**EPIDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY**

Caruthersville Public Library will follow orders of the Pemiscot County Health Department and/or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Service or the Center of Disease Control to help slow the spread of illness. This may include closing the library, or other reductions in service. The library will attempt to keep core services of the library operational in case of reduced staff and reduced hours of operation.

**Levels of operation**

1. **Business as usual.**

During the period prior to the arrival of an epidemic or other health

emergency, the library director shall monitor the situation and provide staff information on preventive measures to reduce the spread of infections.

The CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including:

* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
* 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.

1. **Notification of infections in the area.**

When the library director has been notified by public health officials that the infectious disease has arrived in the area, the following precautions may be taken:

* Staff with compromising preconditions will be encouraged to contact their healthcare provider for guidance on work attendance and/or protective procedures.
* Staff may be encouraged to wear protective face masks, gloves, and eye protection when working with patrons and returned items. Hand washing for 20 seconds with hot water and soap may be required immediately after removing gloves and before removing face masks and eye protection.
* Staff may be directed to quarantine returned items before reshelving or sending them through the delivery to other branches or libraries.
* Programs involving groups of people may be canceled. This includes outside groups

reserving meeting rooms.

* Normal sick leave policy will be in force.

1. **Voluntary closure.**

There are circumstances under which the library may close voluntarily without the declaration of a public health emergency or without being ordered to do so by public health officials. These include:

* If a library staff member tests positive for an infectious disease, the library may close indefinitely.
* If a library staff member who has tested positive for an infectious disease has interacted with staff while infected, the library may be closed indefinitely.
* If the library is notified that a patron who has tested positive for a health-department focused infectious disease had visited the library while infected, the library may voluntary close indefinitely, at the discretion of the library director and the Pemiscot County Health Department.

The decision to voluntary close the library will be made by the library director, in consultation with the Library Board and public health officials. Any library action, including a voluntary closing, will depend on the nature of the infectious disease.

If the library closes voluntarily, the following procedures will take place:

* The public will be notified of the order to close by health officials and/or the library director via the standard procedures for closing during weather (local radio, public access television, and social media). The public will be encouraged to use the library’s 24/7 resources for their information/reading needs.
* Staff will be notified of the closing by the library director

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* The library director will report to the library, when physically possible, to empty the book drop. They may call in an assistant to help with check-in and sanitation process. The director and assisting staff may be required to wear gloves, eye protection, and face masks when handling returned materials. It may be required to quarantine returned items before reshelving. or sending them through for delivery to other libraries. Staff will be required to wash their hands for 20 seconds in hot water with soap after removing protective gloves and before removing eye protection and masks. The library director may inspect the building for any maintenance problems that occur while being closed and inform the city of Caruthersville and the library board about the issues.
* All staff will continue to be paid for their regularly-scheduled shifts for the duration of the emergency closing.
* Maintenance providers may be called in on an as-needed basis to fix problems occurring

during the shut-down.

1. **Notification of health emergency – closure by public health officials**

Upon a declaration of a health emergency by public health officials, the library will first implement the directives of the public health officials.

If the library is ordered to close by public health officials, the following procedures will take place:

* The public will be notified of the order to close by health officials via the standard

procedures for closing during weather. The public will be encouraged to use the 24/7 resources for their information/reading needs.

* Staff will be notified of the closing by the library director.
* All staff will continue to be paid for their regularly-scheduled shifts and work done at the library or at home on special projects as assigned by the library director.
* No staff will be allowed in the library building.

**4. Re-opening.**

In the case of a voluntary closure, the library director, in consultation with the city of Caruthersville, the library board, and public health officials, will make the decision to reopen.

Staff will be notified by current notification procedures when the library plans to reopen. The library director will continue to monitor news and official public announcements in case a second wave of illness occurs.

Approved on