

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Policy

Priorities for Reference Services

Policy Statement

The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury is dedicated to meeting the information needs of the community. The Priorities for Reference Service Policy provides library service guidelines for the staff so that patrons will receive consistently high levels of service.

Definitions

A reference question is defined as any request for information, in person, by mail, phone, e-mail, fax, from either a child or adult, that requires the use of library materials or the professional judgment of the librarian to answer the question. The questions may involve requests for: help with the catalog (not mechanical questions such as how to operate a reader/printer); literature searches; readers' advisory services; referral to sources of information; help in finding specific facts; use of electronic resources.

Regulations

In support of this aim, the philosophy of service is based on the following:

- All library users are provided with equal service. Staff will provide information impartially.
- Users need not be registered borrowers or local residents to receive reference service.
- All requests by users for information are legitimate and are treated as such.
- All transactions between the patron and library staff members are confidential. Patrons and information requests are discussed only for conferring with a colleague for assistance or for training purposes.

Service Priorities

Service to the public has priority over all other tasks.

All patrons requesting for reference service other than readers' advisory or basic local information and directions will be referred to the library staff.

Simultaneous requests will be managed at the Director's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. In-person and telephone reference requests will be handled in the order they are received. Email requests will be handled in the order in which they are received, but in-person and telephone requests will take precedence.

If the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury cannot provide an immediate response to an in-person or telephone inquiry, or an answer within twenty-four hours to an email inquiry, library staff will contact the Reference Librarian on duty at the District Center Library in Doylestown to request assistance.

For reference service that requires extensive research and time, patrons may utilize the library's book-a-librarian service and arrange for a half-hour, uninterrupted session with a librarian.

Referrals Outside the Bucks County Public Library System

If the library staff deems it appropriate to refer the patron to another library or agency, the staff member will make every effort to verify that the material is at the agency. If it is not possible to call the agency immediately, staff will encourage the patron to call ahead before traveling to the agency. Staff will provide the name, address, and telephone number of the agency to the patron, and will verify this information if possible.

Library staff should never refer patrons to individual practitioners -- physicians, attorneys, mental health professionals, or others.

Sources

Library staff will rely upon information obtained from reputable sources in order to give the most accurate and authoritative answers to questions. Library staff should avoid giving personal opinions, philosophy, or evaluations; rather, they should rely upon information obtained from reputable sources. Library staff will always cite the source of the answer.

Instruction and Orientation Services

Instruction and orientation in library use may range from basic individual and class instruction on how to use catalogs, reference tools, the e-library and the Internet to more formal assistance which can be scheduled by appointment if staff time allows.

Specific Reference Policies: School Assignments

Homework is intended to be a learning experience for the student. The role of the library staff is one of guidance in helping students find material or potential sources of information to complete homework assignments and to evaluate information sources. Library staff will make every effort to assist students in locating the material needed for a class project. The students should use the material to complete their assignments.

Specific Reference Policies: Contest Questions

Library staff will treat simple, factual questions in the same manner as all other reference questions. Some contest questions are tricky and might have more than one answer that seems to be correct. The library cannot guarantee that the answer provided is the correct answer for any particular contest. Library staff will not conduct lengthy searches or interpret contest rules.

Specific Reference Policies: Consumer Evaluations

Library staff will help patrons locate objective product information by showing them how to use Consumer Reports and other related magazines, buying guides, and/or general indexes that may lead to product evaluations in other periodicals.

Specific Reference Policies: Book, Antique, and Art Appraisals

The library is not staffed with experts for making appraisals of books, works of art, antiques, coins, stamps, currency or other collectibles. Library staff should refer patrons to appropriate reference resources.

Specific Reference Policies: Genealogical Questions

Library staff will provide general assistance in genealogical research including guidance in locating items in the collection, guidance in contacting other local agencies, and help in obtaining resources through Interlibrary Loan, but library staff will not engage in actual genealogical research for patrons.

Specific Reference Policies: Translations

The library will provide brief translations only if a staff member is available with the appropriate expertise.

Specific Reference Policies: Compilations and Literature Searches

Library staff cannot prepare extensive compilations (bibliographies, lists, statistics, etc.) for patrons, nor can they undertake exhaustive literature searches. If patrons ask library staff to search the library's holdings on a topic and to have materials ready for them to pick up, library staff will do a quick search in library databases and/or scan periodical citations and retrieve some relevant books. Library staff will hold retrieved materials for patrons at the Circulation Desk. Library staff will also offer to assist patrons in their research.

Specific Reference Policies: Mathematical Calculations

Library staff will not perform mathematical calculations for patrons.

Specific Reference Policies: Medical, Tax and Legal Questions

The library does not provide advice or interpretation in the areas of medicine, taxes or law. Library staff cannot undertake legal searches or interpret legal reference sources. This would be regarded as practicing law.

In response to requests for medical information, library staff can only read brief definitions from authoritative sources. They will quote the sources verbatim, and they will inform the patron of the name of the quoted source.

Library staff will not provide advice in the interpretation of tax law or assistance in the selection of appropriate forms.

Specific Reference Policies: Patent Searches

The library does not provide services related to patent searches. These requests will be forwarded to the District Library Center at Doylestown.

Electronic Information Retrieval: Fee-Based Searching

Library staff will use professional judgment to determine when a fee-based electronic database would be the best means of answering a question. In this case, the patron will be advised of the existence of the fee-based material and provided with basic information on how to access the resource. The library cannot subsidize requests for fee-based materials.

Electronic Information Retrieval: General Searching

Library staff will use professional judgment to determine whether Internet resources are appropriate authoritative answers for questions. Librarians will offer suggestions to

patrons who are using Internet workstations and will help within the limits of their expertise in determining whether a resource is authoritative. Library staff will not guarantee the validity of information retrieved but will attempt to provide the patron with tools and contextual information that will help to evaluate the resource.

Loan of Reference Materials

The purpose of a reference collection is to assure library patrons of access to reference tools at all times that the library is open. Reference materials do not circulate. An exception may be made at the Director's discretion if a second copy of the resource is available within the library, or easily available within the Bucks County Public Library system.

Statistics

Statistics on reference questions asked and answered will be compiled during two sample weeks selected by the District Consultant. These results will be extrapolated and used as the basis for all reporting on reference questions.

Approved by Board of Trustees June 17, 2009

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Policy

Priorities for Outreach

Policy Statement

The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury is dedicated to meeting the needs of the community. In order to meet these needs it may be necessary from time to time to offer services at locations other than the library. It may be desirable to form partnerships with outside groups. It may be necessary to undertake other actions outside the normal scope of library service to ensure that members of the community are aware of services offered by the library. The Priorities for Outreach Policy provides library service guidelines for determining when outreach activities such as these are appropriate.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy "outreach" is defined as activity provided outside the normal provision of library services with the intent of promoting library services, creating community partnerships, or meeting needs which cannot be met within the library proper.

Regulations

Outreach activities may be initiated by either the Library Director or the Board of Trustees. The Library Director has primary responsibility for any outreach which involves provision of library services or which has an immediate impact on day-to-day operations. The Board of Trustees has primary responsibility for any outreach activity primarily involved with fundraising, long range planning, or the setting of policy.

The Library Director will promptly notify the Board of Director-led outreach activities. The Board will promptly notify the Director of Board-led outreach activities. The Director and Board will coordinate their activities to ensure that the library is well-represented to outside parties.

Outreach priorities will be determined in accord with the library's long-range plan. Activities which support the goals of the long range plan will be given precedence.

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Policy

INTERNET ACCESS AND USE POLICY

Policy Statement

The primary purpose of Internet access in Bucks County public libraries, including the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury, is to serve as an access point for information. Access to electronic information and communication is a privilege granted to library patrons. As a member of the Bucks County Public Library Information Technology Consortium the library has an obligation to adhere to consortium standards and policies while ensuring library patrons the best possible access to electronic resources.

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities of the library and library patrons to ensure safe, effective provision of electronic information services and to safeguard computers, networks, and data from inappropriate use.

Regulations

The Library endorses and joins in the Bucks County Free Library Internet Access Policy (see BCFL IING 8), and includes the regulations listed below.

The Library may impose sign up systems and limit the number of persons seated per computer to ensure that computer use is orderly and behavior and safety standards are met.

The Library may charge and collect fees for computer printouts.

Computer users who wish to listen to sound must bring their own headsets or other listening hardware.

Computer users who wish to save files must bring their own media (such as thumbdrives or discs). Files may not be saved directly to library computers.

Adopted by the Board of Directors May 20, 2009

Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Policy**PUBLIC COMPUTER AND NETWORK ACCESS POLICY****Policy Statement**

Computers, networks and electronic information systems are essential resources allowing the Free Library of New Hope and Solebury to provide access to information and information services to library users. These resources represent a substantial investment and must be managed responsibly to ensure their integrity and security.

As a member of the Bucks County Public Library Information Technology Consortium the library has an obligation to adhere to consortium standards and policies while ensuring library patrons the best possible access to electronic resources.

The purpose of this policy is to define the roles and responsibilities of the library and library patrons to ensure safe, effective provision of electronic information services and to safeguard computers, networks, and data from inappropriate use.

Regulations

The Library endorses and joins in the Bucks County Free Library Network Access Policy (see BCFL ING 8), and includes the regulations listed below.

To ensure safety, computer users may only plug in computers or other devices in locations designated and approved by Library staff. The Library does not guarantee availability of an electrical outlet.

The Library may charge and collect fees for computer printouts.

Computer users who wish to listen to sound must use headsets or other devices so that no noise is audible to other patrons.

Adopted by the Board of Directors May 20, 2009

The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Services

USE OF LIBRARY-PROVIDED PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Policy Statement

Computers, networks and electronic information systems are essential resources for accomplishing the Bucks County Free Library (BCFL) mission to provide access to information and information services to residents of Bucks County. These resources represent a substantial investment and must be managed responsibly to ensure their integrity and security.

Regulations

The library may set limits on the use of computers in its buildings to ensure that computer access is equitable and that computer use is consistent with the library's mission. This may include time limits on workstation use or network limits to communication resources such as e-mail or chat.

Bucks County libraries impose computer sign-up systems and limit the number of persons seated per computer to ensure that computer use is orderly and behavior and safety standards are met.

Bucks County libraries may charge and collect fees for computer printouts.

Bucks County Public Library computer and network system users are responsible for the content of all text, audio and images they place on or send over the Internet.

Those who use Bucks County public library computer and network systems will not:

- Copy, transfer, rename, add, or delete information or programs belonging to others unless given express permission to do so by the owner. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action by the institution and/or legal action by the copyright owner
- Transmit copyrighted materials without permission
- Transmit any content that is offensive, harassing, or fraudulent
- Conduct any illegal activities using Bucks County Public Library systems.

The transfer of financial and other personal data is at your own risk. The library cannot guarantee that such information sent over the Internet will be secure. The library is not responsible for the misuse of personal information entered on Web sites.

All messages created, sent, or retrieved over the library network are the property of the library and *may be regarded as public information*. Bucks County public libraries reserve the right to access the contents of any messages sent over its facilities if the management believes, in its sole judgment, that it has a business need to do so.

All communications, including text and images, can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver.

Computers provided for public use are configured with various computer software programs that are legally licensed and have been tested for compatibility with BCFL systems. Approved and tested hardware devices such as printers have also been set up and configured to work on the BCFL computer network. To ensure that library computer use does not weaken or damage network security or system reliability, users will not:

- Knowingly cause harm to BCFL or other systems using BCFL resources
- Install any software onto BCFL systems, including but not limited to file-sharing programs such as Gnutella and instant messaging programs such as IRC or Yahoo or Microsoft Instant Messenger
- Connect personal laptops or other computer systems to the BCFL network, except via the provided WiFi network

Computer viruses are programs designed to make unauthorized changes to computer programs and data and can be extremely harmful to the efficient operation of the library computer network. Library computer and network system users will:

- Avoid knowingly introducing computer viruses into BCFL computer systems
- Have all incoming media, such as diskettes and CDs, scanned for viruses
- Immediately report any suspicion of virus infection to a library staff member.

Illegal use of library computers, including violations of intellectual property rights and unauthorized electronic access ("hacking"), may result in loss of privileges.

Bucks County public library computer hardware, software, data and documentation are protected from theft, misuse, unauthorized access and environmental hazards. Those who use the computer and network systems will abide by all applicable policies dealing with security and behavior (See CUS 2.)

Bucks County library computer users must abide by all library policies and regulations. Violation may result in immediate termination of access to the BCFL network or networked computers, depending on the nature and severity of the violation, up to and including loss of computer privileges at Bucks County public libraries.

The Free Library of New Hope and Solebury

Information Services

INTERNET USE

Policy Statement

Bucks County public libraries provide access to the Internet as an electronic tool for staff and users to locate information. Providing Internet access enables the library to greatly expand its information services. Access to electronic information and communication is a privilege granted to library users.

The library receives federal funding in support of public Internet access. Federal law (CIPA, the Children's Internet Protection Act) requires libraries receiving such funding to install filters that block access to adult content, defined as visual depictions in three categories: child pornography, obscenity, and harmful to minors, on all public computers. The library uses filtering software on all computer workstations.

Regulations

Proper use of the Internet is the responsibility of the user. By using the library's computers, users agree to comply with all library regulations and all laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States.

The library may require computer users to read and sign an Internet use agreement stating they will abide by library Internet policy and computer use procedures.

It is a felony offense in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania "to display or cause to display any explicit sexual material...on any...viewing screen in such a manner that the display is visible...in any establishment where minors, as part of the general public, may be exposed to view all or any part of such materials. (Penna. Crimes Code – Sect. 5903.) Therefore, viewing of such material in the public library in view of minors or by minors will not be permitted. Violation of this provision may result in the immediate termination of the user's Internet privileges.

Not all sources on the Internet provide information that is accurate, complete, current, legal or philosophically acceptable to all people. Library users use Internet resources at their own risk. Those users who access electronic mail and other communication tools are cautioned to be aware of proper safety and security measures, and of the potential danger of disclosing personal information via the Internet.

Because parents or legal guardians may feel that some information available through the Internet is not suitable for viewing by children in their care, parental supervision is strongly advised. Parents or legal guardians, and not the library or its staff, are responsible for all information found by children on library computers. Staff members are available to assist caregivers in finding appropriate sites, and the library website has special sections developed specifically for preschoolers, children, and teens.

Upon request, library staff will disable the Internet filter for their session for adult users over the age of 18. The library reserves the right to ask for identification establishing that this federal age requirement for the removal of the filter has been met. Children under age 18 may ask to have a website unblocked temporarily for their information needs.

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