

THORNTON PUBLIC LIBRARY PANDEMIC POLICY

I: PURPOSE

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a pandemic, 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 public health 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 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). Recovery from a pandemic 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 Thornton Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure after consultation with public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

At the discretion of the Library Director or designee with approval from the Trustees, 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 will maintain communication with staff, Library Board of Trustees, and the Town Administrator.

For specific procedures, refer to attached PANDEMIC APPENDIX I, II

IV: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that the Pemi-Baker School District is closed due to pandemic illness, the Thornton Public Library will remain in operation as long as feasible, but possibly with reduced hours and services, unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing is also met. All library programs and special events will be cancelled.

If a patron, student, staff member or anyone visiting the Library is diagnosed with the identified pandemic illness, the Library will close and staff will go into self-quarantine for the recommended period established by the CDC.

V: Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as one healthy employee available to be present at the library during open hours with a maximum 7-hour workday and 35-hour workweek per full-time employee, and no more than 10-hour workweek per part-time employee, unless employee has received approval from The Trustees of the Thornton Public Library. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than two consecutive days 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. wearing of gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g. closing room 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 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.

If, at any time, an employee exhibits symptoms identified by the CDC for current pandemic illness the employees will go home until testing have been received.

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 whenever possible. Library staff should follow the normal procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation, which includes posting on wmur.com, Facebook, 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.

Approved by Thornton Public Library Board of Trustees 3/16/2020