Muhlenberg
COMMUNITY LIBRARY

3612 Kutztown Rd
Reading PA 19605

Reference Service Policy

The Muhlenberg Community Library is committed to provide a "Basic Plus" level of reference service to its patrons. 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.

The Muhlenberg Community Library regards as valid every reference question asked by any patron. 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.

While Library staff will make every effort to assist patrons and students with their research, their focus will be on empowering patrons and staff to learn how best to utilize the Library collection and services so that they may perform their own research, especially in the case of lengthy and/or complex research.

During library hours, a staff member will be available to respond to inquiries from the public. Volunteers are not trained nor expected to perform reference services. Staff will receive introductory and continuing training to allow them to effectively use Muhlenberg Community Library's collection and to make referrals to other reference resources. When the Library lacks the resources necessary to answer an inquiry, the inquiry may be forwarded, with the knowledge of the patron, to the District Center Library (Reading Public Library). The patron may also be advised of other libraries' resources or referred to appropriate agencies. Patrons should be informed of the availability of Power Library's 24/7 online reference service: *Chat with a Librarian*. *Chat with a Librarian* is supported by funds administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Bureau of Library Development and is managed by HSLC/Access PA.

Direct public services receive priority over other library duties. Efforts shall be taken to provide response to patrons as promptly and effectively as possible. Simultaneous requests will be managed at the Library staff discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. If the Library staff 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.

REFERENCE SERVICE STANDARDS

All information requests are to be handled. If information or resources are available, it should be 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.

Library staff will rely upon information obtained from reputable sources in order to give the most accurate and authoritative answers to questions. Staff should avoid giving personal opinions, philosophy, or evaluations.

Library staff can teach patrons how to use library resources to accomplish their research goal. Library staff may not type or proofread your document; provide medical, legal, financial, business, or tax advice or opinion; do a patron's research or homework for them.

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No referrals to private physicians, pharmacists, lawyers, accountants, tutors, or other professionals may be given.

Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions or beliefs should influence the quality of service provided.

Telephone reference service should be used for providing short, factual information.

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Reviewed and approved by Board of Trustees 11/14/2005
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Reviewed by Board of Trustees 10/12/2009
Reviewed by Board of Trustees 5/12/2010
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