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Reference Services Policy [1]

REFERENCE SERVICES DEFINED

- Good reference service involves identifying a person's information need and proceeding to fulfill it accurately, efficiently and pleasantly, using the resources available in the Library, and including referral to resources in other libraries or agencies, if necessary.

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

- Reference services will be provided at all times that the library is open.
- The service desk will be staffed by trained personnel in order to provide quality service.
- The Wichita Falls Public Library regards as valid every reference question asked by any patron of any age. All questions will be given equal consideration and each will be answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit.
- Every effort will be made to complete each reference transaction successfully, consulting with colleagues when necessary.

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT SERVICE PRIORITIES

- The following services will be provided to patrons listed in order of priority:

  Directional personal service to library users who come to the library. Patrons are served on a first come, first served basis.

  Telephone inquiries.

  Library orientation and bibliographic instruction.

  Email, fax, and mail reference.

- Simultaneous requests will be managed at the librarian's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources.
- If the librarian cannot answer a request immediately, he or she will obtain contact

information from the patron and see that the patron received a response within 24 hours.
- If it becomes necessary for a librarian to leave a desk, he/she will make suitable arrangement for coverage.
- Requests from federal, state, or local government agencies have highest priority.

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS

- All information requests are to be handled. If information is available, it is provided to patrons without making a judgment on its moral or aesthetic worth.
- No effort will be made to determine whether library users are entitled to library cards before reference service is given.
- The needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with respect and confidentiality.
- Service to the public takes precedence over other duties and service to the patron present takes precedence over telephone inquiries.
- Librarians will rely upon information obtained from reputable sources in order to give the most accurate and authoritative answers to questions.
- Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions or beliefs should influence the quality of service provided.
- Staff shall not offer their personal opinions, especially on social issues, politics, religion, etc., to patrons.
- Reference staff provides information and guidance in the use of materials, not interpretation of facts.
- Staff will offer to schedule an appointment for patrons if extensive research is needed.
- Telephone reference service should be used for providing short, factual information.
- The library will always cite the source of the answer.

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Mon-Wed 9-8, Th 9-5:30, Fr 9-5, Sat 10-2:30

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