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General

The Carleton Place Public Library reference and information services link users with resources to fulfil their informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs. This policy describes reference requests and information services at the Library and guides employees when answering reference questions.

1. All users seeking information shall be treated equally regardless of sex, age, ability, or ethnicity.
2. The employees shall respect and protect the confidential and private nature of requests for information.
3. The employees shall refer users to the interlibrary loan service, other libraries, agencies, and community resources; if it is not possible to find an answer using the Library's own resources. "I don't know" is not an acceptable answer.
4. To assess and evaluate information services, and to comply with the requirements of the Annual Survey of Public Libraries, statistics on reference questions shall be kept and analyzed.

Reader's Advisory

The Library provides reader's advisory services to the general public and all employees have a role in providing this service. Employees may function in the capacity of selection advisors when requested, guiding children, young adults and adults in their selection of library materials. The ultimate choice, however, rests with the user: it is not the responsibility of library employees to monitor or control the type of library materials selected by users, regardless of age.

Information Services

1. Information Services is providing responses for simple answers by the community including general knowledge or content such as referrals for services or online information location.
2. The Library shall make all reasonable attempts to provide users with the information they are seeking.
3. Information services shall be provided by trained library personnel during hours of opening and may be requested at the circulation desk or over the phone.



4. Library employees shall determine the most appropriate method of filling information requests to ensure that requests are answered accurately and in a timely manner. Sources include but are not limited to the Library's print collection, community referrals, electronic databases and the Internet.
5. The Library shall make use of the internet in providing information services and make every effort to locate authoritative sources. However, due to the nature of the world-wide web and constantly changing origins of information on the Internet, the Library disclaims any responsibility for content accuracy, currency or other quality assessments of information gained by users of the Library's internet connection.
6. The Library reserves the right to:
 - 6.1. Limit the number of books that it shall locate for any one user.
 - 6.2. Limit the extent of a search it shall do for any one user.

Reference Requests

1. The Library provides the following reference services:
 - 1.1 *Quick Reference*: These questions can usually be answered immediately using directories, almanacs and online resources.
 - 1.2 *General Reference*: These questions usually require a lengthier search and/or the use of several sources to arrive at a complete answer.
2. The employees shall answer all reference questions efficiently, accurately, and as completely as possible and shall be guided by the Operational policy on Intellectual Freedom. All questions shall be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes apparent that they are otherwise.
3. The employees shall assist the user in finding information both in-house and electronically and shall provide instruction on how to use Library resources based upon the user's needs.
4. Employees shall not give direction, advice, or opinion when providing reference information. When medical or legal reference requests occur, employees shall assist by referencing quality e-resources and suggest medical and/or legal counsel in place of DIY research. Library staff shall not provide medical or legal advice.
5. All employees shall have a role in answering reference requests.
6. Responding to reference requests shall be given preference over other duties. However, if handling a request shall interfere with service to the Library, such as when working with low staff levels, the request may be deferred for handling within 24 hours.



Research Requests

1. Research requests are those which take on significantly more time and assistance and include:
 - 1.1. Creation of reading lists;
 - 1.2. Investigating questions and providing content or reports; or
 - 1.3. Local history or genealogical research requests.
2. The Library shall take research requests from users and guests.
3. Research requests require a scheduled appointment.
4. Fees may be charged for research requests. Estimates shall be provided by library staff prior to beginning any research on behalf of the requester. Research fees will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
5. The Library may require acknowledgement of support in publications using the research results.