



BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CATEGORY: Health & Safety #1

POLICY REPLACING: New

SUBJECT: Epidemics/Pandemics & Other
Public Health Emergency

BOARD APPROVAL DATE: September 8, 2020

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RATIONALE:

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency.

The Bracebridge Public Library (Library) should plan for conditions where the Library's normal operations are interrupted or cannot continue in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak or other public health emergency. In addition, during any public health emergency, organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of municipal, provincial or federal health/government officials. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the Library can be maintained with limited staff and a change in operational hours as determined by the Library CEO and supported by the Library Board.

DEFINITIONS:

Epidemic - an outbreak of disease that spreads quickly and affects many individuals at the same time

Pandemic - an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population

POLICY STATEMENT:

Continuity of Operations

When there is an infectious disease outbreak or other public health emergency, changes to staff, services, and hours may be necessary.

Health & Safety Practices

Library staff will follow suggestions and directions to implement health and safety practices within the library building and its property following the guidelines and regulations provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) and government officials. Procedures will be developed specific to those directives, which may include but are not limited to the use of personal protective equipment, physical distancing and increased personal hygiene.

The library facility will be maintained in accordance with the guidelines provided by SMDHU and government officials, which may include increased cleaning, changing HVAC filters or other measures to mitigate the transmission of the epidemic.

Training and Education

Training and education for employees and all others who enter the library will be based on information and directives provided by SMDHU and government officials.



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Library Closures

The Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency such as an epidemic/pandemic in the event that any of the following occur:

- A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by the SMDHU or government officials
- If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the epidemic contagion
- At the direction of the Library Board
- At the discretion of the Library CEO

In addition, the Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the possible spread of the contagion. The health & safety of staff and patrons will be key considerations determining service levels.

Types of Library Closures:

- Complete Closure: no staff in the building at any time
- Library Closure with Essential Services Only: library employees may be required to work from home or on site during closures to perform necessary duties, such as payroll, bill paying, building maintenance, emptying book drops, etc.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services – staff may:
 - be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
 - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
 - be required to perform duties beyond their usual responsibilities

At Work Arrangements

For positions with essential functions requiring an in-person presence, employees are expected to attend work as usual and follow the best practices and guidelines to protect their health and safety.

Work From Home Arrangements

To help prevent the potential exposure and spread of an infectious disease, the Library supports alternative work arrangements in situations where work can be performed from home or at an alternative location. The Library favours their employees working remotely as much as possible, as long as it supports the essential operations of the Library.

Library employees will need to ensure that their home workspace is appropriate and safe, and ensures security of library work.



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The Library CEO will determine which positions may be considered for alternative work arrangements based on the compatibility/nature of the work, operational needs, maintaining appropriate service levels, employees' job responsibilities and existing technology/technological infrastructures.

Employee Wellness Self-assessment

All employees reporting to the Library must do a wellness self-assessment prior to the start of their scheduled shift.

Employees who show any signs or symptoms of the infectious disease in question, should not enter the Library and should immediately report it to the Library CEO. At the beginning of an identified epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency, protocols for staff will be provided following the guidelines and regulations provided by SMDHU and government officials.

Terms of Employment

Terms of employment including compensation, leaves, vacation time or personal issues during an epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency will be subject to Library policies including Personnel #2 Terms of Employment and following the guidelines and regulations provided by SMDHU and government officials.

Communication

In the event of cancellation of services, programs or Library closures, the CEO will ensure:

- Notification to Library staff and Board members, Friends of the Library, Town Council and CAO, custodial staff and the public via email, social media and the Library's website
- Notification to scheduled program presenters and program attendees (if we have contact information)
- Information regarding the epidemic/pandemic is posted on the Library website
- Applicable signage is created for interior and exterior Library use
- Notification to local media and any government entities as deemed necessary

Responsibility for Library Operations

If, for any reason, the Library CEO 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 provided by the Library Board Chair or designate with assistance from staff as required.



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RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Board By-law #2 A - Electronic Meetings
Governance #8 - Board-CEO Partnership
Personnel Policy #2 – Terms of Employment

PREVIOUS REVISIONS:

None