are a librarian, please circulate a copy with families with the sections highlighted in blue completed, and ask them to fill in the sections highlighted in yellow.*

*If you are a parent, family member or teacher, please ask your librarian for the information highlighted in blue.*

Dear X,

We are writing to you regarding our school’s library at X school and the proposed closure / reduction in hours / removal of school librarian position [please edit as applies]. It would mean a great deal if you could show your support by responding by the consultation closing date / publicly stating your support [please edit as applies] by [date].

## **Value of the school library**

Libraries are vital to both the school and the surrounding community. School libraries ensure all children have equal access to reading materials and information, computers, and internet access. They also ensure:

* Children have access to spaces that are warm and safe
* Children are able to meet with their peers without any expectation of payment
* Children have a dedicated space to study or relax
* Children have reading role models and can be inspired by passionate librarians
* Other crucial services such as free period products, reading groups, events or clubs

[Please add your own information here, including your experience of your school library. You could touch on any specific details, how many children use it, what experiences you/your child have had from using it. E.g.

* You/your child’s experience with reading or journey to becoming a reader
* Book groups, events or clubs held in the library space
* Your librarian’s impact on your child
* Anything you access in your school library that you would not be able to otherwise]

## **Evidence and research**

The [School Library Association’s research](https://www.sla.org.uk/impact) shows that school libraries' impact includes **higher test or exam scores**, helping **close the attainment gap**, **positive attitudes towards learning across the curriculum** and **higher engagement with reading for pleasure**. Nearly three decades of research shows positive correlations between high-quality library programs and student achievement [Cf. International Literacy Association, 2022.](https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/the-essential-leadership-of-school-librarians.pdf)

Moreover, reading for pleasure has been shown to be more important for a child’s educational success than their socio-economic class (see evidence from the [National Literacy Trust](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED496343.pdf)). From their learning to their social and community engagement and wellbeing – libraries are crucial to every element of children’s lives.

As well as the library space, school librarians offer services that cannot be replicated by volunteers. They are highly trained professionals who, as well as managing the library space and resources, also:

* Teach pupils crucial life skills such as IT skills, self-directed study, how to find high-quality information and use information ethically
* Support teachers with specialist knowledge, including tailored curriculum reading materials and support for pupils with additional needs such as English as an additional language or neurodivergence and disability
* Offer high-quality book recommendations tailored to pupils’ interests and needs
* Help children engage with a community beyond their school

In times of inflation and a cost-of-living crisis, libraries have proven even more necessary, expanding their services to provide crucial community support. As author Kerry Hudson says: “*It is no overstatement to say I wouldn’t be alive today without having access to libraries as a child and young woman who grew up in extreme poverty*.” (quote via [CILIPS](https://www.cilips.org.uk/advocacy-campaigns/librariesareessential/scot-society/))

Findings illustrate that **nearly a quarter of schools in Scotland do not have a school library space**, and two-thirds of school libraries in Scotland have no library budget at all ([CILIP Great School Libraries, 2023](https://www.greatschoollibraries.org.uk/2023research)).

## **Required Actions**

With the above information in mind, we are asking you to show your commitment to our school’s library by:

* Opposing funding cuts to libraries, including school libraries
* Oppose the removal of school librarian positions in your local authority
* Publicly advocating for the role of school libraries and librarians

[please edit as appropriate]

In your response please do inform us how you intend to offer support. We await your response within 14 working days and fully expect a meaningful engagement with how you intend to support the young people under your purview.

Yours faithfully,

[Your name]