

Middleton Public Library
EPIDEMIC OR HEALTH EMERGENCY POLICY

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I. Purpose

- (A) To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic or 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 an epidemic or health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of Dane County public health 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.
- (B) 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.

II. Definitions

- (A) Epidemic – A virus or infectious disease affecting many persons in a specific locality at the same time and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent.
- (B) Health emergency – The state of affairs in which there are not enough healthy library staff to maintain normal hours of operation, or it is unsafe for library staff to provide in-person service to the public.

III. Library Closure

The Middleton Public Library may temporarily close because of an epidemic or library health emergency in the event that either of the following occur:

- (A) The City of Middleton offices close because of a health emergency.
- (B) A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by Dane County public health or other government officials.
- (C) At the discretion of the Library Director, the Middleton 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. In the event of closure, 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.

IV. School Closure Due to Epidemic

- (A) In the event that the Middleton Cross Plains Area School District is closed because of an epidemic, the Middleton Public Library will remain open unless one of the above requirements for closing are also met. However, library programs and special events may be canceled on any day on which Middleton Cross Plains Area schools are closed because of illness.

V. Minimum Staffing Level

- (A) Minimum staffing level is defined as: three healthy desk staff available to be present at the library during all open hours. An inability to maintain this minimal level will result in reduced hours or closing the library. If this minimal level is required for more than 5 consecutive days, the library may reduce staff or close to the public. The absence of healthy library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. At the library director's discretion, this may include:
 1. Cancelling programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.
 2. Reassigning employee duties and shifts.
 3. Reducing open hours if the number of employees falls below minimum levels.
 4. Closing the library for one or more days.
 5. If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the City of Middleton sick leave policy. In the event of closure requiring library employees to be sent home, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours, as the budget allows.

VI. Communication

- (A) In the event of closure, Library staff should follow the Library's Emergency Closing Policy.

VII. Prioritization of Services

- (A) If reduced staffing, hours, or services are required, employees shall perform their responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other tasks, subject to the safety of patrons and staff. Staff shall provide in-person public services in the following order:
1. Direct patron assistance, e.g. check out, issuing library cards, computer and information assistance.
 2. Processing holds, check in, incoming delivery returns, shelving, shelf action lists, pick lists.
 3. All other clerical and administrative functions. Services outside of those described above shall be provided if time permits. Employees shall consult with the Director or designated administrative authority to determine staffing area assignment and priority of work tasks.
 4. Social distancing and use of personal protect equipment (PPE) may be required when in the library facility to minimize exposure to health hazards and protect community immunity. Communications and signs notifying patrons of this requirement will be sent prior and posted in prominent locations within the facility. The following language is recommended by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the CDC for print, electronic, and customer service communications: *"Any individual who is over the age of 2 years of age and able to medically tolerate a face-covering shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a mask or face covering when in a public place and must maintain social distancing of 6 feet."*
 5. Restrooms may not be available to the public.

VIII. Responsibility for Library Operations

- (A) 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 follow the Responsibility for Library Operations Policy.

Adopted 4/14/2020

Amended 6/9/2020