

Reference and Reader's Advisory Policy

Reference Number:	Section 5 No. 08
Responsible Department:	Library Services
Related Policy/Procedure:	
Date of Adoption:	23 May 2000
Current Review Date:	27 April 2021
Minute Reference:	12.2.1
Version Number:	Amendment 3
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act, 1999 Libraries Act, 1985 Copyright Act, 1968 Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act, 2000
Next Review Date:	December 2024
Review Frequency:	Triennially

1. Purpose

The Light Regional Council Library Service provides Reference and Reader's Advisory services to help people find information, select library materials and use library and other information resources (print and digital). Staff respond to varied information needs using the library collections to the fullest extent possible and identifying sources beyond the library whenever necessary. Staff use professional judgment to assess needs and provide information, assistance or instruction appropriate to individual requests.

2. Policy

- 2.1 Library staff reply to all requests for information and will accept questions:
 - In person
 - Over the telephone
 - Through the mail
 - Via e-mail
 - Via any other approved Council communication tool.
- 2.2 Although all requests for assistance will be provided on a first come, first served basis, priority will be given to in-person enquiries over other kinds of enquiries.
- 2.3 Reference transactions are confidential.
- 2.4 In providing information, especially in the subject areas of law, medicine, consumer information, personal finance/tax information, staff will use professional judgment while avoiding personal interpretations and recommendations.
- 2.5 Staff will not discriminate on basis of age, gender, race, sexual preference or disability in the provision of reference services.
- 2.6 Staff may set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to user requests for information. Simple requests for information can usually be answered fully.

More complex questions may require that users participate in finding needed information, with staff providing guidance and assistance. Patrons doing in-depth research or needing extensive individual reader guidance should expect to receive professional assistance, direction and library instruction, but will be expected to conduct the actual research themselves.

- 2.7 The reference interview is a vital part of reference or reader's advisory transactions. Telephone, e-mail and mail do not allow face to face interaction and follow-up, therefore misinterpretation is always a possibility. As such, only brief definitions or descriptions can be read over the telephone or sent via e-mail and mail or other approved Council communication tool. Sources will always be quoted verbatim without interpretation.
- 2.8 In order to ensure equitable access, staff may impose reasonable limits on the use of resources such as the Internet or Family history resources.
- 2.9 Reference materials are circulated only under special circumstances and are subject to the approval of the Library Services Manager.
- 2.10 In supplying reference and reader's advisory services library staff will comply with copyright and other applicable restrictions in the use of library materials.

Policy History

- 1. Original Policy adopted by Council 23 May 2000, refer Council Minute 15.2.2.1, Page 2000/161
- 2. Policy Amendment No. 1 adopted by Council 22 October 2013, refer Council Minute 10.2.6., Page 2013/303.
- 3. Policy Amendment No. 2 adopted by Council on 13 December 2016, refer Council Minute 13.2.2, Page 2016/471.
- 4. Amendment No. 3 adopted by Council on 27 April 2021, Minute Reference 12.2.1, Page Reference 2021/94