

JAFFREY PUBLIC LIBRARY PANDEMIC POLICY

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a pandemic, the library may be required to operate on limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness, including service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure by order of local public health officials. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or 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 extended building 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). Recovery from a pandemic may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for an extended period of time.

Pandemic A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. (World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>)

Appropriate Staffing Level For the purposes of this policy, Appropriate Staffing Level refers to the minimum number of qualified staff necessary to provide service safely and efficiently, as determined by the Library Director or his/her designee.

III: Library Closure

Public Health Mandate

The Jaffrey Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

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 not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels or **if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety**.

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

IV: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that the Jaffrey-Rindge School District is closed due to pandemic illness, the Jaffrey Public Library will remain open, but with reduced hours and services, unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing is also met. All library programs, special events, and meeting room reservations will be canceled. Hours will be reduced and services will be restricted on any day in which Jaffrey-Rindge schools are closed due to pandemic-related illness.

V: Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as two healthy employees available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum 8 hour workday and 40 hour workweek per full-time employee, and no more than 28 hour workweek per part-time employee. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than two consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

In providing service safely and efficiently, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director or designee.

- Increased health/safety measures for staff (e.g., wearing of gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g., closing floors or unmonitored areas for safety);
- Social distancing practices in public areas;
- Reduction of open hours;
- Cancellation of all programs, special events, and meeting room reservations;
- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours;
- Closure of the library.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the established Personnel policy. In the event of closure for less than 30 days, employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours. For building closures and/or service restrictions in excess of 30 days, the Library Board of Trustees may furlough staff in consultation with the Library Director, for business necessity.

If the Library is closed or hours reduced, healthy employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed in their compensated hours. When appropriate, work tools (e.g., laptops, supplies, etc.) will be checked out to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments. Failure to complete work-at-home assignments, without a qualifying reason (e.g., illness, FMLA, etc.), will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with established performance protocols.

VI: Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours must be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should follow the normal procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation, which includes posting on wmur.com, Facebook, and the library website.

VII: Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public, both in-person and online;
- Payroll;
- Accounts Payable;
- Facility Maintenance.

In the case of reduced staffing or reduced hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plan to staff.

VIII: Interim Service Plan

The Pandemic/Interim Service Plan will provide guidance to the Library Director or designee in instituting phased services, according to local health conditions, state and regional recommendations, and the safety needs of the staff and the public. This plan recognizes that in a pandemic, the management of services may require dynamic response and may not be linear in their implementation.