

EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC POLICY

Purpose

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency.

The Library should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. In addition, during any public health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of county, state or federal health or government officials. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the Library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director.

Continuity of Operations Plan – Epidemic/Pandemic

This 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 recovery work almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm). 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.

Library Closure

Vermillion County Public Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency such as an epidemic/pandemic in the event that any of the following occur:

- A. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by Vermillion County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other local government officials.
- B. If a library employee requires testing the following procedures will be followed:
 - a. The Library employee being tested will be required to stay home, and the library will return to curbside service until the testing results are received.
 - i. If results are negative, the library will return to full operation.
 - ii. If results are positive, the library will close according to state and health department recommendations and will be receive a deep cleaning to ensure sanitation.
- C. At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees
- D. At the discretion of the Library Director

In addition, Vermillion County Public Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the possible spread of the contagion. In the event of closure, overdue fines will be suspended. The exterior book drop may be closed or kept open and cleared periodically.

Types of Library Closures:

- Complete Closure: no staff in the building at any time.

- Library Closure with Essential Services Only: exempt and other essential library employees may be required to work from home or on site during closures to perform necessary duties, such as payroll, bill paying, building maintenance, emptying book drops, etc.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services – staff may:
 - o Be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
 - o Be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
 - o Be assigned to clean the building

School Closures

In the event that North Vermillion Community School Cooperation schools closed because of an epidemic, Vermillion County Public Library will remain open unless one of the above conditions under the “Library Closure” section are met.

Compensation in an Epidemic/Pandemic

The Library will compensate an employee their regularly scheduled hours if they:

- Contract the disease
- Are required to care for family member with the disease
- Receive a mandated or doctor-directed self-quarantine

In the event of closure, the library will follow current closure compensation policies per the Personnel Handbook.

Impact on Staff with Child Care Concerns

In the event of school districts and day care closures due to an epidemic, staff may choose to use their accrued leave or take unpaid time off to stay at home.

Communication

In the event of cancellation of services, programs, meeting room/gym usage or Library closures, administration staff will:

- Notify staff, trustees, custodial staff and public via email, social media, and the website
- Call or emailed scheduled program presenters, community reservations, outreach sites, program attendees (if we have contact information)
- Provide information regarding the epidemic/pandemic on the Library’s website’s homepage.
- Create signage for updating patrons inside the library
- Notify local media and other government entities as deemed necessary.

Employee Absences

Vermillion County Public Library Personnel Handbooks outlines the regular Paid Leave policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or public health emergency while the library remains operations. Pre-approved time off will be honored unless voluntarily cancelled.

Social Distancing

If recommended by local, state, or federal health officials, Library staff will follow suggestions and directions to implement social distancing within the Library buildings.

Additional Cleaning Measures

During the epidemic/pandemic, the Library will ask staff and contracted custodians to increase cleaning within the Library. The Director will devise new cleaning procedures for VCPL during the epidemic.

Responsibility for Library Operation

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 operations shall be provided by the Children's Librarian.

Adopted by the Vermillion County Public Library Board of Trustees March 19, 2020

Revised by Vermillion County Public Library Board of Trustees August 6, 2020