

Book Fair

Mon 11 - Sat 16 September
2017 Booked in with Scholastic.

Event run by Kindergarten Parents

Author Greg Lynch

Each year Subiaco Primary School P&C runs a Book Fair to raise funds. The Book Fair service is provided by a global organisation called Scholastic. Scholastic provides the books and other associated products such as kids pens/erasers/sharpeners and sometimes small toys. Scholastic also provides most of the sales and marketing tools. Scholastic allocates a percentage of the sales revenue to the P&C as a sales "commission". The actual percentage depends on whether the P&C chooses to take the commission as books, cash or a mix.

The P&C operates the Book Fair via the Class Liaison Parent (CLP) network. Those CLP's typically work closely with the School Librarians to plan and operate the Book Fair.

Running the Book Fair can be quite a lot of work. The aim of this Primer is to provide as much information as possible to the CLP's.

Making the Book Fair Successful

Scholastic provides quite a lot of good information and tools explaining how a Book Fair should be planned and operated. Operating the Book Fair in a "default" manner would certainly result in acceptable sales revenue. To make the Book Fair truly successful requires careful consideration of the following factors:

1. Being Organised

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the planning and the paperwork of operating a Book Fair. Stay well organised and maintain good records!

2. Marketing

The more people who come in the door, the more you will sell. In 2010 we made a big effort to market the Book Fair inside the School and outside in the wider community. As a result our sales revenue was more than double that of any previous year. Marketing was the big difference.

3. Opening Hours

It is important to have the Book Fair open every morning and afternoon and, if possible, at the Saturday Farmers Market. The afternoons are definitely busier but resist the temptation not to open in the mornings.

4. Restocking

If you are selling well then make the effort to do a mid-week re-stock, or more than one (this can be coordinated with the local Scholastic office). This will keep the shelves full and make the Book Fair look better. Many kids will come in looking for the books (and other goods) that their friends bought...re-stocking will allow you to sell more.

Possible Objections

You may receive some negative comments about the Book Fair. As a general rule, however, the comments from Teachers, Parents and the Kids have been very positive. You may hear some of the following:

i. **Scholastic Make Too Much Of The Profit**

Scholastic have to purchase the majority of the books and products from other suppliers. They also provide a comprehensive service to support the selling process. The fact that there seems to be no viable alternative to Scholastic probably indicates that the profit margins are not excessive.

ii. **The Books Are Not Educational**

Comments from most of the Teachers have been positive. The books seem to be popular with the kids and anything that gets them reading must be a good thing.

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- iii. **The Books Are Too Expensive**
In general most of the books seem to be priced at standard retail price, similar to prices at Dymocks etc. It would certainly be possible to purchase many of the books elsewhere on special or at a discount chain like K-Mart. The aim of the Book Fair, however, is to raise funds for the School.
- iv. **There Is Too Much Rubbish For Sale**
In previous years there have been complaints about the volume and quantity of non-book items on sale at the Book Fair. Scholastic seems to have made an effort to improve in this area and, whilst there are still pens/erasers etc, it is all pretty harmless.
- v. **This Is Marketing to Kids**
The kids come through the Book Fair in the first couple of days and have the opportunity to fill out wish lists, which they typically then take home to their parents. It is a form of marketing to kids, no doubt, but it is still up to the parents to decide what is purchased.

Key Contacts

Establishing early and continuous communication with the contacts is very important.

Scholastic National	Scholastic has assigned a consultant to the Subiaco Primary Book Fair, the details are below: Call centre number is 1800 024 840. Our Book Fair Reference Number is 6526111. The 2017 contact is Joanne Sims: joanne_sims@scholastic.com.au Make early contact with Joanne to get you started.
Scholastic Local	Scholastic has a warehouse facility in Malaga. There is a person there who oversees all of the Book Fair activities deliveries etc. It is critical that you befriend this person because they will be the one who can organise re-stocks outside of the "normal" national process.
School Librarians	The Book Fair will be located in the School Library. As such it is important to introduce yourselves to the Librarians early and re-assure them that you will be organised. The assistance of the Librarians in the lead-up to, and during, the Book Fair is critical.
P & C	You are operating the Book Fair as a P&C activity so there are some important P&C people who you should contact. The P&C Event Coordinator can get you started and provide some assistance along the way. The P&C Treasurer can coordinate money floats and assist with banking etc.
Farmers Market Coordinator	The Farmers Market Coordinator should be consulted about the logistics of operating the Book Fair on one of the market days. The P&C Event Coordinator can put you in contact.
CLP Coordinator	The CLP Coordinator should be able to point you to the right person if you need assistance.
Class CLP's	Remember that an entire year group will be responsible for the Book Fair in a given year so make sure that you contact and involve all of the CLP's for your year groups.

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Decisions to be made

There are some important decisions that need to be made.

Commission	<p>Liase with the School Librarians and the P&C to determine how the commission will be taken at the end of the Book Fair – books, cash or a mix. Ultimately the P&C will determine whether the commission will be made in full or in part to the Library. The Librarians may wait until the Book Fair is completed before deciding how they wish to take whatever commission is allocated to the Library. In 2010, the P&C allocated all of the commission to the Library and the Librarians decided to take some books and some cash (which they used to purchase DVD's not available from Scholastic).</p>
Farmers Market	<p>Decide whether or not you will operate the Book Fair at the Farmers Market. It will need 2-3 people available for about 4 hours (although it doesn't need to be the same 2-3 people for the whole time). In 2010 we sold a significant volume of books at the Farmers Market and it seemed to be welcomed by the Farmers Market patrons.</p>

Other Information about Scholastic

Scholastic Website	<p>Scholastic has a website that has a special section dedicated to the Book Fairs. To access the website go to: www.scholastic.com.au</p> <p>Click "Schools" along the top of the site Click "Book Fairs" on the side bar Click "Log On" Enter the following log on details Fair Number: 6526111 Password: rm33</p> <p>Please note as our book fair is in Term 3, the information relevant to our fair won't be released on the website until early September. However it might still be useful to have a look and become familiar with the site. You will find loads of supporting material explaining how to run the Book Fair, as well as marketing and promotional material that can be used to advertise internally and externally.</p>
Scholastic Warehouse	<p>Scholastic has a warehouse in Malaga, at which they load the trucks for delivery to the Schools. The local Scholastic Book Fair Rep has a room out there where you can view the types of materials and setup that you should encounter in your delivery. You should also be invited to a Book Fair Coordinators session for some weeks before the Book Fair...make sure you attend!</p>

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Marketing

Advertising the Book Fair well is the most important thing to get right. There are a number of ways you can do this, including the following.

School Posters	On the Scholastic website you will find promotional material that can be used to make a poster. Depending how computer-savvy you are you can either make your own poster using the various graphics available (in which case you can include your specific information regarding venue and dates etc), or you can more simply print one of the standard posters and hand-write in your event details. Either way, get the posters up around the school in the week before the Book Fair.
Community Posters	Make a poster that you can hang in various locations around the community. Make sure that this poster is more specific about the location (i.e. "in the Subiaco Primary School Library", rather than "in the Library"). Appeal to people's wish to contribute to the community and to the School. Also highlight that the Book Fair will be operating at the Farmers Market. In 2010 we hung these posters at the Council Library, on the bulletin board outside Farmer Jack's, at the Police and Citizen's community centre and at the Play Group across the road from the School.
School Newsletter	Speak to Joanne Dumaresq, the school librarian about mentioning the Book Fair in the School Newsletter. Mention that people can stock up on Xmas and Birthday presents, as well as contribute to a Teacher's Wishlist.
Subiaco Council Community Email	The Subiaco Council has a community officer who coordinates community activities, particularly with respect to children and parents. This person manages an email that is distributed widely in the community. Find out who this person is and give them some words to advertise the Book Fair.
CLP Network	In the weeks leading up to the Book Fair date start sending emails out via the CLP's. Start the emails general in nature and then provide more and more information as you get close.
Scholastic Leaflets	Scholastic will provide you with promotional leaflets that highlight some of the books that will be available. Get these distributed to the Teachers (speak to one of the Deputy Principals for this) so that they can give them to the children to take home in the week before the Book Fair.

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Marketing (cont.)

Theme	Each year Scholastic have a theme for the Book Fair. In 2010, it was "Destinations" which was meant to signify world culture. Scholastic enthusiastically encourage you to adopt the theme and use it for all promotional materials, for decorating the Book Fair and for running events in conjunction with the Book Fair. In 2010, we used the Destinations logos and graphics for all of our flyers, posters and emails. We didn't decorate the Book Fair at all however...in all honesty the theme seems to add no value once people have entered the Book Fair. The 2017 theme will be confirmed by Scholastic closer to Term 3.
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CLP's and Volunteers

The CLP's will end up doing most of the work planning the Book Fair, in the weeks preceding the date. In the actual week of the Book Fair, however, it is important that you have volunteers to man the Book Fair and cash desk.

You will be asking your year group to volunteer. Send an email via the CLP's describing the importance of the Book Fair and the need for volunteers in the Book Fair week. Describe that you are only looking for an hour or so from each person, on either a morning or afternoon, and that the job will be simple. Tell them that a Volunteer Schedule will be pinned up outside the year group classrooms. You may need to personally "encourage" people to volunteer!

Stock

The delivery from Scholastic will arrive on the Tuesday 5th September 2017 preceding the Book Fair. You will need to liaise with the school librarians and be prepared to spend 2-3 hours doing setup. You will have agreed in advance where the various components will be situated.

Book Cabinets	You will probably get 8 book cabinets that roll in on wheels and then are concertinaed open to display the books. These should be situated in a semi-circle so as to define the Book Fair area. Each cabinet should have a display poster on the back that can be pulled upwards for advertising purposes. Try to arrange the cabinets in order of age group (if possible). Some of the cabinets may have non-book materials inside (pencils, erasers etc in tubs)...these should be removed for display elsewhere.
Boxes	There should be a series of cardboard boxes that contain special books, possible for book series or kindy books. These should be unpacked and placed on the tables.

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Stock (cont.)

Tubs	You will get various small plastic tubs containing non-book items such as pencils, erasers etc. These should be placed on either the tables or next to the cash desk (where they can be monitored more closely!).
Variety Trays	You will receive "Variety Trays" which contain much of the non-book material such as pens and erasers. These flip open for display purposes. They should be located near the sales desk.
Wacky Packs	You may receive "Wacky Packs" which are pre-bundled (and wrapped) book sets.
Posters	You will receive posters in a special poster box. Keep this box near the cash desk so that they don't get damaged.

Layout

The opened cabinets should be arranged in a semi-circle so as to define the Book Fair area. In the centre of this defined area place 4-5 largish Library tables and cover with table cloths (the Librarians should have table cloths from previous years). There are some photos included at the end of this document.

Take one of each poster out of the poster box and pin them up on the pinboard above the computers. Use thumb-tacks so that you don't have to actually pierce the posters when hanging them (these display posters can be kept by the School at no cost). On the Scholastic website you should find some "poster numbers" that can be printed and blue-tacked to each poster so that the children can identify which poster they want to buy.

Teacher wishlists are an important part of the Book Fair. Collect the Teacher Wishlists and lay them out on a clearly marked table (with some pens available) so that Parents can fill out donations. Make it very clear that the donation books need to be paid for at the time the Parent fills out the wishlist!

Situate a desk near the door of the Library to be used as the sales desk. Near this desk is where you should locate the variety trays and tubs containing the non-book materials such as the fluffy pens and erasers etc.

It is a good idea to run a couple of competitions to keep the kids interested for the entire week. In 2010, we ran a "guess the noodles in the jar" competition for the older kids and a colouring competition for the younger kids (materials can be found on the Scholastic website). Prizes can come from the posters or donated by the Librarians.

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Sales

There is much to consider carefully regarding the sales process.

Peak Days and Times	The peak days for sales are the first two days (55% of the total sales), mainly driven by the children having filled out their leaflet wishlists. Make sure you have a number of volunteers scheduled for the morning and afternoons of these days.
Payment Types	You can take payment by cash, cheque or credit card. In 2010, two-thirds of payment was via cash with the remainder by credit card (virtually no cheques).
Orders	You can take orders for books that have sold out. It is essential that these orders are recorded very carefully so that you know exactly who has ordered what (note the child name and class as well as a parent name and phone number). ALWAYS get payment at the time of the order because it is a nightmare trying to get the money later! If you re-stock part way through the Book Fair don't use these re-stocked items to fill orders...put the books out on the shelves and sell them again! The ordered books will be delivered in the week after the Book Fair closes.
Sales Records	Try to keep abreast of how much cash, cheque and credit card takings you have, preferably on a nightly basis. If you have accumulated too much cash you may want to ask the P&C Treasurer to put some of it in the safe rather than carry it around.
Takings	Keep the takings secure each night by either taking them home or putting them in the safe (be careful to ensure you can get it early each morning). You will need to organise a cash float to start the Book Fair, probably about \$200 (ask the P&C Treasurer to coordinate this). Remember to subtract this amount from the final totals) Make sure you keep all credit card slips and cheques well organised. Refer to the fundraising guidelines available from the P&C Event Coordinator
Credit Cards	If you ask early enough you may be able to get an electronic credit card machine from Scholastic. This makes life much easier and will ensure that all credit takings are allocated to Scholastic direct. An alternative may be to use the credit card machine that is normally used for the School Uniform Shop. In 2010, we used an old-style, manual "click-clack" credit machine and then kept the slips for later sending to Scholastic (this machine was provided by Scholastic so it had their vendor details on the plate).

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Sales (cont.)

P&C Cash Summary and Banking	The P&C Treasurer will want good records kept for the Book Fair takings. Keep a written record of how much cash, cheque and credit takings should be present. Also take care to record how many books (and the dollar values) are taken by the Librarians as part of the commission. All of this will also need to be recorded on the Scholastic cash summary. The P&C Treasurer will take responsibility for banking the takings and sending Scholastic a cheque for the sales proceeds (minus the commission).
Scholastic Cash Summary	At the end of the Book Fair you will go online to the Scholastic website to enter details of the takings. You will need to know the totals for each payment type (cash, cheque and credit) and the total value of books taken by the Librarians as part of the commission. This process will result in a printable Cash Summary form that can be sent to Scholastic along with the cash/credit slips and also given to the P&C Treasurer to indicate how much money should be sent to Scholastic.

Teacher Previews

Teacher wish lists are an important part of the Book Fair. They are distributed to each Teacher for them to identify, which books they would like donated to their class or to the Library. You will find printable Teacher wish lists on the Scholastic website...print them and get them put into the Teacher pigeonholes (ask one of the Deputy Principal's for assistance in doing this). Send all the Teachers an email telling them what you have done and encouraging them to bring the classes for a class preview (and to fill out their wish list).

Most of the Teachers will bring their classes through the Book Fair on the first or second day, for the class previews. That being the case there may not be a need for a separate teacher preview of the Book Fair.

Class Previews

The class previews are essential to a successful Book Fair. This is when each Teacher will bring their class through for an early look at the books and other materials for sale. Each of the children should have their Scholastic leaflet with them (described earlier in the Marketing section), which they will use to write down the books they would like to have. They do not actually purchase books at this time, they instead take the leaflet home and ask permission to purchase in the next few days. In 2010, it was clear that it was this process that drove most of the sales.

You will need to schedule the class previews carefully. It will take all of Monday and much of Tuesday to get all of the classes through the Book Fair (assuming 20—30 minutes for each class). Prepare a schedule and then email the Teachers to tell them when they are expected. Assume that some Teachers will not be able to make their allocated time and may just turn up whenever!

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How it all works on the day(s)

A typical day at the Book Fair will involve a fairly busy morning, from 8:30am to 9:15am, during which the main patrons will be the children themselves...at these times you will sell quite a lot of the non-book materials such as fluffy pens and erasers. You will get some parents wanting to buy from their children's wish list.

The afternoons should be busier, from 3pm to 4pm, particularly on the first 2 days. At these times you will get a lot of parents buying from their children's wish list. At times in 2010, people were crammed in like sardines it was so busy!

It is a good idea to have 2 people on the cash desk (one taking cash and one doing credit cards (form two lines if it helps)). Then have a couple of people out at the cabinets helping the kids and parents find what they are looking for and tidying up the cabinets and tables).

Keep an eye on the Teacher Wish lists, particularly to make sure that the donations are paid for at the time. Also help people who are wanting to purchase a poster.

The variety trays and tubs will be over-run with kids so it is a good idea to have someone dedicated to helping out there. This person could maybe also keep track of orders.

Keep close contact with the local Scholastic rep during the Book Fair. If you are running low on certain items (this will definitely be the case with the non-book items) then ring to see if you can go out to pick up some more goods. The kids will love you if you can re-stock the variety trays and tubs. You may also be able to re-stock some of the more popular books (and sell them over again!).

On the Saturday of the Farmers Market set up the cabinets and a cash desk under the verandah outside the Library. In this way you will attract many of the people who come into the Farmers Market from the Bagot Rd entrance.

When the Book Fair has finished there are still some tasks to undertake, including:

- Re-packing the cabinets and boxes, ready for pickup by the Scholastic truck.
- Tidying and re-organising the Library for the following week.
- Sitting down with the Librarians to select which books they wish to take as part of the commission.
- Entering all of the orders onto the Order Sheet in preparation for sending to Scholastic (and subsequently making sure that when these ordered books are delivered that they are distributed to the children).
- Going online to the Scholastic website to complete the Cash Summary form.
- Getting all of the cash takings to the P&C Treasurer so that they can be banked (and ensuring that the Treasurer knows how much should be sent to Scholastic).
- Sending the Cash Summary form to Scholastic with the cheque and credit slips.
- Sending thankyou's to all of the volunteers and to the Librarians.
- Organising for a notice to be put in the School newsletter to highlight the successful Book Fair.

GOOD LUCK!