

Information Services Policy

Date Created: October 11, 2000

Date Reviewed: December 2023

Motion Number: 2024-41

Purpose

The intention of this policy is to provide library staff members with a description of and guidance in providing high quality, responsive and accessible information services to support the Library's vision, and to ensure that our community is aware of the range of services available. The policy does not, however, limit staff initiative in serving the public.

This policy will provide a clear understanding of service levels for our staff and public and will ensure a consistent approach to excellent information services throughout the East Gwillimbury Public Library system.

Types of Information Services Offered

1. Staff members assist library customers in selecting and using the library resources they need. These 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, recommended reading lists and research guides, and access to specialized local collections.

2. Customers may request information through a variety of means, for example: in person, by telephone, by mail, or electronically. All requests are given equal consideration, although some types of questions may require customers to visit the library to fully research them.

3. If a request for information cannot be answered using the resources of the East Gwillimbury Public Library, the customer will be referred, when possible, to other sources or assisted in retrieving the material from another location.

Guidelines

Staff members are committed to answering all requests thoroughly, accurately and without judgment, within a welcoming environment.

1. Customers of all ages and circumstances are treated with equal attention and with sensitivity to their particular needs.
2. In support of the goal of lifelong learning, staff will offer formal and informal instruction and assistance selecting and using library tools and search techniques. Using available staff expertise, customers are encouraged to take an active role in the research process.
3. Library staff will assist customers in finding information from medical, legal, census, or tax sources, but will not offer any interpretation of the information provided. Responsibility for interpreting and applying information rests with the customer.
4. All requests for information will respect customer confidentiality and privacy according to the Library's *Confidentiality of Library Customer Information Policy*, and as dictated by the *Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act. R.S.O. CHAPTER M.56*.
5. Provision of information services follows the Canadian Library Association's *Statement of Intellectual Freedom* and the *Ontario Public Libraries Act R.S.O. 1990*, as referenced in the *Collection Development Policy*.
6. Library staff are available to assist customers with computer and Internet questions. If Library staff are unable to provide in-depth instruction on specific applications, they can assist customers in finding tutorials and help sites, or by referring them to an applicable service or program for further instruction when feasible. Library staff are not permitted to complete online applications or make financial transactions on behalf of customers. If assistance is needed, staff can assist customers in finding tutorials and help sites or refer them to an applicable service or program. (See also East Gwillimbury Public Library's *Public Internet Use Policy*.)

7. During times when employees who lack expertise in a particular subject are assigned to the customer service desk, a customer's question may be referred to another 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 or staff comfort, customer behaviour, or conflicting needs within the library.

8. The Library is committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities and will provide, upon request, alternate formats and communication supports, in compliance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

9. To assess and evaluate information services, statistics on reference questions will be kept and analyzed, whilst respecting customer confidentiality.