

LIVINGSTON FREE LIBRARY PANDEMIC POLICY

I. Purpose

To establish the protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the library must plan for staff being unable to report to work. 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 public 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 crises. 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.

II. Definitions

“Pandemic Plan” - A pandemic plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. With an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building, or begin rebuilding, almost immediately after the event or crises (such as after a fire or storm, or if there is a utility shortage). 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.

“Pandemic” - A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease and may occur when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. If a pandemic were to occur today, we could expect the virus to spread rapidly due to the interconnected nature of the world and the high level of global travel.

(Sources: World Health Organization www.who.int and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov.)

“Employees” and *“Staffing Level”* – For the purposes of this policy in the sections Minimum Staffing Level, Prioritization of Services and Responsibility for Library Operations, the terms employees and staffing level pertain to regular part time library staff.

III. Library Closure

The Library will close due to pandemic in the event that a mandate 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 Board, the Livingston Free Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily (e.g. programming) in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain basic library service levels.

In the event of closure, it is imperative that the Library Director or designee follow the communication procedures and submit payroll information. Due dates and holds pickup dates for library materials will be adjusted so that no overdue charges (if any) are assessed and holds do not expire on dates in which the library is closed. The exterior book drop will be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

IV. Minimum Staffing Level

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as one healthy employee or volunteer available to be present at the library during all open hours. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than five consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

The level of excused absence of library staff or the availability of volunteers will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. Considerations may include:

1. Cancellation of all programs, special events and meeting room reservations.
2. Reduce open hours
3. Close the library for one or more days

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work as scheduled excluding any excused absences. In event of closure, employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

V. Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by a pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours is of the utmost importance and will be performed by the Library Director.

VI. Prioritization of Services

If reduced staffing, open hours or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other work tasks.

Priorities shall follow this order:

1. *Direct patron assistance*: checkout; issuing library cards; computer and reference assistance; facility and collection supervision/safety.
2. *Patron related-tasks*: check in; incoming delivery; shelving.
3. *Workflow tasks*: holds shelf action list; pick list.
4. *Essential Services*: Report hours to payroll service; pick up mail at post office on regular basis and forward bills to Treasurer; and prepare Director information for Library Board meetings

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after the prioritized tasks performing those duties with a deadline or significant impact first. Employees should consult with the Board President in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

VII: Responsibility for Library Operations

If, for any reason, the Library Director is unable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, administrative authority for library operations shall lie with the Board President.

Adopted: May 13, 2020