



# Information Services Policy

## **Statement of Purpose**

This policy is to give Library staff a clear description of the services offered by the library and guidance in providing information service. Staff are encouraged to use good judgement to satisfy patron's needs. The Library considers providing access to information to Library patrons one of its key mandates.

1. Information services are those services that link people with resources to fulfill informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs. It is any assistance given to library patrons to find information.
2. All users seeking information will be treated equitably and with respect to meet their individual needs, regardless of sex, age, ability, and ethnicity.
3. Staff will respect and protect the confidential nature of requests for information.
4. Staff will answer all reference questions efficiently, accurately, and as completely as possible and will be guided by the Ontario Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.
5. When only one staff member is on duty, that person will devote as much time as possible to responding to patron requests for information within the constraints of ensuring circulation and general supervision of the library. Reference duties should take precedence over technical duties such as filing, overdue notifications, etc.
6. Emphasis will be placed on providing the patron with the most appropriate source of information in the most appropriate format. Staff is not to offer any assistance in interpreting the information.

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## **Types of Information Service**

The Perth East Public Library provides a variety of information services to patrons including:

**Ready Reference** – questions that are answered relatively quickly using the resources in the Library's collection.

**Instruction in Library Use** – advising patrons on how to use the online catalog to search for information (i.e. Facetted searches) or how to search online databases.

**Reader's Advisory** – staff will provide suggestions or comments on reading material using comments gathered from other patrons, staff, book reviews, etc.

**Referral for Information the Library is Unable to Provide** – if the Library's collection is not able to provide the information requested by a patron, library staff will attempt to borrow the information from another library or find another source in the community that might be able to provide the information. Every attempt will be made to satisfy requests with materials from the Library's collection before referring patrons to outside sources

**Bibliographic** – staff will compile a list of information sources on a subject as requested, however, this service will be limited depending on staff time constraints.

## **Information Service Delivery and Priorities**

- Requests for information will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis but preference will be given to requests from patrons in the Library.
- Telephone, fax and email requests will be responded to as time permits.
  - If requests received by telephone cannot be dealt with immediately, an arrangement will be made with the caller indicating an agreed upon time period for the library staff to call back with the information requested.
- Lowest priority will be requests received through the interlibrary loan network.

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## **Guidelines for Library Personnel**

- Staff will greet all patrons as they enter the Library and offer assistance.
- Staff will endeavor to respond to information requests made by patrons in person as quickly as possible. Generally, the more experienced staff will handle patron requests for information if another staff member is available to manage the circulation desk, answer the telephone and supervise the library. If only one staff member is available, reference duties should take precedence over technical duties and the staff member will devote as much time as possible to meeting the patron's request within the constraints of having to work the circulation desk and general supervision of the library.
- Library staff will provide as much information as possible to satisfy a patron's request but will not offer any interpretation of the data presented. If interpretation is requested by the patron, library staff will recommend the individual contact a suitable professional to assist in interpreting the data appropriately.
- A list will be kept at the Circulation/Reference desk where staff are to record the date and types of information requested. Similarly, a list will be kept with the Interlibrary Loan materials to record the nature of requests for information which are unavailable at the Perth East Library. The CEO will review these lists for indications of areas of the collection that are lacking.
- Reference materials that are noted in the ILS software as non-circulating are not to leave the library. Patrons wanting to use materials outside the library will be encouraged to consider the online databases that are available through the library's website. Library staff are encouraged to bring exceptional circumstances to the attention of the CEO who may choose to adjust the lending practices.
- Patrons wishing to use the library telephone for short calls within the local calling range are permitted by asking the permission of the staff on duty and if the telephone is not already being used for library purposes.

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- Printers and photocopiers are available for public use (with staff assistance) at a cost of \$0.25/page for black and white printing and \$1.25 for printing in colour. Staff are permitted to use the library's telephone, fax and photocopier equipment for personal use outside work hours following the same guidelines and fees applicable to patrons.

## **Related Documents**

- Perth East Public Library *OP-01 Privacy and Access to Information*

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