



## **Pandemic Illness Policy & Response Plan**

The Geneva Public Library (“the Library”) strives to maintain a safe workplace and protect the health of employees, patrons, volunteers, contractors, and others in the event of a severe pandemic illness. The Library also wants to ensure the continuity of business operations in the event of a severe pandemic illness.

### **1. Guidance**

In the case of a pandemic, the Library will follow recommendations issued by public health authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other governmental agencies. When guidance differs across multiple authorities, the Library will follow directives and recommendations from the Ontario County Department of Public Health as long as such directives and recommendations are in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

### **2. Transmission Protection**

All employees are asked to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of pandemic illness in the workplace. The Library encourages employees to assist in reducing the transmission of pandemic illness by following CDC recommendations, which may include but are not limited to: frequent hand washing with warm, soapy water; using hand sanitizer; covering mouths with tissues when sneezing and coughing; wearing a face mask; and discarding used tissues.

The Library will not tolerate discriminatory actions or harassment of any individuals because of their decisions regarding wearing masks or their vaccination status.

### **3. Staying Home When Ill**

The Library provides eligible employees with Paid Time Off (PTO) or sick leave benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. During flu season and/or other pandemic illnesses, it is critical that employees do not report to work while they are ill and/or experiencing influenza-like symptoms including, but not limited to: fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body

aches, headache, chills, diarrhea, vomiting, and fatigue. The CDC recommends that people with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

#### **4. Work Schedules**

A severe pandemic illness could result in a significant level of absenteeism. Some employees may be unable to work if they become ill while others may need to remain home to care for family members or to provide care for children during school closings. The Library has provisions in place to allow employees to work remotely in order to ensure an efficient workplace and employee productivity during various situations, including the event of a severe pandemic illness. During this time, unless otherwise noted in consultation with the Library's [Emergency Closing Policy](#), normal attendance and leave policies will remain in place.

Individuals who believe they may face particular challenges reporting to work during a pandemic should take steps as early as possible to develop any necessary contingency plans. For example, employees might want to arrange for alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak with supervisors about the potential to work remotely or on an alternative work schedule if necessary.

#### **5. Confidentiality of Medical Information**

The Library treats any medical information obtained from an employee or an employee's health care provider, including any voluntary disclosure that the employee has contracted an illness, as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any disclosure of illness-related medical information will be shared by the Library only on a need-to-know basis and only as necessary to prevent or slow the spread of the illness in the Library, while maintaining confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible. Information will be shared with government officials only if required by law. Library employees, volunteers, contractors, and patrons will not disclose released medical information to the public.

Whenever possible, the Library will avoid disclosing the name of an employee that has tested positive for a pandemic illness and will use descriptions regarding the locations where and times when an infected employee has worked to allow others to determine whether they are at risk of exposure.

#### **6. New York State Forward**

This policy will be carried out under all current and future New York State Executive

Orders and the criteria mandated for organizations to safely and legally operate under [NY Forward](#). The guidelines outlined may be updated as needed to conform with modifications to NY Forward, as well as mandates from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), local government agencies, and feedback from Library employees.

Questions or concerns regarding this policy should be brought to the Library Director.

## **7. Library Pandemic Response Plan**

The following are general guidelines created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Library employees maintain the flexibility to adjust these guidelines in accordance with the conditions of a specific pandemic, and based on mandates and recommendations from Ontario County, the City of Geneva, the OWWL Library System, New York State, and other authorities.

**In the event that Library staffing falls below the minimal level, or if a quarantine has been issued by a public health authority, the Library will move immediately to Level 4.**

### **Business as Usual – Preparedness.**

- Regularly check that emergency policies, procedures, supplies, and contact information are up to date.
- Regularly train employees for emergency scenarios.
  - The Director or their designee educates employees on how to find, interpret, and share reliable information with the public.

### **Level 1 – Business as usual, but employees are on alert.**

- The Director and Board of Trustees (“the Board”) President will frequently assess latest risks and plan appropriate responses.
- The Director informs employees about latest risks, instructions for using safety supplies, and preventative measures.
  - Employees sanitize more frequently touched areas and maintain social distance.
- The Director or their designee educates employees on how to find, interpret, and share reliable information with the public.
  - Employees post resources for reliable information on the pandemic for the public.
- Draft an employee schedule for possible shortened operational hours, employees working from home, and/or abrupt employee illnesses.

- Assess whether employee and/or patron meetings and programs of large gatherings should be postponed or canceled.
- Assess whether the Library needs to restock sanitation supplies and personal protective equipment while supplies last.

**Level 2 – Library will restructure services.**

- Employees and patrons adhere to sanitation and personal protection procedures
- Diminish points of material contact as much as possible between employees and patrons while giving access to the building and needed resources. For example:
  - Limit acceptance of donations;
  - Limit access to public bathrooms and fountain;
  - Limit access to public computers;
  - Public copying, wireless printing, and scanning available by employees only;
  - Quarantine/sanitize any incoming materials;
    - Patron late fees may be adjusted.
  - Reduce in-house meeting sizes to one-on-one;
  - Reduce public access to Library furniture, equipment, toys, etc.
  - Employees should start to shift programming to virtual and take-home kits.
- The Library should post any changes in services to the public as soon as possible.

**Level 3 – Library will limit building access and services.**

- The building may have limited hours of operation.
  - Encourage employees to work from home as much as possible.
- Employees and patrons adhere to any updated sanitation and personal protection procedures
- Further diminish points of material contact between employees and patrons while giving access to most resources. For example:
  - Do not accept donations;
  - Limit access further, or remove, public computers;
  - Encourage curbside/tableside pickup of holds, wireless prints, or activity kits;
  - Quarantine/sanitize any incoming materials;
    - Patron late fees may be waived.
  - No in-house meetings or programs;
    - Virtual meetings/programming only

- o Remove all public furniture, equipment, toys, etc.
- o Reduce access to, or cordon off, library spaces as possible.

**Level 4 – Library will be closed to the public entirely.**

- After consulting with the Board, the Director will close the Library to public use if either of the following criteria are met:
  - o Minimum staffing levels cannot be reached.
  - o On the recommendation of Ontario County, the City of Geneva, the OWWL Library System, New York State, and other authorities.
- The Board will decide what public and support services to maintain, as well as how to administer core operations, including but not limited to:
  - o Maintaining the Library’s website, social media, and signage to keep the public informed of the Library’s status and pandemic response;
  - o Reference questions, which may be answered by phone or email;
  - o The security of the Library building, collections, and equipment;
  - o Ongoing construction project administration, if applicable;
  - o Caring for Library pets and/or plants, if applicable;
  - o Communication with employees;
  - o Payroll;
  - o Preparations to resume full or limited Library services.
- Exterior book drop(s) may be blocked off, and patrons would be unable to return items.
- Virtual services may continue as funding and staffing allow.

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees:** March 25, 2020

**Amended by the Board of Trustees:** 07/29/2020, 11/18/2020, 1/27/2021, 4/28/2021, 3/30/2022, 3/29/2023

**Reviewed by the Policy Review Committee:** 3/13/2023