Jefferson College Library
Chat/SMS Reference Policy

Chat/SMS (Short Message Service) reference services offer the opportunity to provide patrons with convenient access to Library reference services. Jefferson College Library is committed to meeting the needs of our patrons through the use of technology. The Jefferson College Library Chat and SMS Reference expands access to high quality information provided by librarians from off-campus locations.

I. Definitions:
1. *Chat* refers to one-to-one, real time, text-based conversations via an Instant Messaging service.
2. *SMS* refers to the exchange of brief text-based conversations via a mobile phone.
3. *Libraryh3lp* is the name of the software which the Jefferson College Library utilizes for the Chat/SMS Reference service.
4. The library utilizes a service called Chatstaff that makes chat available during selected hours when the library itself is closed. Chatstaff is a service that connects to off-site librarians with ALA-accredited MLS or Information Science degrees who answer questions on behalf of Jefferson College Librarians. This service is not a replacement for Jefferson College Librarian expertise, but may serve as information triage to provide patrons with ready reference assistance, and support until such a time as they may correspond with a Jefferson College librarian.

II. Purpose:
The purpose of the Jefferson College Library Chat/SMS Reference Service is to provide real-time, easy access Reference Services to Jefferson College students, faculty, staff, and the community. The Library strives to make our services available to students both on- and off-campus, and this service allows us to meet this goal.

III. Guidelines:
1. Availability- Chat/SMS Reference is available most times the Library is open, except during times the Librarian staffing the chat service is assisting others in person or teaching a class. In addition, the chat service will be available during posted weekend and evening hours based on assessed need. Library Chat availability is posted at https://www.jeffco.edu/libraryhours.
2. Service- There are three ways in which to engage the Librarian in Chat/SMS Reference: patrons may choose to visit the *Ask A Librarian* link found on the Library's home page; patrons may access the chat page on the Library website directly by navigating to the URL: https://www.jeffco.edu/current-students/academic-services/library/ask-librarian; or patrons may send a text message to 636-486-0898. The chat widget can also be found on various

LibGuides and databases, which patrons may access by clicking the green dialogue bubble. When chat is unavailable, the green icon will turn gray.

3. Usage- The types of questions patrons may ask via Chat/SMS Reference include, but are not limited to: information about using Library materials or services; guidance on finding information sources on the Web; assistance with using Blackboard, MyJeffco, and other computer services; and directional assistance finding the appropriate Jefferson College resources to solve their problems. Chat/SMS Reference can be used for any informational needs that patrons may have.

4. Chat/SMS Reference complements the Library's other online reference service where patrons can ask questions by email. Librarians may advise patrons to contact us by phone at 636-797-3000 ext. 3160, 3161, 3166, 3167 (Hillsboro), 3556 (Arnold) or in person if a question seems better addressed in one of those ways. Reference questions are answered in the order in which they are received. If there will be a wait time, the approximate wait time will be communicated to the patron. Patrons visiting the library in person will have priority. If the question would be better addressed by a different Jefferson College department, the patron will be given the contact information for the appropriate office or department.

5. Inappropriate Usage- Behavior inappropriate to regular social media and computer use policy standards will not be tolerated. The Librarian reserves the right to terminate chat sessions of patrons engaging in obscene language, threats, or harassing behavior. In the event that a reference session is terminated, the patron will be informed as to the reasons why their behavior is not appropriate.

6. Librarians are ethically required to refuse to provide opinions on personal medical, legal, or financial matters, but will refer the patron to appropriate information sources. Librarian advice cannot take the place of other professional advice that would come from a doctor, lawyer, or accountant (respectively).

7. Privacy--Patrons may use the Chat/SMS Reference service anonymously; however, IP (Internet Protocol) addresses are logged automatically. The Library keeps logs of chat sessions for training and tracking purposes. Any information which might identify a particular student is purged from the record. Identifying information may include student name, Jeffco ID number or other personal information.

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