

Crime and Punishment @ Your Library

It was Miss Scarlett ... with the lead pipe ... in the library!

Okay, so our school libraries are not always the scenes of such violent or severe crimes, but theft and littering do occur and can drive even the calmest school library staff member crazy. Therefore, our question for this edition of Idea File is: “What consequences do you suggest for staff and students who misuse the library (for example lose books, fail to return materials on time, or leave a mess)?”

We received many suggestions, some tongue-in-cheek, some serious. Enjoy all the options for dealing with these common library “crimes”!

*Introduction by Diana Maliszewski,
question provided by Lisa Hascal*



I think libraries should have an acknowledgement board. Staff and students should have to write a letter recognizing/acknowledging how their thoughtless actions can depreciate the learning experience for others.

Karen Whiteman
Head of Library/Business
Eastdale C.V.I.
Durham District School Board

We prefer not to use money as a system of consequence. When possible, we have the students give their time by tidying up the library, taping books, shelving and displays. The consequence fits the crime more effectively when their time, not their dime, pays for the crime.

Amy Willemsen
Teacher Librarian
David Suzuki Secondary School
Peel District School Board

We have them work for us for the amount of book that was not returned. Was the book worth twenty dollars? They must work for free for us - for two hours. If they worked for us, we would pay them ten bucks an hour.

Sherry Lawson
Administrator of Heritage Services, Culture
Chippewas of Rama First Nation