



Epidemic & Library Health Emergency Policy

Purpose

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic or library 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.

Definitions

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.

Epidemic – A 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.

Library health emergency – The state of affairs in which there are not enough healthy library staff to maintain normal hours of operation.

Employees and staffing level – Regular full-time and regular part-time library staff are defined in the Village of Belleville's Employee Handbook as those who work annually between 1,000 – 2,080 hours for determination of paid leave benefits. This does not include Library Pages or volunteers.

Library Closure

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

- A. The Village of Belleville's offices close because of a health emergency.

- B. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the Dane County or Green County public health department or other government officials.
- C. The Belleville School District closes schools because of an epidemic.

At the discretion of the Library Director, the Belleville 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. The exterior book drop may be locked for the duration of the closure.

Library Reopening

In the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak, a phased reopening may be required or recommended by public health officials. The Library Director will develop a plan for the Library Board's approval based on guidance from county and state public health officials, the Department of Public Instruction, and the South Central Library System.

The Library may reopen to the public even if Belleville public schools remain closed if cleared to do so by the Dane County public health department.

Minimum Staffing Level to Remain Open

If public health officials allow public facilities like libraries to remain open during or to reopen following a public health emergency, the Library must maintain a minimal level of staff in order to be open to the public. Minimum staffing requires two staff be present in the library during open hours.

The availability of healthy staff members and their scheduled hours per week 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.

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the Village of Belleville's sick leave policy. In the event of sudden closure and healthy library employees are sent home from work or the Library does not open in the morning as

scheduled, those employees shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

During an extended closure due to a health emergency, regular full-time and regular part-time library staff will receive pay equivalent to their scheduled number of hours per week with the expectation that they will be available to work up to that number of hours from home if possible.

Communication

In the event of closure, library staff will communicate changes in the Library's open hours to the public via the library's website, social media accounts, and phone messages.

Prioritization of Services

If reduced staffing, 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, with safety being the highest consideration:

1. Direct patron assistance, e.g. check out, issuing library cards, computer and information assistance.
2. Processing incoming holds, check in, incoming delivery returns, shelving.
3. Processing shelf action list and pick lists for outgoing holds.
4. Submission of payroll, processing bills for payment, preparing for and holding Library Board meetings.

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after 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.

Employee Absences

The Village of Belleville's Employee Handbook outlines the sick leave policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic or library health emergency unless superseded by a Village policy specific to that public health event.

Responsibility for Library Operations

If, for any reason, the Library Director is unable or unavailable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, the staff member with the most seniority will assume authority for the administration of this policy and library operations. Major decisions shall be implemented only after consulting the Library Board President, or if unavailable, another member of the Library Board. Established precedent and existing policy shall guide the decisions made in the absence of the Director.

Approved: June 10, 2020