

## Pandemic Policy

If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the Library District 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 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 crises. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the Library District can be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

### 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 crisis (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.

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

### Library District Closure

The Library District 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 Director or by action of the Board of Trustees, Library District 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 District service levels.

In the event of closure, it is imperative that appropriate plans are in place for the following:

- procedures to meet payroll obligations
- communication procedures to keep staff informed
- due dates and holds pickup dates for Library District materials will be adjusted so that no overdue charges are assessed and holds do not expire on dates in which the Library District is closed
- the exterior book drop will be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible

### School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that any local school district is closed due to pandemic illness, the Library District will remain open unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing are also met. However, all Library District programs and special events will be canceled on any day in which any or all of Poughkeepsie City School District or Spackenkill Union Free School District schools are closed due to pandemic-related illness.

Should school be canceled due to a pandemic, non-circulating children's materials will be removed from public areas during the duration of the school closure to minimize spread through surfaces frequently touched by children. Kits will be placed into storage and temporarily unavailable for circulation. Disinfecting and/or cleaning procedures issued by public health officials will be followed as possible.

### **Minimum Staffing Level**

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as the equivalent of typical Saturday staffing during all open hours with a maximum 7-hour workday and 35-hour workweek per employee, including available part-time employees. 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 District.

The level of excused absence of Library District staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. Phases may include:

- cancellation of all programs, special events, and meeting room reservations
- minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time; employees may be reallocated and have shifts reassigned and lengthened to provide coverage
- reduce open hours if number of employees falls below temporary minimum levels
- close the Library District for one or more days if number of employees further declines or only minimum level can be met for five or more days.

If the Library District is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences consistent with established leave policy. In the event of closure and healthy Library District employees are sent home, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

### **Communication**

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours is of the utmost importance. Standard communication protocols will be used.

### **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.

Priority responsibilities shall follow this order:

- direct patron assistance: check out; issuing Library District cards; computer and reference

- assistance;
- facility and collection supervision/safety.
- patron related-tasks: check in; incoming delivery; shelving.
- workflow tasks: holds processing; materials processing
- essential services: payroll; processing bills for payment; Library District Board meetings.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after these prioritized tasks, if time permits, performing those duties with a deadline or significant impact first. Employees should consult with the Library Director or designated administrative authority to determine staffing area assignment and which individual work tasks should take priority, or in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

### **Employee Absences**

The Library District leave policies and practices shall be followed in the event of a pandemic outbreak, or as amended by the Board of Trustees in response to specific situations.,

### **Responsibility for Library District 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 and all Library District operations shall follow the established Chain of Command.