

Argyle Free 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 maybe 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.

II: Library Closure

Public Health Mandate: The Argyle Free Library will close due to a 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 and the Library Board of Trustees.

III: School Closure Due to Pandemic

In the event that the Argyle Central School District is closed due to pandemic illness, the Argyle Free Library will also close. All library programs, special events, and meeting room reservations will be canceled. Hours will be reduced and services will be restricted.

IV: Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as at least one healthy employee available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum 6-hour workday.

An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level 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, wearing masks, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library; limiting numbers in areas that receive the most traffic
- Social distancing practices in public areas;
- Reduction of open hours;
- Cancellation of all programs and special events

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- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours;
- Closure of the library.

In the event of closure, the Board of Trustees and Library Director will, on a case-by-case basis, discuss employee compensation. The Board of Trustees and the Library Director will attempt to minimize the impact of a closure on the staff while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

If the Library is closed or hours reduced, healthy employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks or tasks that can be completed at the library during closed hours.

V: 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 signage at the library, signage on the front door of the library, signage at the town hall and the post office, posting on Front Porch Forum, Facebook, and the library website.

VI: Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public, both in-person and online;
- Payroll;
- 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 or weekly work plan to staff.