

Georgina Public Library Board Policy Manual

Policy Title: Information Services

Intent

Information Services connects people with resources to fulfill their informational, cultural, educational, leisure, and recreational needs. This policy is intended to provide both staff and patrons with a clear understanding of the level and scope of the Library's provision of information services.

It is the Library's goal to meet the informational needs of the community, in cooperation with other social organizations and schools. In fulfilling this goal, the library seeks to provide patrons with accurate, up-to-date resources and trained staff who provide services to all citizens of the community without discrimination. Library staff act as a supplementary resource to students who have access to libraries within their own educational institutions. Our joint public/school site provides front line service to the students of the resident schools, with additional staff and resources provided by the school boards.

Regulations

Types of Service: the Library provides the following variety of informational services:

- Quick reference – questions which require specific, short, factual answers such as political leaders, or geographical questions and can be answered using print or electronic almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias etc.
- In-depth reference – requires a more lengthy search and interpretation, and may require the use of several resources. Library staff will guide and assist patrons in pursuing their search, while providing informal instruction in how to search the library catalogue and use resources (print, media, electronic) to their best advantage. Interpretation of medical or legal resources which are beyond the scope of staff expertise will not be attempted; patrons will be referred to Library resources and community professional resources. If a patron requires more intensive assistance, the staff will do the search to the extent that time permits.
- Consultation – patrons may request consultative assistance in defining their more complex queries and deciding on their scope and method of approach.
- Location of material – Library staff will check to see whether a specific item is owned by the Library, and will assist the patron in locating it on the shelf, or placing a hold on the item if it is not immediately available. If the Library does not own the requested item, the patron will be offered the opportunity to request an Interlibrary Loan.
- Instruction – Library staff will provide formal orientation and instruction to individuals or groups by request and as staff time allows.
- Referral – It is the library's policy to cooperate with and support other service agencies in the community through mutual referral of clients and sharing of information whenever appropriate. If it has been established by Library staff that a query cannot be fully answered with the Library's resources, efforts will be made to refer the patron to another source and to assist the patron in contacting that source, if required. Assistance may be through an Interlibrary Loan request, or provision of a telephone number, email address, street address, website, or other pertinent information.
- Special collections – The Library maintains local municipal government documents, some provincial and federal government documents (most are now online), and published works of local history. Most local history material is maintained by the Town Archives. The Library also maintains, on behalf of the Town of Georgina, a database of regional community information.

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- Bibliographic Services - Library staff may create listings of Library holdings on a broad range of subjects, or genre reading topics, to support general interest and program themes. Assistance is given, as time allows, to individuals who request a bibliographic listing of holdings on a particular topic or by a particular author. No attempt is made to compile a list of required readings for academic courses.
- Telephone/Electronic/Mail requests - Patrons contacting the Library via telephone, email, mail, or online request form receive full staff attention in order of receipt.
- Interlibrary Loan Service – The library functions as part of an information network within the wider community of Ontario and Canadian libraries through the Ontario Library Service's Interlibrary Loan System and in accordance with the regional and national interlibrary code. This service is available to patrons whose request cannot be filled by Georgina Public Library's resources. In return, Georgina shares its resources in accordance with the interlibrary code, while retaining priority in the use of resources for our own patrons. Some restrictions apply with regards to type of material and age of material.

Service Priorities:

- During periods of peak use and/or staff shortage, it is recognized that the extent of personal service must be curtailed in ratio to the number of patrons to be served. In addition, a patron's question may need to be referred to a more senior or experienced staff member, or deferred as appropriate. The circulation desk is staffed during all open hours.
- Student staff are not expected to answer reference questions, but to refer patrons to senior staff on duty.
- If time or staffing does not permit an immediate, complete response to a patron's query, all attempts will be made to follow through within 24 hours with a telephone call, email, or arrangements to pick up required information. All questions are considered to be legitimate and important, unless it becomes obvious that they are not.
- Patron privacy is respected at all times (see Privacy Policy).
- Reference sources are cited for all information provided, unless the information requested is a personal recommendation (e.g. a book you liked, a good restaurant in town).
- Students are given all reference services available to other groups; however, time, budget, and the best interests of the student prohibit staff from amassing an exhaustive collection of materials for research purposes. Students will be given instruction in the use of available searching tools and will be assisted in their searches as staff time permits.

Attachments:

POLICY HISTORY:	
Initial Draft	November 22,2006
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