

## **Policy 950**

### Pandemic or Epidemic Response Policy

(Associated Procedures)

#### **A. Introduction – Policy Statement**

When it is determined by the Director in consultation with the Board President or the next available officer that an emergency situation exists or is impending and when it is determined best for the safety, health, and general welfare of the public and the staff, the closing of the Library or restrictions of service levels may be authorized.

In accordance with the Library District Act which designates the Library Board of Trustees and designees to respond to emergency situations, this policy contains associated levels of service restrictions to be put in place with prudence. This policy and associated procedures is put into place when the greater good of the community outweighs the typical drive to maintain an open facility or full operations.

Associated steps are crafted to inform the public of an outline of what may expected in services and facility operations that may be taken in response to a local, state or national health threat. These may be defined as a health crisis, pandemic, epidemic or other serious state of risk.

The Library Director is authorized to respond quickly in rapidly evolving situations, in consultation with Board President or other officers, in situations where a full Board meeting may not be possible. Rapid judgement calls may need to be made, and will be supported by the Board of Trustees.

Every effort will be made to consult reputable resources such as the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Kane County Health Department, local Village resources, reputable information sources and other Libraries as a matter of best practice. While decisions to limit or cease services may not always be met with public approval, this policy provides guidance and support for the Board and Administration to make difficult or unpopular decisions and navigate public opinion.

#### **B. Personnel Considerations**

Employees scheduled to work on a day that the Library is at limited services may be required, as health and wellness allows, to work within the facility to continue to serve the public. Activities may not be department restricted as all staff will participate in assisting where help is needed. Activities included may be drive-up Circulation, processing holds, assisting patrons via phone or e-mail or other projects as assignment. Staff may be designated to work remotely by the Director as their position allows.

Immune compromised staff members should inform the Director of such, and job modifications may be made.

Staff that are working within the facility or remotely will be paid for regular hours. Should the Library elect to have a full closure with no services, staff will be paid for their regularly scheduled hours.

Staff Illness: Staff that have paid time off (PTO) and are unable to work due to illness will utilize their PTO first, and then may take unpaid time. Staff that do not have paid time off may take unpaid days off. The Library Director is authorized to make additional accommodations such as reassigned days of work or

allow staff to make up hours as it is reasonable to operations and appropriate to the health considerations of the staff member. Every effort will be made to assist the staff member, however the Library does not provide additional benefits or sick time for variable, seasonal, or select part time positions.

Should a staff member exhibit signs of illness, the Library Director may require the staff member to take time off to preserve the health and wellness of other staff members. FMLA will be encouraged should an illness be extensive.

The Library Director may utilize discretion in allowing the employee to return to work, and may require a Doctor's note if there is a concern of wellness or ability to perform duties.

### **C. Levels of Response**

Response levels with associated procedures are defined, but not inclusive. Further adaptations may be made, especially in rapidly evolving situations. At each step, an analysis of prudence, community needs, and other local information will be a key consideration.

#### **Level 1: Precautionary Health Procedures**

*To be used when virus activity in Kane County estimated to be high and/or when a pandemic illness has entered US borders.*

1. Cleaning & Supplies
  - a. Purchase additional cleaning and disease prevention supplies.
  - b. Provide tissues and hand sanitizer to staff and place in public areas.
  - c. Offer staff gloves to be used if desired. As appropriate, recommend use by staff who handle many materials.
  - d. Perform additional routine cleaning as needed of all frequently touched surfaces in the Library, such as workstations, countertops, touchscreens, light switches and door knobs.
  - e. Provide staff with disinfectant wipes for quick disinfection.
  - f. Staff should contact Maintenance if an area needs to be thoroughly cleaned; Maintenance staff have access to medical grade disinfectant.
2. Work Adjustments
  - a. Authorities may request that persons returning from an infected area of the world not return to work for a period of time. Library employees are required to follow those recommendations. Absences for this purpose will be excused, applicable paid time off must be exhausted prior to taking unpaid leave. Staff that do not receive benefits may take unpaid time off.
  - b. Any employee presenting symptoms congruent with the outbreak will be asked to return home/or refrain from coming to work. Employees will use paid time off when applicable.
3. Communicate to the Public
  - a. Share official sources for health information with patrons.
  - b. Promote healthy habits.
  - c. Promote online Library services.
  - d. Share messaging with regards to any warnings, guidelines, or service modifications.

4. Communicate to Staff
  - a. Share this Pandemic Response Procedure.
  - b. Encourage staff to receive appropriate vaccinations.
  - c. Emphasize that staff should stay home when sick and follow respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
  - d. Advise traveling staff to check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices.
  - e. Promote healthy habits.

## **Level 2:** Moderated Services

*To be used when cases have been diagnosed within the county and/or when case levels are of significant concern.*

Decisions and actions will be guided by the recommendations of public health officials from the County, Village, and State in regards to closure or reduction in services/hours.

These procedures are in addition to those in Level 1—Level 1 procedures will continue.

1. Service Adjustments
  - a. Reduce or suspend services. Public health authorities may advise that libraries and other gathering places minimize or entirely suspend situations where numerous individuals congregate in relatively confined spaces. In such cases, the Library Director may suspend some or all:
    - i. Library programming
    - ii. Refreshments at programs and unpackaged refreshments in the staff lounge.
    - iii. Public meeting room use.
    - iv. Deliveries to homebound patrons.
    - v. Circulation of items that are difficult to clean or that have a high risk of spreading disease, such as the board books, developmental games, telescope, etc.
    - vi. Other services deemed necessary to suspend to contain the spread of the virus.
    - vii. Plan for social distances: shut down every other computer in the computer lab, remove chairs from the tables, and adjust staff schedules so that two people are not in a shared space at one time.
  - b. Remove shared toys and activities from the Children's and Adult departments.
  - c. Other adjustments that are a reasonable and prudent response.
2. Work Adjustments
  - a. Cancel all Library-related travel to areas under a CDC Traveler's Health Notice Warning) and reconsider Library-related travel.
  - b. Suspend in-person meetings or work related gatherings.
3. Communicate to the Public
  - a. Continue messaging as in Level 1. Messages should explicitly state that service reductions are being done to slow down disease transmission.

- b. Post an alert on the website outlining adjustments to services; adjust homepage to include pointers to official sources of information about the pandemic.
  - c. Contact affected program registrants, meeting room users, study room reservations, etc. to notify of service adjustments.
  - d. Inform patrons that fines will be waived during moderated services.
4. Communicate to Staff
- a. Library Director to monitor and coordinate response among authorities, schools, villages and Library.
  - b. Review and adjust staff contact information to ensure it is current.

### **Level 3: Temporary Closure or Reduced Hours with Remote Services**

*To be considered or utilized when there is a declared national emergency, when the local school districts elect to close by choice or under state or federal order, when the Board of Trustees (represented by President if a full Board meeting is not possible) feel the threat is of considerable concern for the public good or safe working conditions of the staff, other conditions that may affect safe operations.*

This level is applicable so long as adequate staff may be retained for essential operations. Staff that demonstrate any level of illness, or are severely compromised may be asked to work remotely or not at all under the Library Director discretion.

Remote or Virtual Services may be defined, but not limited to services that can be maintained by the staff such as drive-up circulation, virtual storytimes if possible, downloadable and streaming content, book carts for patrons of book donations that may be taken freely, databases, catalog services, deposit collections at other institutions. As a commitment to community service, the staff will perform such services so long as it is reasonable and safe for them to do so. Virtual Services will be highlighted to the community.

Procedures for Level I and II will continue during Level III:

1. Service Adjustments
  - a. Temporary Closure.
  - b. Extend due dates, waive fines when applicable.
  - c. Post closure signs; highlight remote and virtual services.
  - d. Inform vendors and delivery services.
  - e. Notify RAILS.
  - f. Notify Emergency Closing Center.
  - g. Notify volunteers.
  - h. Redirect staff with a service plan
2. Work Adjustments
  - a. Staff may report for duty in the closed facility, compromised staff with low immunity may not interact with the public on any level.
  - b. Precautions may be put in place such as a quarantine of materials upon return, disinfecting materials, or other precautions as recommended.

- c. Library Director will continue to work remotely or in person to coordinate response among staff and with the Library Board of Trustees.
- 3. Communicate to the Public
  - a. Post an alert message on the website and social media indicating that the Library facility is closed; remote services such as Circulation Drive Up, book return, databases, streaming services, catalog are in services.
  - b. Post reference services are available by phone or e-mail to assist patrons.
  - c. Post Library closed message on front door of the Library.
  - d. Continue to share official sources for health information and library service updates with patrons via digital communication channels.
  - e. Promote Library's digital resources.
- 4. Communicate to Staff
  - a. Library Director to continue to monitor and coordinate response among authorities, schools, villages and Library.

**Level 4: Facility Closure and No Services are Available**

When Levels 1-3 have been exhausted and the severity of the situation does not allow travel for Library staff to the facility, or when there is not adequate staff to maintain remote operations, all services may cease until it is safe to resume operations.

**FINAL CAVEAT:** Should the situation call for a more nuanced response than is outlined here, the Library Director and Board may adjust the Library's response to meet emergent needs.

3/13/2020