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**BARRIE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PUBLIC SERVICES POLICY**

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**MOTION #16-34**

**Reviewed June 23, 2016**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy is intended to provide library staff with a clear description of and guidance in providing service. The policy is in no way meant to limit initiative on the part of staff in serving the public. Staff are encouraged to use good judgement to satisfy patrons' needs.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

It is the policy of the Public Services Department to answer all reference and information questions efficiently, accurately and as completely as possible, within reason, and to assist patrons in the use of the library and its resources.

If it is not possible to find an answer using the Barrie Public Library resources, patrons will be referred to other libraries, agencies and community resources.

**3. COURTESY AND INTEREST**

All patrons seeking help at the Library will be greeted in a friendly manner and regardless of sex, age, ability and ethnic background will be treated equally, with respect and courtesy.

All questions will be considered important and legitimate, unless it becomes clearly apparent that they are otherwise.

**4. TYPES OF SERVICE**

The Barrie Public Library provides a variety of information services to patrons that are described below:

1. Quick Reference

These questions can usually be answered immediately using resources that are easily accessed.

2. General Reference

General reference usually requires a more lengthy search and/or the use of a number of sources to arrive at a complete answer. The Public Services staff will guide and assist the patron in pursuing the answer while simultaneously providing, as required, informal instruction in how to search and use library resources to the best advantage.

3. Readers' Advisory

Readers' advisory is the activity of recommending books and other library material to patrons and helping them identify their reading, listening, and viewing preferences. Staff assist patrons by making a judgement about the material, utilising the criteria each patron and staff have established.

4. Consultation/Interpretation

Staff will attempt, to the best of their abilities, to provide consultative assistance in defining more difficult questions and will show alternative methods of approach. The level of assistance will be based upon the patron's needs and capacities, and staff time constraints.

The interpretation of information which requires expertise beyond the scope of Public Services staff competence is not attempted; e.g. in the fields of law, medicine, and evaluation or authentication of rare items. A patron will be referred to the information in the library or elsewhere but it will not be interpreted by Public Services staff.

5. Location of Material

The Public Services staff will check for a patron to see whether a specific desired item is in the library's collection. If it is, but is not immediately available, instruction will be given to the patron in placing a hold or a hold will be placed by staff if requested. If the Library does not own the item, assistance will be given to the patron in borrowing it from another library, in locating the information that will allow the patron to purchase the item elsewhere, or in assisting the patron in making a purchase suggestion to the library.

6. Library Orientation, Instruction and Student Assistance

An important component of the duties of the Public Services staff is that of familiarizing the patron with all library services and giving instruction in the use of the public access catalogue, digital resources, Internet, Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) collection, microfilm reader/printer, and other library materials and equipment. The level of assistance provided will depend on the resources and staff available.

Students and researchers are given all information services available to other groups; however, neither time, resources, nor the educational goals of the students allow Public Services staff to amass an exhaustive collection of materials for research papers. Students and researchers will be given instruction in the use of the available searching tools and assisted in their searches.

Due to the number of educational institutions in the community, the library may not be able to provide extensive resources for any one teacher or class.

Public Services staff will provide formal library orientation and instruction to individuals or groups as scheduled, and as per the tour procedure.

7. Referral

It is the policy of the Barrie Public Library to maintain active liaison with other service agencies in the community. This policy is reflected in mutual referral of patrons and sharing of information whenever appropriate. If it has been established by the Public Services staff that a request for information cannot be answered or has been answered only in part with the resources of the Barrie Public Library, the patron will be referred, when appropriate, to another source and assisted, where circumstances warrant, in contacting that source.

Every attempt is made to satisfy requests with materials available in the library before referring patrons or inquiries to outside sources.

8. Special Information Collections

The Barrie Public Library maintains and gives service from the following special collections: (a) local history, (b) genealogy\*, (c) reference and (d) Community Information database. Staff will assist patrons in performing genealogical searches to the extent of their resources, expertise, and staff time available

\* The Library's genealogy holdings are supplemented by the OGS, Simcoe County Branch's collection.

9. Telephone Service

Patrons initiating enquiries by telephone will receive full staff attention. If the Public Services staff member is unable to deal with the telephone request immediately, arrangements will be made to return the call within an agreed upon time period. Staff will endeavour to respond to voice mail messages as quickly as possible on the day they are received.

Patrons needing extensive research service (extended reference) will be requested to visit the library to participate in the research process.

10. Correspondence

In addition to answering requests presented in person and by telephone, the library will also respond to requests received by mail, and e-mail in a timely manner.

11. Interlibrary Loan Service

The Barrie Public Library is part of an information network within the community, within the Southern Ontario Library System and in cooperation with other library systems across Ontario and Canada.

This service is automatically offered by the Public Services staff whenever the information requested cannot be filled by the resources of the Barrie

Public Library and is within the scope of the regional and national interlibrary loan code.

In return, the Barrie Public Library shares its resources in accordance with the code, while always giving priority in the use of resources for its own patrons.

#### 12. Information Barrie

Information Barrie is the Library's community information and referral service. This service is integrated into the overall reference service as part of the Information Services department. Resources include a community information database and pamphlets.

### **5. PRIORITIES OF SERVICE**

The extent of personal service to each individual is dependent on the number of patrons to be served. The following priorities are applied:

- 1st priority - requests presented in person
- 2nd priority - requests presented by telephone/voice mail
- 3rd priority - requests sent in by mail/ /e-mail
- 4th priority - requests received via the interlibrary loan network

### **6. PERSONNEL POLICIES**

The Public service areas will be staffed continually from the time the library opens until it closes by a professional librarian, a graduate from a recognised library techniques program or a person with recognised equivalent training and experience.

### **7. PATRON CONFIDENTIALITY**

Patron's confidentiality is respected at all times, in compliance with our Privacy Policy and government legislation.

Patrons are not asked to identify themselves in any way before reference service is provided.

### **8. PATRON CONDUCT**

The Library is a public building and a service paid for by the taxpayers of Barrie. Abuse of patrons, staff or Library property is not tolerated. Disruptive or abusive patrons will be asked to desist from such behaviour or leave the premises, as per the rules of the Conduct Policy.

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**9. PATRON FEEDBACK**

Patrons who have comments or suggestions regarding services and collections covered by this policy will be promptly assisted at the time of the incident and informed as to how to communicate these to the appropriate Manager.

Motion #01-51	Revised July 5, 2001
Motion #02-45	Revised October 10, 2002
Motion #03-38	Revised October 23, 2003
Motion #04-39	Revised October 28, 2004
Motion #06-39	Revised November 23, 2006
Motion #09-20	Revised June 25, 2009
Motion #11-16	Revised April 28, 2011
Motion #13-22	Revised July 24, 2013
Motion #14-36	Revised November 27, 2014
MOTION #15-27	Revised June 25, 2015
MOTION #16-34	Reviewed June 23, 2016