



## **Pandemic Emergency Closure Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The Purpose of the Pandemic Response Policy is to provide the staff and trustees of the Norwood Public Library the guidance needed in order to effectively prepare and respond to health pandemic while ensuring the safety of staff, trustees and patrons.

### **2. Definition of Pandemic**

A pandemic is an event in which a new virus emerges, infects people and spreads between people sustainably. Because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against the new virus, it spreads worldwide.

### **3. Response Service Plan (3 phase approach)**

#### **I. Precautionary Measures**

In the event of an increased communicable illness, the library will add precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of disease. These measures will be taken during common seasonal outbreaks of infectious diseases while the library remains open and providing normal service. Precautionary measures to include and not limited to:

- Performing additional routine cleaning of high touch points.
- Promoting healthy habits among employees and patrons.
- Reducing contact with difficult to clean items or areas. (Toys, games, puzzle and other hard-to-clean items).

Additional precautionary measures will be taken as needed as outline in the library's **Infectious Disease Policy**.

#### **II. Reduced Hours and Services**

The library strives to provide the best service possible to our community. However, the safety of staff and patrons is the library's highest priority. In addition to adhering to the above precautionary measures, the library reserves the right to reduce library hours, suspend programming, Interlibrary loan and community room use as necessary to reduce disease exposure to staff and patrons. Decisions about the suspension and continuation of services will be made based on guidance from local health officials.

#### **III. Closure**

The library may completely close the building to the public and suspend all in-person programs, services, and events. The Library Board of Trustees will approve a closure through a formal vote of the board. Reasons for closing may include, but are not limited to:

- Safety of employees or patrons is at risk.
- Employees are too ill to work, have self-quarantined, or are under mandatory quarantine by health officials.
- Employees are under a stay-at-home order by government agencies.
- Recommendations by recognized library organizations such as the New York Library Association (NYLA) and/or the American Library Association (ALA).
- Recommendations or mandates by local, county, state, or federal agencies.

#### **4. Pandemic Response Committee**

Upon or after closing the library, the library board will appoint a Pandemic Response Committee. This committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around the pandemic, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control. This committee will also meet periodically throughout the closure and will advise the library board on pandemic best practices and re-opening procedures based on guidance from the library system, local health officials and state mandates. The Pandemic Response Committee will consist of the library Director, the Board President and other trustees who wish to be on the committee. A committee will be designated to monitor and coordinate events around an infectious disease outbreak, as well as to create work rules that could be implemented to promote safety through infection control.

#### **5. Working Remotely During a Pandemic**

Library staff may be able to work remotely during a pandemic, whether from home or another approved location. Working remotely allows for the library to maintain a connection to the community and also allows for a continuation of work flow for projects, programs, services, continuing education, and other tasks that do not directly involve the public through in-person or face-to-face contact.

The library board will approve all telecommuting arrangements based on the library's **Employee Handbook**.

#### **6. Resuming Partial and Full Service Following a Pandemic**

The library will resume regular operations on a partial and full basis as soon as reasonably possible, depending on recommendations by government officials, library trustees, and the library system. In an effort to provide services while mitigating risk to staff and patrons, the library will resume services using a phased approach. The phases, including their service details and procedures are outlined below. Re-opening (at any phase level) will be dictated in part state and local government mandates and guidance as well as the availability of disinfecting supplies and personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, or other protection).

It will also be expected that employees will follow precautionary measures outlined in the library's **Infectious Disease Control Policy** when they are permitted to return to work.

In all phases, the health, wellness, and safety of library employees, library patrons, and the greater community must be balanced with the programs and services offered by the library.

#### **7. Communication**

Changes in status will be communicated to the community via signage, the library's website, social media, and news outlets.

The library director shall maintain regular contact with staff and trustees for the duration of the pandemic. The library Director will also maintain contact with library system staff in order to receive timely updates and system information related to the pandemic.

Any temporary changes in patron services will be reflected in the corresponding service policies. This may include, and not limited to, the library Circulation Policy, Meeting Room Use Policy, Printing/Photocopier Use, etc. Any policy changes and updates will be communicated via the library's website and library signage.

### **8. Health and Safety Equipment**

The library will provide personal protective equipment (PPE) as recommended or mandated by law and as each situation warrants, and to the extent possible. This may include gloves, masks, and/or other appropriate health and safety equipment.

Employees must wear appropriate health and safety equipment according to library policy, when required by health and safety officials, or when mandated by local, state, or federal regulations or laws. In an effort to keep patrons and staff safe while in the library, patrons may be required to wear masks and may be subject to other safety precautions such as social distancing. The measures will be outlined in the library's **Patron Responsibility Policy** if warranted necessary.