

Pandemic Policy

Adopted July 21, 2020 by the South Georgia Regional Library Board of Trustees

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to limit the spread of the pandemic among Library staff and the public and to maintain essential library functions and services as safely as possible.

DEFINITION

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a pandemic is a global outbreak of disease.

PARAMETERS AFFECTING PRACTICES

The status of a pandemic and public health guidelines will be determined by the following sources: Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency, South Health District, Georgia Department of Health, CDC, or other authorized public health officials. Courses of action will adhere to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines.

Important aspects to examine in the preparation for a pandemic:

- Method of transmission
- Symptoms
- Recommended disinfecting supplies
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting practices

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Pandemic Policy and appropriate course of action for the Library system will be determined by the Library Administrative Team. Prior to a library closure or payroll changes specifically caused by the pandemic, The Library Director will consult with the South Georgia Regional Library Regional Board of Trustees. Library Administrative Team members should be prepared with essential personnel documents, a laptop, laptop charger, current emergency contact list for staff, library keys, and any other items or information to perform library business in the event of a closure.

Refer to the *South Georgia Regional Library System Pandemic Service & Access Guide* for the following operational phases:

- Phase 1: Traditional
- Phase 2: Precautionary
- Phase 3: Limited Seating
- Phase 4: Walkthrough Library

- Phase 5: Closed with Curbside
- Phase 6: Closed to the Public
- Phase 7: Staff at Home

Phase transition may not be implemented in consecutive order and phases may be revisited as needed.

The *South Georgia Regional Library System Pandemic Service & Access Guide* outlines details for operating hours, staffing, building capacity, protective measures, services, material check out and return, restroom access, meeting and study room access, materials donations, and volunteers for each phase.

GENERAL INFECTION CONTROL PRACTICES

All employees are responsible for practicing infection control at all times in order to protect themselves, Library patrons, and others from illness.

- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day for at least twenty seconds with soap and water.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands after you cough or sneeze.
- If soap and water is not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, rubbing hands together until dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home and limit contact with others. Library staff should report absences as outlined in the *South Georgia Regional Library Personnel Policy*.
- Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces, such as counters, desks, tables, doorknobs, railings, keyboards, computer mice, telephone handsets, and drinking fountains.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

When health authorities have established that a pandemic is present, social distancing measures may be implemented. Social distancing practices are meant to reduce transmission of an illness between people.

Examples of social distancing measures:

- Some service points may be unavailable.
- Access to equipment and public computer use may be limited.
- Seating may be limited.
- Use of self-checkout stations, where available, will be encouraged.
- Meeting rooms may be closed or limited to certain size groups.
- In-house and outreach programs and special events may be changed to digital format or canceled.
- Travel for work may be postponed or canceled.

PROCESS & RESPONSE

The following considerations should be made by the Administrative Team when a pandemic is expected, imminent, and underway:

- Inform library staff that they should stay aware of advisements from local, state, and federal sources.
- Consult with Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency for reliable and current recommendations and resources about the pandemic.
- Work to classify the risk level of all aspects of the Library system.
- Determine the need, obtain, and distribute protective equipment and disinfecting supplies.
- Provide updates on Library operations to staff. Staff members may be notified by email of operational changes.
- Implement procedures for preventing the spread of illness, cleaning, and disinfecting a public space, as suggested by the CDC and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- Provide updates on Library operations to the public as necessary.
- Review information and communicate with Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), other public library systems, and professional library organizations.
- Contact vendors whose services may be impacted by the pandemic.
- Communicate information about crisis support and employee assistance programs to staff.
- Determine operating hours and services offered based on staffing, public visitation, and recommendations from health officials.
- Determine if teleworking and flexible work hours can be established.
- If a reduction of staffing, hours, or services are required, employees shall perform priority responsibilities as assigned by supervisors. Staff may be temporarily reassigned to different duties than they normally perform as well as alternate schedules and locations.