

## **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**

Wells 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 mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by Wells County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other Federal health/government officials or local government officials.
- If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the contagion causing the epidemic, WCPL will temporarily close that location.
- At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees
- At the discretion of the Library Director

In addition, Wells 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. Staff that can perform their jobs virtually will be encouraged to do so.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services – staff may:
  - be allowed to work inside the building while maintaining epidemic guidelines, although the building is closed to the public
  - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
  - be assigned to clean the building

- Staff that can perform their jobs virtually will be encouraged to do so.

### **School Closures**

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

### **Program Cancellation**

In the event of an epidemic/pandemic, programs will be reduced or cancelled, at the discretion of the library director, based on the guidelines associated with the epidemic/pandemic from the CDC, State or Local health authorities.

### **Compensation in an Epidemic/Pandemic**

While open the Library will compensate an employee their regularly scheduled hours following FMLA guidelines, if they:

- contract the disease
- are required to care for a family member with the disease
- receive a mandated or doctor-directed self-quarantine
- or otherwise mandated by the Federal or State Government

In the event of closure, due to an epidemic or pandemic, staff will be paid their regularly scheduled hours.

### **Impact on Staff with Child Care Concerns**

In the event of school districts and day care closures due to an epidemic, and the Library remains open, 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 usage or Library closures, administration staff will:

- Notify staff, trustees, and Friends board members, custodial staff and public via email, social media and the website
- Call or email scheduled program presenters, community room reservations, outreach sites, program attendees (if we have contact information)
- Notify vendors who perform annual maintenance in the building and vendors we placed orders with for shipment purposes.
- Contact the post office and ask them to hold the library's mail for staff to go pick up.
- Provide information regarding the epidemic/pandemic on the Library’s website homepage - Create signage for updating patrons inside the library
- Notify local media and other government entities as deemed necessary

### **Employee Absences**

Wells County Public Library Staff Handbook outlines the regular Employee Benefits policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or public health

emergency while the library remains operational. 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 custodians to increase cleaning within each location in accordance with public health guidelines. The Building Manager will devise new cleaning procedures for WCPL during the epidemic.

### **Responsibility for Library Operations**

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 Branch Manager.