Exeter Community Library Pandemic Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to provide comprehensive guidance for public library staff, stakeholders, and patrons during a pandemic. It outlines measures to ensure the safety of individuals, continuity of services, and efficient communication.

2. Objectives

- Protect the health and safety of staff, volunteers, and patrons.
- Maintain essential library operations.
- Provide timely and accurate communication.
- Support community needs through adapted services.

3. Preparedness

3.1. Risk Assessment

- Identify potential health risks associated with pandemics.
- Monitor updates from health authorities (e.g., WHO, CDC, local health departments).

3.2. Staff Training

- Conduct regular training on hygiene, infection control, and emergency procedures.
- Ensure all staff are familiar with remote work tools and protocols.

3.3. Supplies and Equipment

- Maintain a stock of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and signage.
- Ensure technology infrastructure supports remote operations.

3.4. Partnerships

- Collaborate with local health authorities and community organizations.
- Collaborate with the Berks County Public Libraries System on procedures and protocols

4. Response Plan

4.1. Activation of Plan

- The plan will be activated upon guidance from health authorities or when pandemic conditions affect operations.

4.2. Health and Safety Measures

- Implement social distancing measures, including rearranging furniture and limiting occupancy.
- Increase cleaning frequency, especially for high-touch surfaces.

4.3. Screening and Entry Protocols

- Employees must self-monitor for signs and symptoms of the contagion.
- Employees and visitors must follow all screening protocols as prescribed by health authorities prior to entering library buildings

4.4. Service Adjustments

- Transition to virtual programming and services.
- Implement curbside pickup or delivery for library materials.
- Extend loan periods and waive late fees.

4.5. Staffing

- Allow remote work for eligible staff.
- Develop a schedule to minimize on-site staff and ensure coverage.
- Establish a contingency plan for staff shortages.

4.6. Communications

- Use the library website, social media, email, and local media to share updates.
- Provide clear instructions on modified services and health protocols.
- Respond promptly to patron inquiries.

4.7. Workplace Exposure Protocols

- Close off, clean, and disinfect areas as recommended by health authorities
- Notify staff and patrons who may have been exposed to the contagion
- Maintain confidentiality of medical conditions.

5. Hygiene and Personal Protective Measures

- Frequent handwashing and sanitizing are mandatory.
- Employees must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as recommended by health authorities while in public areas

6. Housekeeping

- Conduct routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces and high-touch areas.
- Use daily cleaning checklists to ensure thorough disinfection.
- Engage professional cleaning services for areas exposed to contagion.

7. Recovery Plan

7.1. Phased Reopening

- Reopen in phases based on guidance from health authorities.
- Gradually resume in-person services and programming.

7.2. Evaluation

- Review the effectiveness of the pandemic response.
- Gather feedback from staff and patrons.
- Update the pandemic plan based on lessons learned.

8. Approval and Review

This Pandemic Policy has been approved by the Library Board and will be reviewed annually or as necessary to reflect updated public health guidance or library operations.

Approved by: ECL Board of Trustees
Date: 2/10/2025

Appendices

Contact information for local health authorities:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/ | Phone: 800-232-4636

Department of Health, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health.html | Phone: 877-724-3258

Berks County Emergency Services: Phone: 610-374-8865

Sample Checklist for Phased Reopening:

Phase 1: Limit occupancy, implement curbside services, and train staff.

Phase 2: Allow limited in-person visits and resume computer access.

Phase 3: Open with capacity limits and increase operating hours.

Phase 4: Return to full operations.

Sample Communication Template:

Subject Line: [Brief Description of Update]

Body:

- Introduction: Clearly state the purpose of the update.
- Details: Provide specific information.
- Call to Action: Encourage patrons to visit the website or contact staff.
- Closing: Thank patrons for their cooperation.