

Kimball Library

Pandemic and Public Health Crisis Policy

Purpose:

The following policy is intended to provide the Kimball Library Board of Trustees and the staff with guidance in the event of a pandemic or public health crisis. A pandemic is defined as the worldwide spread of a new disease (World Health Organization).

If there is a pandemic or public health crisis, the Library may be required to close by state or federal authorities or to take unique measures to help slow the spread of illness such as service restrictions, limited hours or temporary closure. Recovery from a pandemic or public health emergency may be slow or happen in waves. Phases of closure or limited staff, services and hours may be necessary for an extended period of time and may fluctuate with the course of the outbreak.

Services:

Depending upon the severity and duration of a pandemic, the Library Trustees, with input from the Library Director and public health officials, will consider closing, reducing operating hours or limiting library services temporarily. Possible changes to service could include, but are not limited to the suspension of:

- Access to the building
- Library programs
- Meeting room use
- Circulation of materials

At the discretion of the Library Director, the Library may close, reduce its operating hours or limit services temporarily in the event that there is insufficient personnel to maintain appropriate staffing levels (defined as a minimum of 3) or if the staff is unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety.

Communication

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain communication with library staff, the Library Board of Trustees and the Town Administrator.

Changes regarding services and/or hours will be announced to the public in a timely manner. This communication will come from the Library Director or designee in conjunction with the Board of Library Trustees. Normal procedure will be used for announcing an unexpected closure or program cancellation including posting on wmur.com, Facebook, Instagram, and the library's website. When possible, program attendees will receive emails, texts and/or phone calls regarding cancellations.

Staff

During a pandemic or public health crisis, library staff will be expected not to come to work if they are symptomatic. Staff who arrive at work sick or become ill during the day, will be sent home. The requirement for a doctor's note for illness may be waived.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the Personnel Policy. Staff who have extenuating circumstances at home such as a young child temporarily without school or daycare options or underlying health conditions making them or an immediate family member significantly more vulnerable to the illness, may be excused from coming to work. A doctor's note may be required.

If the Library is closed or hours are reduced, healthy employees may be assigned to work from home. Employees with the Library Director's permission to work from home shall be compensated for their time. If necessary, work equipment (laptops, supplies, etc.) will be provided.

In the case of reduced staffing or hours of library operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plans to staff. In consideration of the mission of the Kimball Library priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information and programmatic services for the public by phone (potentially) and online
- Payroll
- Accounts payable
- Facility maintenance

To ensure the health and safety of employees and patrons, the following actions may be taken:

- Promote handwashing, the use of gloves and inoculation
- Require use of masks and physical distancing protocols
- Promote staff self-administered daily temperature checks
- Reallocate employee responsibilities, including schedule changes and work tasks
- Reduce library hours
- Cancel programs, special events and meeting room reservations
- Reallocate employee responsibilities, including schedule changes and work tasks
- Close the Library

Adopted by Kimball Board of Library Trustees, May 20, 2020