

REINBECK PUBLIC LIBRARY PANDEMIC POLICY

I: Purpose

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the library must plan for staff being unable to report to work. In addition, during a pandemic; businesses, social organizations or schools may be required to take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness: including closing down by order of local public health officials. Other public health measures may include; limiting or canceling social and public gatherings, or requiring quarantines and/or other social distancing measures. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or some 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, reduced hours, or closure 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). 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.

“Pandemic”: A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease and may occur when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. If a pandemic were to occur today, we could expect the virus to spread rapidly due to the interconnected nature of the world and the high level of global travel. During a pandemic, up to 35% of employees may be absent at one time due to their own illness.

III: Library Closure

The Reinbeck Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event that:

1. The City of Reinbeck closes.
2. Other Reinbeck community businesses and recreational services close.
3. A mandate order or recommendation for closure is issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

At the discretion of the Library Director or the Library Board President, the Reinbeck Public Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily (e.g. programming) in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain basic library service levels.

In the event of closure, it is imperative that the Library Director or designee follow the communication procedures and submit payroll. Due dates and holds pickup dates for library materials will be adjusted so that no overdue charges are assessed and holds do not expire on dates in which the library is closed. The exterior book drop will be kept open and cleared periodically as long as possible.

IV: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that any Gladbrook-Reinbeck area school districts are closed due to a pandemic outbreak, the Reinbeck Public Library will operate on reduced hours, close, or operate in whatever way the city deems appropriate. All library programs and special events will be canceled on any day in which any or all of Gladbrook-Reinbeck area schools are closed due to pandemic-related illnesses.

School closure is an attempt to slow the spread of disease/viruses. Allowing large crowds to congregate at the library would be counterproductive. The Reinbeck Library will stay in contact with the City to determine the best course of action.

Disinfecting and/or cleaning procedures issued by public health officials will be followed as possible.

V: Minimum Staffing Level

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as one healthy employee available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum 8 hour workday and 40 hour workweek. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than five consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

The level of excused absence of library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. Phases may include:

1. Cancellation of all programs and special events.
2. Staff Library at minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time.
3. Reduce open hours if number of employees falls below temporary minimum level.
4. Close the library for one or more days if number of employees further declines or only minimum level can be met for five or more days.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the Reinbeck Public Library/City of Reinbeck Work Rules sick leave policy. In the event of closure where library employees are sent home, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours during the closure by providing work from home project hours.

VI: Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours is of the utmost importance. Library staff should contact the Director, who will be in contact with the City.

VII: Prioritization of Services

If reduced staffing, open hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other work tasks.

Priority responsibilities shall follow this order:

1. **Direct patron assistance:** check out; issuing library cards; computer and reference assistance; facility and collection supervision/safety.
2. **Patron related-tasks:** check in; incoming delivery; shelving.
3. **Workflow tasks:** holds list; pick list.
4. **Essential services:** payroll, processing bills for payment, Library Board meetings.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after these prioritized tasks. If time permits, performing those duties with a deadline or significant impact first. Employees should consult with the Director or designated administrative authority to determine staffing area assignment and which individual work tasks should take priority. Or in the event that they feel a responsibility not listed here requires urgent attention.

VIII: Employee Absences

The Reinbeck Public Library will work on a case-by-case basis regarding absences during a pandemic.

XI: Conclusion

In the event of a pandemic, The Reinbeck Public Library endeavors to be prepared with a well-planned response and quick reaction to help stop the spread in our community. We will do our best to adapt and respond in these situations as there is no “one way” to approach such difficult decisions. This outline is a guide and reference but leaves room for creativity and ingenuity. Our hope is to be prepared and equipped in unique situations so that our Library services remain available to the citizens of Reinbeck through extenuating circumstances.