

Purpose

West Perth Public Library's information services link people with resources to fulfil their informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs. This policy describes information services at the Library and guides library staff when answering reference questions.

Responsibility

1. All users seeking information will be treated equally in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990*.
2. The Library will provide welcoming spaces and library services to Indigenous peoples, and share elements of First Nations culture with non-Indigenous persons.
3. The staff will respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information.
4. The staff will answer all reference questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible, and will be guided by the Board's policy on *Intellectual Freedom*. All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.
5. The staff will assist the user in finding information, and will provide instruction on how to use library resources based upon the user's needs. The staff provide the following services:
 - a. *Quick reference*: These questions can usually be answered immediately using directories, almanacs and online resources;
 - b. *General reference*: These questions usually require a lengthier search and/or the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer.

6. The staff will refer users to the inter-library loan service, other libraries, agencies and community resources, if it is not possible to find an answer using the Library's own resources.
7. The extent of individual service to each person will depend on the number of users needing to be served. The following priorities will apply.
 - 1st priority - requests presented in person
 - 2nd priority - requests presented by telephone/voice mail
 - 3rd priority - requests sent in by mail/e-mail or digitally
 - 4th priority - requests received via the interlibrary loan network
8. To assess and evaluate information services, and to comply with the requirements of the *Annual Survey of Public Libraries*, statistics on reference questions will be kept and analyzed.

Related Documents:

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Code of Conduct*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Collections*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Confidentiality and the Protection of Privacy*.

West Perth Public Library Policy. *Intellectual Freedom*.

Government of Ontario. *Annual Survey of Public Libraries*.

Government of Ontario. *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990*.

Issued: February 2021

Revised: January 2022