



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.

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 the reference collection of the Muhlenberg Community Library 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 a 24/7 online reference service: *Ask Here PA*. *Ask Here PA* 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 librarian's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. If the librarian 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. A patron requiring lengthy and complex research may be instructed on the use of available resources in order to perform their own research. Students performing school assignments should be instructed in locating and using the appropriate resources.

REFERENCE SERVICE STANDARDS

All information requests are to be handled. If information is available, it is 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.

Service to the public takes precedence over other duties and service to the patron present takes precedence over telephone inquiries.

Librarians 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. The library will always cite the source and date of publication of the resource used.

Librarians do not give medical, legal, financial or tax advice. No referrals to private physicians, pharmacists, lawyers, accountants, tutors, or other professionals may be given.



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

Staff shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc., to patrons.

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

Reviewed and approved by Board of Trustees 11/14/2005

Reviewed and amended by Board of Trustees 11/12/2007

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Reviewed by Board of Trustees 5/12/2010

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