

Cook Memorial Library

V. Management of Buildings & Grounds

F. PANDEMIC POLICY (Adopted 4/27/2020)

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious infectious 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 by order of local public health or state officials. 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 weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

II: Definitions

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). If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for an extended period of time.

Pandemic A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. (World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>)

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

III: Library Closure

Public Health Mandate

The Cook Memorial Library will 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, or state level. In the absence of a mandate the Board of Trustees shall have the discretion to close the Cook Memorial Library building to protect the public and the staff while striving to provide services creatively and remotely as reasonably possible.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

At the discretion of the Library Director, the Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels or if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee shall maintain communication with staff, Library Board of Trustees, and the Selectmen's Representative to the Board of Trustees.

IV: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that the School Administrative District (S.A.U.) 13 closes its schools due to pandemic illness, the Board of Trustees shall decide whether the Library will be closed for the same amount of time. If none of the aforementioned requirements for closing (see III. Library Closure) are also met, the Board of Trustees shall decide whether to offer reduced hours and services, whether to limit the number of patrons allowed into the building at one time, and whether to cancel library programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.

V: Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as two healthy employees available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum 8 hour workday and 35 hour work week per full-time employee, and no more than 20 hour work week per part-time employee. An inability to maintain this temporary minimum level will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

In providing service safely and efficiently, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director or designee.

- Increased health/safety measures for staff (e.g., monitoring staff health before working, wearing of gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g., closing floors or unmonitored areas for safety);
- Social distancing practices in public areas;
- Reduction of open hours;
- Cancellation of all programs, special events, and meeting room reservations;
- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours;
- Closure of the library.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the established Personnel policy. In the event of closure, employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours. In the event of long-term closure lasting more than one month, Library Trustees, at a regular or special meeting, may review staffing in response to budgetary constraints caused by the pandemic.

If the Library is closed or hours reduced, healthy employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed in their compensated hours. When appropriate, work tools (e.g., laptops, supplies, etc.) will be checked out to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments.

VI: Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours must be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should follow the normal procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation, which includes posting on wmur.com, Facebook, the Tamworth Exchange, and the library website.

VII: Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

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

In the case of reduced staffing or reduced hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plan to staff.