

Pandemic

Policy

Adopted June 4, 2020

Pandemic Policy

If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the Library must be prepared to handle unique situations that may arise around staffing, extended closure of the facility, ongoing fiscal responsibilities and ways to accommodate needs of the community. In addition, during a pandemic, businesses, social organizations or schools may be required to take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness including closing down by order of local public health officials.

Other public health measures may include limiting or canceling social and public gatherings, requiring quarantines and/or other social distancing measures. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or some other physical crisis. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the library can be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

A pandemic plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy. With an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption staff will return to the building, or begin rebuilding, almost immediately after the event or crises. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, services and hours may be necessary for several weeks or more.

Library Closure

The library will close due to pandemic in the event that an order or recommendation for closure is issued by public health or government officials on the local, county or state level.

At the discretion of the library director, the library may close, reduce its operating hours or limit services temporarily in the event there is not sufficient staff to maintain normal library service levels. The minimum staff level is defined as two healthy employees.

Reduced service phases may include:

1. Reduction of normal operating hours if staff level falls below the minimum requirement of two workers.
2. Cancellation of all programs, special events and meeting room reservations.
3. Day-to-day evaluation of library service levels to determine public access to services.

In the event of area school closings, the library will cancel all programs and special events and student access will be limited. In addition, to limit the spread of germs, all non-circulating children's materials will be removed from public areas for the duration of closure.

In the event of closure by public health mandate, only essential staff, Board members or Friends will be allowed in the facility to maintain essential functions and fiscal commitments. Access will be provided for cleaning and maintenance services as needed.

The Library Director will ensure plans for extended closure include:

- 1) security considerations for an empty facility
- 2) periodic check ups on building condition
- 3) ongoing payment of bills
- 4) response to important email and telephone messages

Communications

As with any limitation of services or closure, notification will be made via MailChimp and other social media. If a date to reopen is unclear, the public will be urged to check the website daily for updates. Whatever limited services remain available will be listed: for example, return of books or limited hours of service.

The library director will take responsibility to maintain the telephone contact tree to ensure that efficient, timely communication may occur to employees, the Board of Trustees and Friends.

Public health posters will be posted to provide information suggesting social distancing practices, washing hands, wiping keyboards and other recommended "good practices". Furniture will be reconfigured as needed to conform to such guidelines. Useful public health links will be made available on social media. The Library Director will make the library facility and resources as available to the community as possible within the public health guidelines provided for the health and safety of patrons and staff during each phase of operational capability.

Employee Absences

Under the New York State Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), employees will be paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Specific details regarding employee benefits under the Act are attached to this policy and posted in the library.. Employees should notify the library director if they develop a qualifying condition.

Responsibility for Library Operations

If, for any reason, the library director is unable or unavailable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, administrative authority for this policy shall fall to the Board of Directors. All library operations shall fall to a library staff member designated by the library director.