

**Pillsbury Free Library
Warner, NH**

Communicable Disease / Pandemic Policy

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on June 16th 2020

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PILLSBURY FREE LIBRARY WARNER, NH COMMUNICABLE DISEASE / PANDEMIC POLICIES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is two-fold: to provide guidance for preventing the spread of communicable disease in the library environment and protocol for providing Library services in the event of a pandemic.

I. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Communicable diseases, for the purpose of this policy, are serious diseases that are capable of being transmitted to other individuals through the air or by direct contact between individuals or contaminants.

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to contagious and infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, influenza, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis-A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis-B (serum hepatitis), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Coronavirus and any newly discovered diseases.

The library will not discriminate against any patron or employee based on the individual having a communicable disease. Patron and employees shall not be denied access to the library solely on the grounds that they have a communicable disease. The library reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from the library facilities, programs and functions if, based on a reasonable determination, such restriction is necessary for the welfare of the person who has the communicable disease and/or the welfare of others within the library

The library will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations that protect the privacy of persons who have a communicable disease. Every effort will be made to ensure sufficient safeguards to maintain the personal confidence about persons who have communicable diseases.

Employee and Patron Responsibility While in a Library Facility

- Each individual has a responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases when they are aware or suspect that they are or could be a carrier of a communicable disease. This would include showing or feeling signs of illness, such as coughing, sneezing, fever, joint aches, overall ill feeling or a report of a communicable disease from a health care provider.
- Being aware of personal interactions or exposure to the disease or caring for someone with a confirmed or suspected communicable disease.
- Good judgment skills by all are critical in safeguarding the health of the Library patrons and employees.
- Avoid public places if you have or suspect you have a contagious disease. If you become ill due to a communicable disease, you may still be contagious for some time after being symptom free. Follow guidance from CDC on the specific contagious disease.
- Practice proper hygiene by covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or handkerchief. If this is not possible, then the elbow or hand can be used for coughs and sneezes, with immediate hand washing or sanitizing of hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth and wash hands frequently.
- Wearing of face masks might be recommended or mandated for those with or without symptoms to help control the spread of the contagious disease.

Library Guidance

The library will help patrons and employees avoid communicable diseases by:

Requiring library patrons and employees who demonstrate active symptoms of a communicable disease to leave the library facilities, program or function if library personnel reasonably believe the person is placing the welfare of themselves or others at risk.

Encouraging infection control practices in the library by displaying posters that address and remind individuals about proper hand washing, respiratory hygiene, keeping hands away from nose and mouth, cough etiquette, and in the case of airborne diseases, maintaining appropriate distances and the proper wearing of face masks.

In addition to the standard janitorial cleaning, wipe down with an appropriate sanitizer or disinfectant all public door handles and door areas used for ingress and egress; including internal doors as well as external doors. Employees may also be required to sanitize or disinfect any library equipment or surface areas deemed appropriate by the administration.

Providing sufficient facilities for hand washing with warm water and soap. Provide alcohol-based approved hand sanitizers (or wipes) in common areas such as lobbies, circulation desks, and restrooms.

Providing tissues, disinfectants, and disposable towels for patrons and employees to clean work stations and work surfaces, as well as hands free disposal receptacles.

Providing a healthy environment and establishing procedures recommended by public health officials for handling body fluids. These procedures shall provide simple and effective precautions against transmission of disease to persons exposed to the blood or body fluids of another. These procedures shall be standard health and safety practices.

Influenza Special Cases, Flu Pandemic, Coronavirus, or other Widespread Illnesses

In the event of any serious outbreaks of influenza, coronavirus or other widespread illness, as determined by the State of New Hampshire, United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), or any other authorized public health official; at a minimum the recommended or mandated protocols for such outbreak will be followed in addition to all the applicable library policy guidelines. See Pandemic Policy below

II. PANDEMIC

The purpose of this policy is to establish the protocol to be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious and wide spread infectious /communicable disease outbreak, the library may be required to operate on limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness, including service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure. These steps will be taken to protect our community, patrons and employees. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or other physical crises. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the library can be maintained for several months or more with limited employees and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

1. DEFINITIONS

Pandemic According to Merriam-Webster Online, a pandemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population. This can include many diseases, such as influenza and coronavirus. The World Health Organization defines a pandemic as the worldwide spread of a new disease. (<https://www.who.int>)

Epidemic A disease can be declared an *epidemic* when it spreads over a wide area and many individuals are taken ill at the same time. If the spread escalates further, an epidemic can become a *pandemic*, which affects an

even wider geographical area and a significant portion of the population becomes affected.

Pandemic Policy A Pandemic policy 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). A Pandemic may spread quickly and be brought under control fairly quickly or it may take a long time to spread and a long time to control, before the library can fully re-open. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow with limited employees, services, and shortened hours may be necessary for an extended period of time.

Appropriate Staffing Level For the purposes of this policy, appropriate staffing level refers to the minimum number of qualified employees necessary to provide service safely and efficiently, as determined by the Library Director or his/her designee.

2. LIBRARY CLOSURE PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATE

The Pillsbury Free Library will reduce hours and services or close due to pandemic in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials on the Local, County, State or Federal level. For the purposes of these mandated orders the Library is a place of public assembly, and library employees are not considered essential workers. The Library will also follow the advice of the American Library Association, and the New Hampshire Library Association.

3. DISCRETIONARY SERVICE LEVEL CHANGES

The Library Director or Trustees may close the Library, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is not sufficient employees to maintain appropriate staffing levels, insufficient PPE and/or cleaning supplies, or if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety of patrons and employees.

Based on specific pandemic information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), National Institutes of Health, and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, other measures may include:

- Increased health/safety measures for employees (e.g. wearing of gloves, face masks, wiping down work areas, daily health checks etc.)
- Increased health/safety measure for patrons (e.g. wearing of face masks, health checks before entering facility or the Library being closed to all public).
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g. closing rooms or unmonitored areas for safety)
- Physically distancing practices in public areas, removing chairs and distancing computers. For most airborne infectious diseases this could be 3 to 6 foot distance.
- Limiting the number of patrons in the Library at a time, based on physical distancing guidance. Cancellation of programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.
- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide services.
- Closure of the outside book drop to protect against infectious diseases entering the library on materials or when there are no employees to empty the drop.
- Appropriate measures for disinfecting books and surfaces, bathrooms, railings, door handles, telephones, computer equipment, counters, and cleaning of workstation/offices of employees who go home sick, emptying of wastebaskets. Items such as children's toys, soft furniture and puzzles that are difficult to disinfect will be put in storage (such measures may be different for different infectious diseases).

Health Check Guidance

Health checks for staff and patrons may consist of questions based on early symptoms and disease progression guidance from the CDC. The CDC might also recommend temperature or oxygen level

screening if they are symptoms of the current disease.

If a person answers in the affirmative, or has a fever of over 100, they will be asked to leave the library. Persons who are showing active symptoms of the disease should not be allowed in the library or will be asked to leave the library.

Employees cannot return to the Library until they are symptom free for the required time or they have obtained a Doctor's report that they are free of the disease. The Employees may be eligible for paid sick leave and/ or working from home.

When a person who is a confirmed case has been in the library.

The Library should be prepared to close immediately, regardless of whether there is community transmission, if a person with a confirmed case has been in the facility. If this happens, the Library will follow CDC guidance and coordinate with State or local health officials for best practices for cleaning and disinfecting the library.

4. CLOSING CRITERIA

The physical Library will be closed for the safety of the staff and patrons when:

- It is deemed unsafe for patrons or staff to leave their homes, and or be in close proximity with others.
- Mandated by Federal, State or Local governments for the safety and health of the population and to slow the spread of the disease
- If the American Library Association, and or the New Hampshire Library Association recommend closing libraries to the public to protect library workers and their communities from exposure to the infectious disease
- There are not enough available employees to keep the library open
- The Library Director and or the Board of Trustees deem it unsafe for the employees to work in person with the public in the facility and or for the public to enter the facility
- The building is deemed unsafe to enter and needs a professional cleaning before re-opening.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain communication with employees, Library Board of Trustees, Town Manager and the public.

5. FACILITIES UPKEEP

If the library is closed for an extended period of time, a schedule will be set up to see to the critical needs of the facility, such as boiler and building checks by Library Director, Custodian, or Town Building Manager. Before reopening all systems need to be checked and cleaned appropriately.

6. FINANCES

The Library Director, Treasurer and Town payroll clerk will work to ensure payroll is submitted and payments are made on-time. Library Director or Treasurer will ensure all bills are paid in a reasonable time period.

7. STAFFING – work and leave

Minimum staffing level is defined as two healthy employees when the building is open. An inability to maintain this minimal level will result in reduced hours or temporary closing of the library.

In the case of changes in staffing and or hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will be responsible for assigning work to staff.

If there is a recommendation from public health officials that people stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of an illness, staff shall be asked not to come to work if they are exhibiting those symptoms and may be eligible for appropriate paid sick time.

In the event the library closes, employees' hours are cut, or staff are unable to work due to risk factors or illness due to the pandemic, staff may be paid for their regularly scheduled hours if eligible under emergency guidelines. (This is strongly recommended by the American Library Association)

If Federal, State or Local officials recommend isolation to avoid risk of infection, staff will be allowed to make their own decision about risk to the health of themselves and their families, and will not be penalized if they decide that it is unsafe for them to come to work. Working from home or working in the closed library may be allowed, following all physical distancing and health safety procedures, and at the discretion of the Library Director.

When appropriate, work tools (e.g., laptops, supplies, etc.) may be checked out to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments.

8. COMMUNICATION

In the event of changes necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours must be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should use any available procedure for posting unexpected closure/program cancellations, which may include posting on social media, TV, radio, print, and the library website.

The Library Director and Board of Trustees will remain in contact for guidance and assistance as needed. The Board of Trustees will continue their monthly meetings and any necessary committee meetings if at all possible using virtual or online meetings. Trustees will follow guidelines for public meetings.

9. PRIORITIZATION OF SERVICES

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public, either in-person or online;
- Payroll;
- Accounts Payable;
- Facility Maintenance.

10. OUTREACH SERVICES

At the discretion of the Library Director outreach services may be initiated during these times. Such services could be, but are not limited to:

- Curbside pickup for materials requested by phone or online
- Telephone or email reference questions
- Virtual programs on online platforms
- Addition of new or enhanced online resources

11. RECOVERY OF SERVICES AND RE-OPENING PLANNING

Resumption of services may be a lengthy process depending on the severity of the Pandemic and the Federal, State and Local situation. The process of reopening will be dependent on guidance from public health officials.

The processes for reopening will be outlined in a Re-opening Plan that will be specific for the situation and using guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), National Institutes of Health, and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

The Library must be prepared to reinstate any or all restrictions, limits to service and hours, if circumstances warrant.