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## Purpose

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

## Responsibility

1. All users seeking information are treated equitably in accordance with the Ontario *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990*.
2. The Library provides welcoming spaces and library services to First Nations peoples, and share elements of First Nations culture with non-First Nations persons.
3. Staff respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information.
4. Staff answer reference questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible, and are guided by the Board's policy on *Intellectual Freedom*. All questions are considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes obvious that they are otherwise.
5. Staff assist users in finding publicly-available information, and provide instruction on how to use library resources based upon the users' needs.

Staff cannot provide the following services on behalf of a user:

- a. Recommend, select, draft, or complete forms or documents from/for other agencies;
- b. Explain, interpret or translate forms or documents from/for other agencies;
- c. Give advice, counsel or professional opinions of a specialized nature.

6. Staff will refer users to the interlibrary loan service, other libraries, agencies and/or 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 depends on the number of users needing to be served. The following priorities apply.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> priority - requests presented in person
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> priority - requests presented by telephone/voice mail
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> priority - requests sent in by mail/e-mail or digitally
  - 4<sup>th</sup> 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 are 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*.

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