

REFERENCE POLICY

Ref-1 Responsibility for reference service

Board motion number: 156:06

All public service staff of the Bonnechere Union Public Library must receive training in offering subject assistance to library patrons before taking sole responsibility for handling the circulation desk. All staff may attempt to answer questions and requests for information from any library patron, regardless of age.

Ref-2 Type of service offered

Board motion number: 157:06

Library staff will attempt to answer questions as fully as possible, but must keep in mind the needs of all patrons using the library. If a question proves to be very time-consuming (requiring more than 15 minutes to answer), the library patron may have to be called later with the answer. A possible time-frame for answering the question should be provided to the patron. The Bonnechere Union Public Library welcomes all questions from all patrons and, except for the circumstances noted in REF-3, will attempt to answer any question, and will do so without passing judgement on the nature of the question.

Ref-3 Excluded questions

Board motion number: 158:06

School-related questions will be answered in the same manner as all reference questions. Only simple answers can be provided for prize contest questions. In the course of reference duty, a staff member may be asked to provide information from medical, legal, census, or tax sources. Library staff will do so readily, but must not offer any interpretation of the information provided.

Ref-4 Telephone and fax requests

Board motion number: 159:06

Requests received by telephone, fax or in writing are treated as all other requests, but if the library is busy, priority will be given to the needs of patrons who have come into the library. Telephone questions will be answered when time permits. The patron will need to be called back on the principle of first come-first served, giving a realistic expectation of how long it might take to address the question.

Ref-5 Development of the reference collection

Board motion number: 160:06

The chief executive officer (CEO) is responsible for developing and maintaining the reference collection appropriate to the needs of the community. He/she may delegate tasks to other staff members, as appropriate. Please refer to the collection policies of the Bonnechere Union Public Library. Questions which the library staff was unable to answer will be noted. The CEO will peruse these questions from time to time, to assist in selecting materials for the library.

Ref-6 Unanswered questions

Board motion number: 161:06

Questions for which no answer or material has been found in the Bonnechere Union Public Library collection will be referred to the appropriate agency by the library staff (if such an agency is known), or will become an interlibrary loan request. If time permits, staff may contact the agency for the patron. This includes making long distance calls on a patron's behalf. If time does not allow this, the name of the organization, as well as information allowing the patrons to directly contact the agency will be supplied if possible.

Ref-7 Reference statistics

Board motion number: 162:06

Accurate statistics regarding service to patrons should be recorded using the Reference Statistics Form provided.

Ref-8 Circulation of reference material

Board motion number: 163:06

Reference questions may be answered using the entire collection of the library. However, some material will be designated for use in the library only. Such material normally does not circulate. In exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the senior staff member on duty, a special one- or two-day loan may be granted.