



REFERENCE & INFORMATION SERVICES POLICY

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Introduction

Information services are those services which link people with resources to fulfill informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs. The public service staff of the Wainfleet Township Public Library shall endeavour to answer all reference and information questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible, and to assist patrons in the use of library and bibliographic tools. Staff will do so without passing judgement on the nature of the question.

Responsibility for Reference Service

All staff of the Wainfleet Township Public Library shall receive training in providing reference, information and reader's advisory assistance to patrons.

Types of Service

Library staff will attempt to answer questions as fully as possible, but must keep in mind the needs of all patrons using the library. If a question proves to be very time consuming (requiring more than 15 minutes to answer), the patron may need to be called back later with the answer.

School-related questions will be answered in the same manner as all other reference questions.

The interpretation of information by library staff is not attempted, e.g. in the fields of law, medicine, tax issues, evaluation or authentication of rare items, etc., as this requires expertise beyond the scope of library staff.

Requests received by telephone, fax, email or in writing are treated as all other requests, however priority is given to the needs of patrons who come into the Library. Patrons needing extensive reference service will be requested to visit the Library to participate in the research process.

The Library provides a variety of information services including:

- (a) Quick Reference – Questions which require specific factual answers. These questions can usually be answered immediately using resources from the Reference Collection or the Internet.
- (b) General Reference – These questions usually require a lengthy search and the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer. Staff will guide and assist the patron in pursuing the answer, while simultaneously providing, as required, informal instruction in how to search and use library resources to the best advantage.
- (c) Reader's Advisory – Reader's advisory is the activity of recommending books to readers and helping readers identify their reading preferences. Staff will assist patrons by making a judgement about the material, utilizing the criteria each patron and staff establish during the reference interview.
- (d) Location of Material – The staff will check for a patron to see whether a specific desired item is in the Library's collection. If it is, but is not immediately available, a reserve may be placed, if requested. If the Library does not own the item, assistance will be given to the patron in borrowing it from another library.
- (e) Referral – The Library maintains active liaison with other service agencies in the community. If a request for information cannot be answered or has been answered only in part with the resources of the Library, then the patron will be referred, where appropriate, to another source and assisted where circumstances warrant, in contacting that source. Such assistance may take the form of initiating an **Inter-Library Loan** request or by provision of a phone number or email address and any other pertinent available information. Every attempt is made to satisfy requests with materials available in the Library before referring patrons or inquires to outside sources.

Development of the Reference Collection

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for developing and maintaining the reference collection appropriate to the needs of the community. He/she may delegate tasks to other staff, as appropriate.

Questions which the library staff were unable to answer will be noted. The CEO will review these questions from time to time, to assist in selecting materials for the collection.

Circulation of Reference Material

Reference questions may be answered using the entire collection of the Library. However, some material is designated for use in the Library only. Such material normally does not circulate. In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the staff, a special one- or two-day loan may be granted.

Reference Statistics

Accurate statistics regarding reference service to clients should be recorded using the Daily Statistics Log provided at the Circulation Desk.