

Pandemic Policy  
April 14, 2020

### **Purpose**

To establish the protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, the library must plan for staff being unable to report to work. In addition, during a pandemic, businesses, social organizations, or schools may be required to take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness including closing down by order of local public health officials. Other public health measures may include limiting or canceling social and public gatherings, requiring quarantines, and/or other social distancing measures. Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or some 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 pandemic.

### **Definitions**

“Pandemic Plan” – A pandemic 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). 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.

“Pandemic” – A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease and may occur when a new virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. If a pandemic were to occur today, we could expect the virus to spread rapidly due to the interconnected nature of the world and the high level of global travel. During a pandemic, up to 35% of employees may be absent at one time due to their own illness. Additional numbers may be absent for other reasons, as covered in the City of Oelwein Personnel Manual.

(Sources: World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int> and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>)

“Employees” and “Staffing Level” – For the purposes of this policy in the sections Minimum Staffing Level, Prioritization of Services, and Responsibility for Library Operations, the terms employees and staffing level pertain to part-time and full-time library staff as those who annually work between 1,040-2,079 or 2,080 or more hours respectively.

### **Library Closure**

The Oelwein Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event that

- The City of Oelwein closes following the City of Oelwein Emergency Closing Policy or
- A mandate order or recommendation for closure is issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

At the discretion of the Library director or the Library Board President, the Oelwein Public Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily (e.g. programming) in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain basic library service levels.

In the event of closure, the Library director or designee will

- post effective communications about the closure.
- submit payroll.
- adjust due dates and holds pickup dates for library materials so that holds do not expire on dates in which the library is closed.

In the event of a closure, healthy library employees shall report for work for the equivalent of their regularly scheduled hours. Schedules may be adjusted to limit the amount of staff in the building at one time. Work-from-home schedules may be implemented. If healthy library employees are sent home, those employees shall be compensated as determined by city policy. As city employees, library staff will be treated the same as city employees in their same classification.

### **School Closure Due to Pandemic**

In the event that any Oelwein Area School District school is closed due to pandemic illness, the Oelwein Public Library will

- remain open unless one of the aforementioned requirements for closing are also met.
- remove non-circulating children's items from public areas during the duration of the school closure to minimize spread through surfaces frequently touched by children.
- follow disinfecting and/or cleaning procedures issued by public health officials, as possible.

However,

- all library programs and special events will be cancelled on any day in which any or all of Oelwein Area schools are closed due to pandemic-related illness.

### **Minimum Staffing Levels**

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 employee. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than five consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

The level of excused absence of library staff will determine the ability to carry out services and maintain open hours. Phases may include:

1. Cancellation of all programs, special events, and meeting room reservations.
2. Staff library at minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time; employees may be reallocated and have shifts reassigned and lengthened to provide coverage during open hours.
3. Reduce open hours if number of employees falls below temporary minimum level.
4. Close the library for one or more days if number of employees further declined or only minimum level can be met for five 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 City of Oelwein Personnel Policy. However, an employee who is absent for three (3) consecutive days shall not be required to provide a health care provider's signed and dated

written certification verifying the necessity for the absence identifying the diagnosis/illness to which the diagnosis is attributed.

### **Communication**

In the event of closure or reduction in services necessitated by pandemic, library staff will post effective communications about any reduction in services or open hours.

### **Prioritization of Services**

If reduced staffing, open hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities that most directly impact patrons prior to any other work tasks. A minimum of two healthy employees will be assigned to staff the building regardless if this is their typically assigned department, schedule, or responsibility.

Priority responsibilities shall follow this order:

1. Direct patron assistance: check out, issuing library cards, computer and reference assistance, monitoring the facility and collections.
2. Patron related tasks: check in, incoming deliveries, shelving materials, inter-library loan request, monitor holds and reserves.
3. Essential Services: payroll, processing bills for payment, material orders, board meetings, reports, general communications (Facebook, newsletter, signs).

Individual responsibilities outside of those described shall be completed after these 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 a responsibility not listed requires urgent attention.

### **Employee Absences**

The Oelwein Public Library follows the City of Oelwein Personnel Policy. This policy shall be followed in the event of a pandemic outbreak with the exception of the requirement for a health care provider's signed and dated written certification verifying the necessity for the absence.

### **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, administrative authority for this policy and all library operations shall be assigned to the Assistant Director.