

# Summer Reading Challenge 2021 Memorandum of Understanding

## Purpose

The Summer Reading Challenge is a national reading for pleasure programme. By signing up to the Summer Reading Challenge, authorities benefit from economies of scale along with nationally brokered partnerships and PR opportunities. As well as the benefits of being part of a national campaign, there are collectively shared responsibilities about how the Summer Reading Challenge is run. This Memorandum of Understanding sets out the respective roles of The Reading Agency and local authorities for the Summer Reading Challenge 2021.

## Responsibilities of The Reading Agency

- Act as the national contact for the Summer Reading Challenge programme and be responsible for its development, co-ordination and all national PR and communications.
- Co-ordinate the development and distribution of materials to the agreed timetable.
- Provide regular communications and updates to local authorities about the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Provide advice and best practice principles for local authorities running the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Provide logos, templates, and artwork along with branding and communications guidelines for local authorities to use.
- Provide training materials to ensure a consistent approach for staff and volunteers across all participating authorities.
- Provide a range of online resources to participating authorities to enhance the Summer Reading Challenge experience at a local level.
- Manage the evaluation process, collating the response data and distributing both national and regional results.
- Be responsible for the development and delivery of content, including digital content on the official Summer Reading Challenge website.
- Collect and provide web user data for individual library authorities for the specific purpose of effectively delivering the Summer Reading Challenge, in accordance with GDPR or equivalent data protection regulations.
- Manage relationships with national partners and international partners, funders, and stakeholders.
- Co-ordinate the national Summer Reading Challenge Strategy Group.

## Responsibilities of local authorities

- Purchase the core packs, as they are core to the delivery of the Summer Reading Challenge.
- Acknowledge that the submission of an order form for Summer Reading Challenge materials is a commitment to purchasing materials and supporting the delivery of the Challenge. The Reading Agency will require a purchase order or suitable alternative to issue an invoice for materials. Please note, cancellations will not be accepted once forms have been submitted, and no refunds will be given to authorities that no longer wish to receive goods.
- Provide the Summer Reading Challenge materials free of charge to participants.
- Run the Summer Reading Challenge in such a way that is accessible and flexible for all children to take part by following the best practice principles issued with this MOU where possible.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are trained to deliver the Challenge and understand the best practice principles.
- Ensure the Summer Reading Challenge is effectively and accurately promoted within the locality and that end dates of the Challenge and available incentives are clearly communicated.
- Confirm a named Summer Reading Challenge coordinator to be the main point of contact and liaise with The Reading Agency on behalf of the authority. Immediately inform The Reading Agency if this contact changes.
- Allow contact details of your Challenge coordinator to be made available to press by The Reading Agency.
- Comply with The Reading Agency's intellectual property rights relating to the Summer Reading Challenge, along with those of any partner organisations, by adhering to the marketing and branding guidelines provided.
- Agree to abide by data sharing arrangements for the purpose of The Summer Reading Challenge. The Reading Agency will only disclose participant data that relates to your specific authority on the basis that you will take all reasonable steps to keep the data secure in accordance with the GDPR or equivalent data protection regulations.
- Provide feedback to The Reading Agency by completing the evaluation form at the end of the Summer Reading Challenge by the agreed deadline.

### Agreeing to the terms of the MOU

To agree to the terms of this MOU, please copy the wording below into an email, complete your details and email to [srcorders@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:srcorders@readingagency.org.uk) along with your order. By agreeing to this MOU we are assuming that you will have checked with your Head of Service.

*I can confirm that <name of library authority> agrees to the terms of this MOU.*

Your name:

Date:

Please contact Rose Attu with any queries: [rose.attu@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:rose.attu@readingagency.org.uk)

## BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

We appreciate that the way the Summer Reading Challenge is run can vary from authority to authority. However, to offer a consistent experience, and meet the expectations of children and their parents/carers, we are setting out these best practice principles for running the Summer Reading Challenge which we ask all participating authorities to adopt:

### 1. Maintaining consistency across local authorities

- The Summer Reading Challenge should be run in a fun, flexible, child-friendly way ensuring all children wanting to take part are able to do so.
- There should be no limit on the number of children that can take part, or when a child can sign up.
- The core Summer Reading Challenge materials must be provided free to all participants; this includes any incentives that you choose to purchase in addition to the core pack. However, the kit bags (which are non-essential items for participating in the Challenge) can be sold to carers/parents if the library service wishes to do this. This has been approved by the ASCEL national committee. Selling a kit bag for £1.50 - £1.75 covers the cost of the bag and individual child's core pack. Please note that authorities must not sell kit bags in exchange for entry into the Summer Reading Challenge.
- All children completing the Summer Reading Challenge should receive a certificate and preferably a medal (or medal sticker for under 3's).
- Authorities should signpost participants to the national Summer Reading Challenge website for additional activity wherever possible.

### 2. Local variations

- Each year, The Reading Agency publicises official launch dates for the Challenge in Scotland and Northern Ireland (in June) and England/Wales (in July). Delivery of promotional materials is coordinated so library authorities receive items in good time for these start dates. Any authorities planning significantly earlier start dates for their Challenge do so at their own risk. Please contact the Summer Reading Challenge team at the earliest opportunity if you require assistance with this matter.
- The Reading Agency does not set an official end date for the Challenge, but ideally it should be within 2-3 weeks of the return to school date for your area. Please ensure you clearly publicise your local end date (and have enough time to complete your evaluation data by the required deadline).
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand how the Challenge works, know about the 2021 theme, and know what incentives are available in your authority. A library training presentation and 2021 core pack guide will be available to download from The Reading Agency website to support this.
- Ensure that your promotional material accurately reflects what children will receive locally, e.g. do not use images of medals if you do not award these.
- Participants' data should be handled in line with local data processing policy. Please ensure you are aware of your library/local authority's guidelines.

### **3. Definition of a starter/participant**

- To be considered as a “**starter**” or “**participant**”, a child is required to visit their library and complete a registration card or register through the LA process, borrow books to read, and be issued with either the core pack (or pre-school Mini Challenge Card for under 4s) or a token sticker/bookmark.
- Children invited to take part during a school visit cannot be classified as “starters” as the starter figures will be artificially inflated. In past years, some authorities have reported significantly more starters than core packs ordered. When queried, this has often been because children attending a school engagement activity (e.g., an assembly), were counted as “starters” rather than as a potential audience figure.

### **4. Library visits during the Summer**

- Ideally, taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge encourages a child to read throughout the summer and develop the habit of visiting the library.
- While best practice would be for a child to visit their library at least three times during the summer, please use discretion about the number of library visits children make, as holidays, parental working patterns, and library opening hours can make achieving a set number of visits difficult.
- If possible, allow children who have signed up at a different library authority to continue the Summer Reading Challenge whilst residing locally.

### **5. Book Talk**

- Children should be encouraged to talk about the books they have read each time they visit the library, before receiving their rewards.
- Book Talk has so many benefits for children, staff, volunteers, and parents and carers. Feedback from participants, parents and carers shows how much confidence and achievement children feel when they have the chance to share their reading choices with others.
- We acknowledge that staff capacity is an issue, but this is where your volunteers can play a key role. Volunteers should understand the principles of good book talk and praising children for their reading achievements.
- For useful, suggested Book Talk questions, see the prompt cards in the Summer Reading Challenge resources.

### **6. Number of books read**

- The Summer Reading Challenge is not about the quantity of books that a child reads over the summer.
- Although we recommend reading at least six books for the Challenge, children may set their own target to work towards.
- It is up to the discretion of your library authority to decide the number of incentives that will be awarded and at which stages.
- Children who read more than their target should not expect to receive more than one medal or core pack etc.
- A ‘special achievement’ certificate will be available to download from the resources page of the website. You may choose to award this to a child who has read lots of books, but also to any child who has overcome challenges or made personal progress in some other way (see point 7 below).

### **7. Adapting the Summer Reading Challenge**

- Please use your discretion to adapt the Summer Reading Challenge to the needs of individual children. For example, you could award core pack stickers/incentives in the following scenarios:
  - To a struggling reader who has read one book. They may have achieved more reading than they thought they could.
  - To a child who reads a very long book.
  - To take account of cultural diversity and disability.

- If possible, allow older children to sign up if they wish to.
- Younger children (under 4) may take part either using the main Challenge materials or the specially created pre-school Mini Challenge materials.

## 8. Giving out incentives

- The European certification (EN71 scheme) on the medals, lanyards and scratch and sniff inks are categorised as not suitable for under 3's. **Medals in particular present a choking hazard and should not be issued to under 3's - this should be clearly explained to any parent or carer who asks for a medal for a child under 3.** Once again, we have produced a medal sticker to fulfil the need for a safe incentive for children under 3.
- The smelly inks found on some of the collectible stickers are safe and non-toxic, but the smell might encourage very young children to suck/eat the paper or sticker on which they are used!
- Where possible, ensure you purchase official Summer Reading Challenge materials as these meet all European safety standards (this is the universal EN71 standard). If you decide to buy additional incentives from elsewhere then they must also meet European safety standards; do check your local authority's recommendations/policy on product liability (i.e. materials you give out for free) if you have not purchased them through us.

## 9. Materials and incentives

- Please check your consignment of Summer Reading Challenge materials carefully upon receipt. If any items are missing or damaged, contact Salvo/The Reading Agency within 14 days of receipt. Stock is limited, so it may not be possible to replace items later in the summer.
- Please note, The Reading Agency will not accept a request to return goods that have been received and are no longer required for any reason. No refund or credit notes will be issued in this respect.
- If you are worried about running out of core materials by giving them to children who do not come back, perhaps just issue a round sticker or bookmark on the first visit and save the core pack and reward stickers for the second visit.
- If you do run out of materials, check with us to enquire whether there is additional stock available to purchase, or with other nearby authorities who may have spare materials available.

## 10. Charging for events and activities

- You may charge for activities like special workshops or performances.

## 11. Collecting data from volunteer run and managed libraries

**Volunteer run libraries:** If your library service has libraries staffed by volunteers but the library still operates under the auspices of your local authority, e.g. you oversee stock; provide materials; include the volunteers in your training and ensure these libraries offer a similar experience, you should include all their participation data (starters, finishers, volunteer data, etc.), in your authority results. It's useful for us to know the numbers of libraries you have operating like this to see trends emerging in these times of change.

**Volunteer managed libraries:** Libraries which are completely independent of local authority support and governance i.e., they manage their own stock; fund their own stock; fund their own materials. The Reading Agency will sell materials to these libraries if they can fulfil certain criteria around providing the same safeguarding children training and policy for their volunteers and sign up to core principles of operating the Challenge. This includes asking them to:

- adopt the local start and finish dates as the overarching library service
- offer the same incentives as overarching library service
- not to approach local schools with offers of school visits or send information about the Challenge without prior discussion with the overarching library service to ensure messaging is consistent and schools are not receiving confusing information.

Where communication is good, the Challenge can still run well though volunteer managed libraries. The Reading Agency will take responsibility for collating their data.