

Proactive Pandemic and Public Health Policy

The following proactive policy provides library staff guidance in the event of pandemics, epidemics, public health concerns, and public infection concerns. The Library Director is encouraged and authorized to:

1. Take actions in accordance with the recommendations and edicts of the Westford Health Department and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (such as hand washing, cough containment, use of personal protective equipment, social distancing, etc.).
2. Promote staff inoculation in accordance with Board of Health's demographic priorities and guidelines, identifying high-risk staff for immediate Health Department inoculation.
3. Enforce the Westford Board of Health's exclusion edict.
4. Enact and enforce a "Go home if sick" policy whereby staff arriving to work sick, or becoming ill during the day are given a mask and sent home.
5. Follow the Westford Health Department mechanism for illness surveillance and centralized reporting.
6. Waive the requirement for a doctor's notification of illness during the height of any pandemic, epidemic or public health emergency.
7. Calculate and communicate the financial impact of staff absences and leaves to Town officials and the Finance Department.
8. Follow a Continuity of Operation plan that includes cross training, remote access, single point service access, reduced hours of service and *authorized* staff working from home.
9. Link the Departmental website to the Westford Health Department Information site.

The Board of Library Trustees establishes for any public health emergency, epidemic or pandemic an emergency Minimum Staffing Level of four persons per shift with appropriate specialties and sufficient security per shift, as determined by the Library Director. Inability to meet this staffing minimum due to illness or Health Department mandatory exclusion, or safety issues shall be deemed sufficient criterion for closing the library (See Minimum Staffing Requirements During COVID below).

Depending upon the severity, virulence and duration of a public health emergency, pandemic or public infection, the Library Trustees and Administration will, with Health Department input, consider restrictions on work-related travel, suspension of story times and other library programs to discourage public gatherings and to promote social distancing, reduction or suspension of meeting room use and suspension of Homebound service for the protection of patrons and staff.

Approved and Voted by the Board of Library Trustees: 10/5/09; Revised 7.8.19; Revised 3.13.20; Revised 6.1.2020; 12.6.21.

Pandemic Protection Procedures and Protocols

In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, and in accordance with state and local Health guidelines and edicts, the Library administration and staff are authorized to enact protective measures to promote the health and safety of both Library users and Library staff. These measures and steps may include:

- Phased-in restoration and hours of Library services
- Phased-in restoration of public Meeting Room use
- Virtual meetings, programs and presenters
- Allocation of materials budget to purchase downloadable formats
- Allocation of budget for safety supplies and personal protective equipment
- Age-specific hours of service
- Temperature taking of reporting staff
- Metered public access to the facility, to ensure social distancing
- Use of face coverings by the public and staff, except for those aged two and younger, those with respiratory issues or disabled library patrons [recommended for two- to five-year-olds]
- Use of disposable gloves by the public and staff, except for those aged five and younger or disabled library patrons
- Use of hand sanitizer, provided at entrances and exits
- Creation of one-way entrances and exits, and use of added exits to promote social distancing
- Limitations on the number of persons in the elevator cab [one, OR family members]
- Limitations on the number of persons in multi-stall and multi-sink restrooms [one, OR family members]
- Social distancing through use of signage and floor decals
- Social distancing through the removal and spacing of library furnishings, displays, computers and service points
- Social distancing through use of outdoor space
- Quarantining of all returned physical library materials
- Accelerated cleaning and disinfection of all public and staff spaces and surfaces
- Assigned telephones, PC's and restroom sinks, stalls and timed hand-washing for staff
- Spacing and temporary re-assignment of staff to ensure safety and social distancing while working, and while taking meals and breaks
- Reversal of measures as regulations ease
- Re-application of shut-down measures in the event of a viral flare-up

J. V. Fletcher Library Minimum Staffing Requirements During COVID

APPENDIX TO THE PANDEMIC POLICY

The J. V. Fletcher Library during COVID is committed to providing sufficient staffing of the Library in order to:

- Maintain a high level of quality service to all patrons
- Protect the personal safety of all library patrons and J. V. Fletcher Library Staff

The following policy and thresholds are adopted to support these objectives:

- A minimum of five (5) public-facing staff members shall be present during weekdays and Saturdays between the hours of 10:00am-5:00pm
- A minimum of four (4) public-facing staff members shall be present during the evening hours of 5:00-9:00pm
- A public-facing staff member is defined as a paid, trained employee who provides regular library services to patrons at one of four public service desks on the Ground and Main floors (i.e. not Library Pages, Maintenance Staff, Office Staff or Volunteers)
- A staff person will be on duty who is trained to perform the duties of Building Supervisor

In the event that the minimum staffing requirement is not met after surveying all staff and all efforts have been made to secure coverage, the following steps may be taken:

1. Evenings when the Library is open until 9:00pm, full-time staff members may be asked to work a split or alternate shift to meet the minimum staffing level, provided this leaves sufficient staff for daytime coverage.
2. On Saturdays, substitute or additional staff may be contacted to come in and work from 11:00am-1:30pm to provide meal coverage.
3. If sufficient staff is not available to bring the public-facing staffing level to the minimum staffing requirement, the Library will be closed for public service. Non-public facing staff will continue to work.
 - If the Library is closed to the public as a result of insufficient staffing, scheduled personnel hours and wages will not be affected.
 - Staff will immediately communicate with the Library Director regarding the actions taken to secure coverage, circumstances necessitating closing the Library, and seeking authorization for such closure.
 - Service may be provided for a portion of a service day, and service will be restored as soon as sufficient staffing is in place.
 - The Library Director will notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the office of the Town Manager; in Director's absence, this responsibility will fall to the Assistant Director.
 - The CLOSING CHECKLIST from the Emergency Manual will be enacted.
 - Notice of the Library's closure will be posted on all patron entrances, on the Library webpage scroll, on library social media, on the Telephone Answering Message and on local media outlets. This notice will contain the time of closing, the reason for closing (when possible), and the anticipated time or reopening (when possible).

