

## **St. Joseph Public Library Epidemic and Public Emergency Policy**

The St. Joseph Public Library (SJPL) expects that some staff will be unable to report for work during an epidemic or other health emergency. SJPL will follow orders of the City, County, and State Health Departments to help slow the spread of illness. This may include the closing of library branches or other reductions in service. SJPL will attempt to keep core services of the library operational in case of reduced staff and reduced hours of operation but will balance the need for our service against the potential for becoming a place where the epidemic can be transmitted and spread.

### **Levels of operation**

1. Business as usual. During the period when there is a potential epidemic or other health emergency, the library director shall monitor the situation and prepare stockpiles of cleaning and sanitation supplies to reduce the likelihood of staff becoming infected and train staff on preventive measures to reduce the spread of infections.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses including:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing a nose.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay home when you are sick.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
2. Notification of infections near St. Joseph. When SJPL has been notified by public health officials, either directly or through broadcast media, that an illness has arrived near our community, the following precautions will be taken in addition to the actions listed above:
    - Staff should increase hand washing and sanitizing surfaces to prevent the spread of illness.
    - Staff with compromising preconditions will be required to contact their healthcare provider for guidance on work attendance and/or protective procedures.
    - Staff will be encouraged to wear gloves when working with returned items. Hand washing for 20 seconds with hot water and soap is required immediately after removing gloves.
    - Returned library materials will be quarantined or wiped down with appropriate antiseptic wipes before being re-shelved.
    - Equipment, counter surfaces, door knobs, etc. will be frequently wiped down with appropriate antiseptic wipes.
    - Library owned children's toys will be temporarily removed to avoid the spread of virus.
    - Programs involving groups of people may be canceled. This will also include outside groups using meeting rooms.
    - Some public computers will be shut down in order to maintain a distance of at least 6-feet between each person on a public computer.

- Hours of operation may be reduced by the library director if illness lowers the number of staff able to work at public service desks.
  - Normal paid time off policies may be suspended.
3. Notification of health emergency. Upon a declaration of a health emergency by public health officials, SJPL will first implement the directives of the public health officials.
- Precautions and actions listed previously will continue.
  - Library services may be reduced further to limit the number of people in a building.
  - If employees are diagnosed with the epidemic causing virus, the branch where they work may be closed as a precaution for a time. The current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines will impact the decision to close.
  - Staff and the public will be notified of the closure via the same procedures used for weather or other emergency closure. The public will be encouraged to visit other SJPL branches and use SJPL digital resources for their information and reading needs.
  - If a library is closed the Branch Manager or designated staff will visit the branch once per day to empty bookdrops. Up to three staff members who are not exhibiting any signs of illness may help with the bookdrops. Staff are required to wear gloves when handling returned materials. All materials returned will be quarantined or disinfected. Staff are required to wash hands for 20 seconds in hot water with soap after removing protective gloves. Staff will inspect the buildings for any maintenance problems that occur while being closed and inform the library director upon discovering any problems.
  - All staff will continue to be paid for the duration of the closure. Paid time off may not accrue during the branch closure.

If all libraries are ordered or advised to close, the following procedures will take place:

- The public will be notified of the order to close by health officials via standard SJPL procedures for closing for weather or other emergency. The public will be encouraged to use SJPL digital resources for their information and reading needs.
  - Staff and the public will be notified of the closing via the same procedures used for weather or other emergency closure.
  - Branch managers or other designated staff will visit branches once per day to empty bookdrops. Up to three staff members who are not exhibiting any signs of illness may help with the bookdrops. Staff are required to wear gloves when handling returned materials. All materials returned will be quarantined or disinfected. Staff are required to wash hands for 20 seconds in hot water with soap after removing protective gloves. Staff will inspect the buildings for any maintenance problems that occur while being closed and inform the library director upon discovering any problems.
  - All staff will continue to be paid for the duration of the emergency. Paid time off may not accrue during the branch closure.
  - Maintenance and custodial staff will be called in on an as-needed basis to fix problems occurring during the shut-down.
4. Reopening.
- Staff will be notified when the library district or branch is allowed to re-open, which may occur in stages that do not automatically open the buildings to the public immediately.
  - Provisions under step 2 may be required until the full epidemic has passed. The library director will make the appropriate determination upon being allowed to re-open.
  - Upon reopening the standard paid time off policies will be unsuspended if they were revoked.

- The library director will continue to monitor news and public official announcements in case a second wave of illness occurs.