

Infectious Disease Pandemic Response Plan

I. Purpose and Rationale

This plan is established by McMillan Memorial Library (MCM) in response to threats posed by the COVID-19 virus as well as other highly infectious diseases with potential for pandemic. MCM seeks a measured and responsible reaction to potential pandemic. This plan represents MCM's commitment to provide library services to the public in the safest and most effective way possible during a period of pandemic illness with public health and safety the primary concern, along with the goal of business operations continuity so far as possible.

The local, national and international conditions of pandemic illness may change on a daily basis. The current situation regarding COVID-19 is dynamic and currently developing rapidly. MCM's response is subject to modification based upon the best and most current information and shifting conditions. Therefore, this plan is subject to change as MCM identifies the most effective responses to the conditions.

II. Coordination with Public Health Authorities and Local Government

An effective response to pandemic requires ongoing coordination with public health authorities and other local governments. MCM will formulate its response to the threat posed by COVID-19 in cooperation with local, state and national health authorities and in consultation with local city and county governments.

Communications, both internal and external, are a critical component of MCM's response. MCM is committed to communicating in a timely and accurate manner with the public, staff, public health entities, the media and community partners. MCM will continually monitor external factors, update procedures based upon the latest and best information available, and communicate changes as effectively as possible.

MCM will work to ensure that all library staff members understand MCM's plans and procedures. Pandemic illness is frequently a source of considerable anxiety. Educating staff by sharing the most current and accurate information available is the most effective way to reduce anxiety.

- To inform staff, MCM will:
 - Keep staff apprised via email and Flock in order to help staff understand Library procedures, and assist staff in communicating plans and procedures to the public. MCM also will utilize its internal chain-of-command to communicate with staff.
 - Invite questions from staff regarding plans, and afford staff the opportunity throughout the pandemic response period to express concerns and suggestions.

- Respond to staff questions and comments as soon as possible.
- In an effort to inform the public, MCM will:
 - Post relevant information about MCM's pandemic response on its website, social media, and/or via Internet email lists.
 - Post relevant information in the library.
 - Respond to questions from members of the public as soon as possible.
 - Inform the public via local media and the MCM website and other means of relevant changes to library operations and procedures.
- MCM representatives will network cooperatively with public health authorities, local governmental and educational entities, and other organizations and groups in the community.
- The Library will look for best practices from and work cooperatively with regional, state and national library organizations and public libraries.

III. Library Operations

IV. Continuity of Services

MCM seeks a balanced, responsible approach to operations informed by the best and latest science and public health guidance available. There are obvious risks in failing to prepare and respond adequately to the threat presented by pandemic disease agents. However, significant changes to library operations and services have the potential to disrupt operations more than the effects of pandemic illness alone. MCM will consider costs and benefits to residents and staff regarding proposed changes to procedure.

MCM will maintain continuity of library services to the greatest extent possible while working to provide safe facilities and cooperating with public health authorities.

V. Public Health Measures [Also to be used by staff as public talking points]

MCM is committed to providing safe and sanitary facilities for the public and for library staff. Based upon recommendations from state and local health authorities, the Centers for Disease Control, or other public health authorities, MCM may decide to temporarily increase the frequency and type of cleaning and sanitizing in the Library, especially areas and surfaces that experience higher use.

However, no amount of reasonable effort can ever guarantee that public places are free of infectious agents, including, potentially, the COVID-19 virus. Even a recently cleaned and disinfected surface can potentially transmit disease once touched by a sick person. With hundreds of visitors a day, MCM encourages individuals to take preventative measures as a necessary component in minimizing public health risks in the library.

MCM emphasizes prevention and individual responsibility for taking steps that contribute to keeping well and helping prevent the spread of infectious illness. To that end, MCM provides public and staff with convenient access to hand sanitizer, hand washing facilities, disinfecting wipes, latex/nitrile gloves and facial tissues. The Library will post signs in restrooms encouraging hand washing and routine sanitation practices that help minimize

the spread of infectious illness from person to person.

VI. Temporary Reduction or Suspension of Services

During the course of a pandemic, public health authorities may advise or mandate that libraries and other public gathering places minimize or avoid conditions where numerous individuals congregate in relatively confined spaces. In such cases, the Director or his/her designee may temporarily discontinue library programs and/or services as well as use of library meeting rooms by the public or other similar measures.

VII. Temporary Closure of McMillan Library

Closure of McMillan Library will be at the discretion of the Director or his/her designee. MCM may be closed temporarily under one or more of the following conditions:

- Public health authorities advise, request or order such closure.
- The closure of local public schools.
- Public visitation is too low to warrant keeping MCM open.
- Too few staff members are available to operate MCM.
- The closure of other local public institutions or businesses.
- Any other conditions that prevent MCM from operating safely and effectively.

VIII. Minimizing Negative Impacts on Operations and Services

MCM provides crucial resources and services to residents. MCM will strive to minimize negative impacts on access to resources and services resulting from procedures adopted in response to pandemic illness.

MCM will work to preserve access to its online resources both in the Library and remotely. Residents with Internet access can use MCM online resources remotely and when it is closed. MCM will strive to maintain access to its digital resources such as its Internet site, subscription databases, online catalog and collections of digital books and other media even in the event that MCM is closed temporarily.

MCM recognizes that some residents lack home computers or Internet connectivity and rely on the public library to provide free Internet access. While MCM remains open, MCM will strive to maintain public Internet access insofar as it is possible to do so safely.

In coordination with health authorities, MCM will consider alternatives to the complete suspension of public computing, depending on emerging conditions. Measures might include provision of disinfectant wipes, social distancing, measures to increase space between simultaneous computer users, latex gloves and other measures.

In the event of a temporary closure of the library, MCM may suspend all due dates, suspend all late fees or both. MCM will use its Internet site, social media, library email distribution lists and work with local media to publicize any such suspension. MCM will encourage the public to keep checked out items in their homes until further notice. A suspension would be advantageous for a number of reasons. It would help prevent MCM from being inundated with returned materials while no items were getting checked out. It would prevent customers from feeling a need to venture to the library to return materials, as a suspension would provide assurance that no fines would accrue on items currently checked out.

Potential Procedures with Significant Negative Impacts on Library Operations

Quarantine on recently returned items

While perhaps unlikely, it is possible that a quarantine period on recently- returned materials is recommended by public health authorities. MCM will consider how such a process might be implemented as well as how operational problems might be addressed.

Disinfecting and cleaning of all returned library items

The suggestion might arise that a procedure be implemented that staff clean each returned item at the time of check in. Such measures might be implemented, as necessary, however, due to the inordinate amount of time required, such a procedure could be disruptive to the point of slowing library operations. In addition, while surface covers of library items might potentially be cleaned it is not possible to disinfect each page of returned books. Finally, effective disinfecting methods such as heat, liquids and gels could likely damage or destroy library items, especially with repeated application.

Even if one or both of the processes above were implemented---quarantining and individual disinfecting---the items would be subject to being touched again by members of the public as soon as they were re-shelved.

Closed stacks

The stacks at MCM are open, which means that library users have direct and free access to shelves where books, CDs, DVDs and other items are stored, and are able to retrieve items themselves. Health officials or others might suggest that MCM implement a system of “closed” stacks for a period of time. In a closed stack arrangement only staff can access shelved materials, and staff must retrieve requested materials for the public.

Such a system would be disruptive for MCM given the physical arrangement of MCM and current workflow processes. Both have been designed to facilitate self-directed service. A closed stack system would be highly difficult, time consuming and inefficient to implement in MCM. This procedure will be considered, as warranted, with these issues in mind.

IX. Library Staff

General

MCM is committed to communicating with staff regarding its pandemic illness plans to insure that all staff members understand the procedures and their role in MCM’s response. MCM will make every effort to respond to staff concerns and questions and will consider revising procedures based on continuing dialog with staff members throughout MCM.

Personnel Policies and Procedures

During a pandemic many human resources questions regarding staffing and personnel matters will arise.

The City of Wisconsin Rapids Human Resources will inform MCM’s response to relevant issues such as paid time off, sick leave and return from sick leave, FMLA, emergency leave, extended benefits, working from home, and related matters. Existing policies will govern all such decisions unless and until MCM’s Board of Trustees modifies the policies.

Prevention and Personal Responsibility

The emphasis of MCM’s response is on good hygiene habits and personal responsibility in

preventing the spread of infectious illness. MCM encourages staff to follow the CDC guidelines, which aim to slow the spread of infectious diseases. As with other respiratory viruses, it is recommended for people to protect themselves and others by practicing certain everyday actions:

- Clean hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or into your elbow.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Get an annual flu vaccine if you have not had one. (Although COVID-19 is not an influenza virus, and the flu vaccine is not a vaccine for COVID-19, an annual flu shot is recommended as a general method to reduce occurrence of infectious disease.)
- For further guidelines regarding individuals infected with COVID-19 specifically, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>.

X. Continuity of Services with Minimal Staffing

MCM managers and administration will develop continuity of service plans with reduced, less-than-optimal staffing levels. They will identify methods of staffing desks and service areas within MCM and providing a basic level of service should illness temporarily reduce MCM's available workforce during a pandemic.

XI. Library Closures

In the event that MCM is closed, managers will first work to identify any necessary tasks for employees to perform. Depending upon the nature of the closure, selected staff may continue to work in MCM to perform tasks related to continuity of services. Potential on-site work tasks during a public closure might include:

- Collections inventory
- Processing and cataloging
- Retrospective spine labeling for materials on shelves
- Shelf reading
- Collection management
- Computer and network maintenance and support
- Shifting collections
- Self guided computer training opportunities for staff on software and online resources
- Materials repair
- Mailing out materials from the library
- Providing telephone reference
- Providing online reference
- Administrative activities
- Attaching and linking RFID tags

In the event of either a partial or complete closure of MCM, the type and amount of paid and unpaid leave available to employees will be determined by the Library's personnel policies.

Working from Home

In the event of a partial or complete closure of MCM, or if an emerging situation related to pandemic influenza warrants it, MCM may consider temporary work-at-home possibilities for some staff who have been identified as essential personnel to deliver critical processes and functions. This may be supported by specially authorized remote computer access into MCM's telecommunications and computers systems. Temporary work-from-home for any employee requires advance approval of the Director or her/his designee.

Adapted from

https://www.pueblolibrary.org/sites/default/files/media/2020/pandemic_response_plan_2020_3.3.2020.pdf