

# **SUN PRAIRIE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## ***REFERENCE SERVICES POLICY***

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- I. Purpose**
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### **I. Purpose**

- (A) The Sun Prairie Public Library provides reference services for people of all ages. The purpose of the Sun Prairie Public Library Reference Services Policy is to ensure that patrons receive knowledgeable and personalized assistance in finding appropriate information and selecting and using library resources.

### **II. Overview of Services**

- (A) Reference service is provided for both adults and children at the Information Desk. The Reference Collection includes adult, young adult, and children's reference materials in a variety of formats.
- (B) Library staff answers requests in a variety of ways including:
  - In person at the Information Desk or other library service desks
  - By phone at the Information Desk
  - Via email on the library's web site
  - Via AskAway, an online reference service available to patrons 24 hours per day, seven days a week
  - By mail
- (C) Library staff provides formal and informal instruction to patrons on the use of library resources, including:
  - Print, and electronic resources
  - LINKcat and database classes
  - One-on-one training sessions by appointment
  - Impromptu, brief instruction in the use of library resources

### **III. Priorities and Limitations**

- (A) Questions will be responded to in the order received, with priority service given to in-person requests.
- (B) Library staff may set reasonable limits on the amount of time and level of response given to patron requests for information.
  - Telephone requests are limited to questions that can be answered within three to five minutes.
  - Email requests will be answered within 24 to 48 hours.

- Mail requests will be answered within one week of receipt of request. There is no charge for this service; however, donations to the Sun Prairie Public Library are always welcome.
  - Library staff will assist students in finding answers to homework questions, but will not complete the work for them.
  - Library staff will assist patrons with in-depth research by providing library instruction, but patrons are expected to conduct the actual research themselves.
- (C) While the goal is to provide reference service all the hours the library is open, there may be times when staff is unavailable. Requests will be responded to within 48 hours, whether they are submitted via telephone, email, or a printed form available at the Information and Registration Desks.
- (D) Library staff may refer information requests to other South Central Library System libraries, state and local agencies, or use the Interlibrary Loan System to obtain materials from outside South Central Library System when appropriate.

#### **IV. Service Ethics**

- (A) The Sun Prairie Public Library Reference Policy follows the standards set by the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, 1995.
- (B) Library staff will treat all requests, and the patrons who make them, with respect. Appropriate assistance will be provided courteously and impartially to all, regardless of age, background, disability, origin or views.
- (C) Library staff will provide accurate, timely, up-to-date information from authoritative print, online, and electronic resources, or from a reliable authority.
- The complete citation of the source used to provide information, including title, author, and date of publication, will be given to the patron.
  - Library staff will use professional judgment and will avoid giving advice when providing information to patrons, especially in the areas of law, medicine, tax, personal finance, and consumer information.
  - Responses will be provided in the most expedient and convenient manner.
- (D) All library transactions are treated confidentially as required by Wisconsin Statute 43.30. (See the Library's Confidentiality Policy.)

Adopted May 11, 2006