Public Health Policy

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in the event of a public health event. In the case of a public health event, 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 public health event 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 and reduced hours due to a public health event.

II: Definitions

Public Health Event: Any event that represents immediate threat to human health based on frequency, circumstances of occurrence, clinical presentation, or severity and requires prompt action

Public Health Plan: A public health 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 public health event may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for an extended period of time.

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 Glen Carbon Centennial Library will close due to a public health event 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 conditions or circumstances make it impossible 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 necessary public authorities.

IV: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that schools within the Edwardsville School District are closed due to a public health event, the Glen Carbon Centennial Library will remain open, but may reduce hours and services, unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing is also met. Hours may be reduced and services may be restricted on any day in which Edwardsville schools are closed due to illness related to the event.

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 39 hour workweek per part-time employee enrolled in IMRF. 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 rooms 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 policies regarding leaves and absences. In the event of closure, employees shall be compensated.

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.

VI: Communication

In the event of closure necessitated by a public health event, 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 Facebook, the library website, and posters around the building.

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:  Policy Implementation

In the event of a public health event, the Library will respond according to the recommendations of the CDC, Madison County Health Department, or other appropriate public health authorities.  It is expected that the Library's response to these recommendations will fall into one of three levels as follows.

Public Health Policy Plan

**Level I: Precautionary Health Measures**

1. Cleaning & Supplies

* Purchase additional cleaning and disease prevention supplies
* Provide tissues and hand sanitizer to staff and in public areas
* Offer staff masks and gloves, to be used if desired. As appropriate, recommend use by staff who handle many materials.
* Perform additional routine cleaning, as needed, of all frequently touched surfaces in the Library, such as workstations, countertops, and door knobs
* Provide staff with disinfectant wipes for quick disinfection
* Staff should contact Building Stars if an area needs to be thoroughly cleaned

2. Work Adjustments

* Authorities may request that persons returning from an infected area of the world not return to work for a period of time. Library employees are required to follow those recommendations. Absences for this purpose will be excused.
* Any employee presenting symptoms congruent with the outbreak will be asked to return home and/or refrain from coming to work.
* Review documentation of departmental procedures and/or departmental cross training so others can take over for sick employees

3. Communicate to the Public

* Share official sources for health information with patrons
* Recommend that patrons and staff with symptoms not enter the building
* Promote healthy habits
* Promote online library services

4. Communicate to Staff

* Share this Public Health Response Procedure
* Encourage staff to receive appropriate vaccinations
* Emphasize that staff should stay home when sick and follow respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene
* Communicate any CDC reporting requirements
* Advise traveling staff to check the CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices
* Promote healthy habits

**Level II: Moderated Services**

1. Service Adjustments

* Create social distancing by number of public seats, limiting the number of patrons in the library at one time, and altering work schedules so that fewer people are working in close proximity to one another
* Reduce or suspend services. Public health authorities may advise that libraries and other gathering places minimize or entirely suspend situations where numerous individuals congregate in relatively confined spaces. In such cases, the Library Director may suspend some or all:
* Library programming
* Public meeting room use
* Deliveries to homebound, nursing homes, and retirement centers
* Holds processing
* Review and prepare options for emergency library services as necessary

2. Work Adjustments

* Cancel all library-related travel to areas under a CDC Traveler’s Health Notice Warning Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel) and reconsider library-related travel to Level 2 areas.
* Adjust volunteer work schedules as affected by service adjustments

3. Communicate to Public

* Continue messaging as in Level I. Messages should explicitly state that service reductions are being done to slow down disease transmission, not because of an abundance of sick staff.
* Post an alert on the website outlining adjustments to services; adjust homepage to include pointers to official sources of info about the pandemic
* Contact affected program registrants, meeting room users, study room reservations, etc. to notify of service adjustments
* Overdues, up to 14 days will be waived if the patron communicates that they have been ill

4. Communicate to Staff

* Library Director to monitor and coordinate response among authorities, schools, villages, and library
* Encourage staff to wear gloves and masks when handling materials
* Review and adjust staff phone tree to ensure information is current

**Level III: Temporary Closure**

1. Service Adjustments

* Temporary Closure. During the course of a public health event, the Library Director may temporarily close the Library buildings under one or more of the following conditions:
* Public health authorities advise, request or order such a closure
* Edwardsville School District closes
* Public visitation is too low to warrant keeping the buildings open
* Staffing levels are too low to operate the Library
* Any other conditions that prevent the Library from operating the facilities safely and effectively
* Emergency Closing Guidelines apply; staff are not required to remain “on call” during an extended closure
* Extend due dates
* Close drop boxes and post closed signs
* Inform vendors and delivery services that we are closed and not accepting deliveries
* Notify IHLS
* Notify after-hours cleaning company
* Notify vendors

2. Work Adjustments

* Staff and volunteers are to refrain from reporting to work in person.
* Library Director will continue to work remotely to monitor building and systems conditions as well as coordinate response among staff and with Library Board of Trustees.
* Circulation Manager will continue to work remotely to communicate with public.

3. Communicate to the Public

* Post an alert message on the website indicating the library is closed; homepage to include pointers to official sources of info about the pandemic
* Post library closed message on front door of main library and annex
* Continue to share official sources for health information and library service updates with patrons via digital communications channels

4. Communicate to Staff

* Library Director to continue to monitor and coordinate response among authorities, schools, villages, and library

FINAL CAVEAT: Should the situation call for a more nuanced response than is outlined here, the

Library Director and Board may adjust the library’s response to meet emergent needs.