



Whitby Public Library

Information Services Policy

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Purpose

1. To guide welcoming, quality, responsive, equitable, and accessible information service.
2. To fulfill the multiple literacy needs of our patrons, including information literacy which is essential for participation in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the community.
3. To provide a clear understanding of service levels for our staff and public.
4. To maintain a consistent approach to information services throughout the Whitby Public Library.

Roles

The Whitby Public Library operates as a system to meet the community's information needs. The Central Library, Community Branches, and Whitby Archives have different roles and collections which determine the extent of services and resources available.

Staff who provide information services strive to ensure patrons are given access to the information and resources they need and receive assistance to navigate the complexity of the Library's collections whether in print, electronic, or non-book format, including the Internet. The Library values and retains well-trained, knowledgeable employees that exemplify friendliness and personal attention, employ excellent communication skills to negotiate reference questions, exercise tact, and respect the privacy of patrons.

Staff use judgment to assess the most appropriate way to provide information services that are effective and efficient within the time constraints created by popular demand.

Types of Service Offered

1. Staff help patrons locate, select, and use the library resources and technologies they need. Information services include responding to simple and complex questions, providing readers' advisory services to match books and readers, community information and referral, library instruction and orientation, use of Discovery Zone or other library technology, and access to specialized local collections.
2. If a request cannot be answered using the Library's resources, staff will refer patrons to other sources or help retrieve material or information from another location.
3. Patrons may request information in person, by telephone, by mail, or electronically. Although all requests are given equal consideration, some require patrons to visit the Library.

Guidelines

Staff will answer requests thoroughly, accurately, and without judgment, guided by our values of accountability, collaboration, inclusion, intellectual freedom, lifelong learning, reading, and literacy.

1. The level of service may vary depending on the number of people requiring assistance. Patrons of all ages and circumstances will be treated equally, with respect, and in a courteous manner.
2. Staff will offer instruction and assistance using library technologies and search techniques and encourage patrons to take an active role.
3. Patrons are responsible for interpreting and applying information.
4. Patron confidentiality will be respected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and any other relevant legislation and library policies.
5. The Whitby Public Library Board endorses the Canadian Federation of Library Association's **Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries**, and the Ontario Library Association's Positions on **Children's Rights in the Library** and **Teen's Rights in the Public Library**.

6. Library staff are available to assist patrons with computer and Internet questions. While staff do not provide in-depth instruction on specific applications, they will help patrons find and navigate online help options, user forums, and tutorials.
7. Library staff will not complete online or print applications or make financial transactions on behalf of patrons.
8. During times when employees lack expertise in a particular subject, a patron's question may be referred to another staff member or deferred as appropriate until another staff member is on duty. The library has the right to end reference or technology assistance sessions at any time for reasons related but not limited to time constraints, patron behaviour, or conflicting needs within the library.
9. To assess and evaluate information services, information services statistics may be kept and analyzed while respecting patron confidentiality.
10. The Library is committed to meeting the needs of patrons with disabilities and will provide alternate formats and communication supports upon request.