Warren-Newport Public Library District

Lake County, Illinois

Board of Trustees

Policy 3035

Reference and Reader's Advisory Services

Adopted: August 9, 2005
Reviewed/Revised: November 17, 2009; June 18, 2013; September 17, 2013; January 15, 2019; February 16, 2021; March 18, 2025; February 10, 2026

ARTICLE 1. INTRODUCTION

The Warren-Newport Public Library District (WNPLD) serves a diverse public with unique individual needs and widely varied levels of ability to conduct research independently. Reference and reader's advisory services offer assistance to patrons in the use of Library collections and resources. The most recent standards document from the Illinois Library Association (ILA), *Illinois Public Library Standards,* provides the model for this policy. In accordance with those standards, the Board of Trustees shall review this policy biennially.

ARTICLE 2. PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

All staff members are expected to treat each question asked with respect, regardless of the level of assistance required or the topic of the question. Names of users and the transactions that occur between users and the staff are confidential and not discussed outside a professional context. The Board of Trustees and Executive Director of WNPLD encourage staff of all levels to pursue opportunities for continuing education that will enable them to better meet the needs of the Library's patrons. Staff members receive in-house training regarding appropriate responses to patron questions, including reference and reader's advisory questions. This training includes reference interviewing techniques, reader's advisory service, and information literacy instruction.

ARTICLE 3. RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES

Reference service, reader's advisory, and related materials are available during all hours the library is open and are provided in response to inquiries of all forms, including but not limited to inquiries from patrons in the library, by telephone, by email, etc. The reference and reader's advisory questions of patrons in the library are given the highest priority.

ARTICLE 4. RESPONSE TIME

All requests for information receive an answer or status report within one (1) working day.

ARTICLE 5. REFERRALS

Questions that cannot be answered with on-site resources are referred to another agency. Such referrals are verified and/or mediated by library staff. The staff does not evaluate or interpret information provided, nor does the staff explain the definitions of terms, offer advice, select or complete forms, or otherwise serve as a surrogate for a professional in any field. If all materials within the library are beyond the understanding of the patron, the patron will be advised to consult with an appropriate professional for additional information or advice.

ARTICLE 6. REFERENCE MATERIALS

Materials in the Reference Collection, regardless of format, do not circulate.
