

## **Public Health Emergency Policy**

**Adopted: 11/12/2020**  
**Last Reviewed: 3/14/2024**

### **PURPOSE**

The Walworth-Seely Public Library has adopted this Public Health Emergency Policy in compliance with New York State Labor Law §27-c to implement operational plans in the event of certain declared public health emergencies including, but not limited to, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or other communicable disease or pandemic illness.

The primary goals of Walworth-Seely Public Library's Public Health Emergency Policy are to establish:

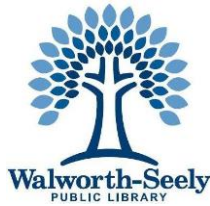
- The roles and responsibilities during all phases of a public health emergency
- Preparedness activities and response protocols
- Coordination and decision making for the continuation of operations

This policy is designed to ensure precautionary, response, and recovery measures to a public health emergency involving a communicable disease threatening to impact or immediately impacting the library's staff, trustees, volunteers, and/or community members. The Walworth-Seely Public Library (WSPL) strives to maintain a safe workplace and protect the health of its employees, patrons, visitors, or others in the event of a severe pandemic illness. WSPL also wants to ensure the continuity of business be guided by and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and guidelines issued by public health authorities such as the Wayne County Public Health Department (WCPHD) and Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other government agencies.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

The library Director as authorized by the Board of Trustees administers the Public Health Emergency Policy. This includes activating the plan, establishing an internal communications network, and coordinating all response and recovery activities. If, for any reason, the Director is unable or unavailable to administer the plan, administrative authority shall be passed to Board President.

### **DEFINITIONS**



The following terms are hereby defined for the purposes of this policy:

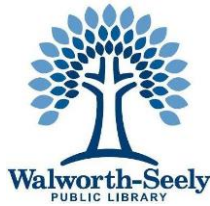
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Equipment worn to minimize exposure to communicable disease or pandemic illness as mandated by local, state, or federal law and/or any Executive Orders related to the public health emergency or mandates issued by federal agencies including the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- **Employee:** Any person employed by the Walworth-Seely Public Library regardless of job classification or title.
- **Contractor:** Any individual performing paid services for the library but not an employee of the Walworth-Seely Public Library.
- **Essential:** Designation made to an employee or contractor whose duties require them to be physically present at the Walworth-Seely Public Library to perform their job, OR tasks that are vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of the library.
- **Non-essential:** Designation made to an employee whose duties do not require them to be physically present at the Walworth-Seely Public Library, OR tasks that are not vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of the library.
- **Communicable disease:** Illness caused by an infectious agent that occurs through the direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent or its byproducts or via inanimate environment or object to a susceptible person or persons.
- **Retaliatory Action:** The discharge, suspension, demotion, penalization, discrimination, or other adverse employment action taken against any employee.

## PREVENTION

All employees are asked to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of pandemic illness in the workplace. We encourage employees to assist by frequent hand washing with warm soapy water, using hand sanitizer, covering mouths with tissues when sneezing, discarding used tissues, and regularly cleaning and sanitizing their workspaces.

## ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES OR DUTIES

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce, the library Director shall be designated as an Essential Employee and is permitted to be physically present at the Walworth-Seely Public Library to perform tasks essential to their job or the operations of the library including, but not limited to, maintenance to the facilities that could otherwise threaten or pose a risk to the library's facilities if not performed; bookkeeping such as accounts payable, accounts receiving, and processing payroll; and/or accepting, sorting, and opening postal mail or packages.



These essential tasks may be delegated to a specific employee or contractor at the discretion of the Director. This employee or contractor is permitted to be physically present at the Walworth-Seely Public Library to perform only the designated essential tasks as assigned.

### **TELECOMMUTE/WORK FROM HOME**

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce, the Walworth-Seely Public Library's Working Remotely Policy will be implemented.

All employees whose duties and routine tasks require the use of a computer and/or internet access, will be provided library-issued equipment necessary to perform those duties and tasks if needed. Employees may use their own equipment if they choose.

The Director will provide instructions for downloading/installing any software for employees to perform their duties remotely. The Director will also provide instructions for transferring office phone lines to personal cell phones as applicable to the employee's job description if necessary.

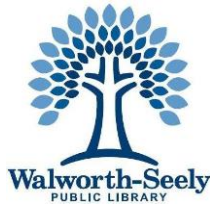
### **IN-PERSON REPORTING**

The Director will coordinate the schedule for employees and contractors reporting to the library in-person to perform essential tasks so that the Walworth-Seely Public Library remains in compliance with the state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce. No employee or contractor is permitted to report to the Walworth-Seely Public Library without authorization from the Director.

### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

PPE as required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders will be provided by the Walworth-Seely Public Library. As per OSHA guidelines, employees are not financially responsible for mandated PPE. Employees may provide their own PPE if they desire and if it is in compliance with all local, state, or federal laws or Executive Orders and CDC and OSHA regulations.

The Walworth-Seely Public Library will provide any necessary training for mandated PPE including proper use and disposal.



The Walworth-Seely Public Library will keep a supply of PPE in storage in the event a public health emergency is immediately declared. All employees will be aware of the storage location of PPE. The Director will monitor PPE supply levels and replenish the supply as needed in accordance with the library's Procurement Policy.

Failure to comply with PPE mandates may result in disciplinary action.

## **EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

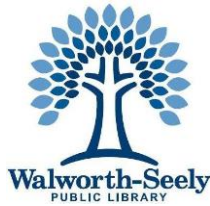
If required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders, mandatory, continuous health screening practices will be implemented for all employees.

In the event an employee is exposed to a known case of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency, exhibits symptoms of such disease, or tests positive for such disease, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:

- The employee must not report to the library or they must leave the premises immediately, if already at work, and notify the Director.
- The Director will notify both local and state health departments and will follow guidance specific to workplaces with a suspected or positive case.
- The Director and the employee will determine which other staff members were in close contact and possibly exposed to the communicable disease.
- The Director and the employee will determine which areas of the library are now considered "contaminated" and need to be immediately closed.

## **Cleaning Contaminated Areas**

- The library will immediately close off contaminated area(s).
- The area(s) will be quarantined for a length of time determined by local or state health departments.
- The HVAC system will be temporarily turned off the area so that particles will not circulate throughout the facility.
- After the determined length of time, the area(s) used by the employee will be cleaned, vacuumed, and disinfected including work spaces, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like computers, tablets, keyboards, and other office supplies.
- The area(s) will be cleaned by Walworth-Seely Public Library Cleaning Staff or designated substitute wearing appropriate PPE and using cleaning supplies and disinfectants approved by the CDC as effective against the communicable disease.



- Once the area(s) has (have) been appropriately disinfected, it (they) can be opened for use.
- The library will continue routine cleaning and disinfecting and logging these activities as recommended.

### **Contact Tracing**

The Director will adhere to local and state guidance regarding Contact Tracing which may include reporting or contacting other employees, contractors, visitors, and patrons who voluntarily supplied their information for the purpose of Contact Tracing who may have been in close contact with the employee suspected or confirmed to have the communicable disease.

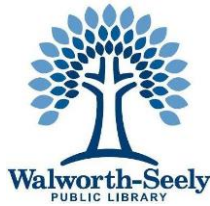
The Director will keep the health status of employees confidential. Our policy is to treat any medical information obtained from an employee or an employee's health care provider, including any voluntary disclosure that the employee has contracted influenza or a pandemic illness, as a confidential medical record. In furtherance of this policy, any such disclosure will be shared only on a need-to-know basis and only as necessary to prevent or slow the spread of the illness at work, while maintaining the confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible. Information will be shared with government officials only if required by law.

### **Compensation**

The Walworth-Seely Public Library will adhere to all local, state, or federal laws or Executive Orders regarding sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to this communicable disease. As a municipal library, WSPL is exempt from the New York Paid Sick Leave Law. WSPL provides part-time employees with Paid Time Off (PTO) and full time employees with Personal Days to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. If the library building is closed due to a pandemic illness, staff will be compensated according to the Emergency Closing Policy.

### **Returning to Work**

- If an employee is exposed to the communicable disease or exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease, they must follow all local and state health department directives which may include being tested for that communicable disease and/or quarantining for a specified amount of time at home.
- If an employee has a suspected or confirmed case they must not report back to work until they have met all of the following criteria in consultation with a healthcare provider and in accordance with local, state, and/or federal criteria specific to the communicable disease.



- All other employees will be provided instructions for returning to work dependent on the determination of risk of exposure by the local or state health department during Contact Tracing.
- Individuals who believe they may face challenges reporting to work during a severe pandemic response should take steps now to develop any necessary contingency plans, such as alternative sources of childcare should schools close and/or speak to the Director about the potential to work from home temporarily or on an alternative schedule if necessary.

### **Mitigating Risk**

Reporting to work following a known-exposure to the communicable disease, having symptoms consistent with the communicable disease, or following a positive test without being medically cleared to return to work as defined above will be considered a violation of library policy and may result in disciplinary action.

The Walworth-Seely Public Library will not take any retaliatory action for employees not reporting to work due to a suspected or confirmed case of the communicable disease. Employees must follow the established protocols outlined in the Personnel Policy for reporting an absence.

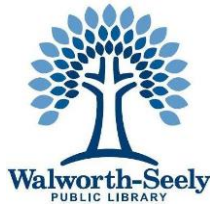
### **CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS**

In the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease, the Director will address operations according to the following outline. Some circumstances will require deviation from this sequence in order to best serve the safety and health of the library staff and community.

- Assess the emergency declaration as it relates to the library's facilities, materials, staff, or community.
- Notify the appropriate persons including employees and the Board of Trustees.
- Determine the next steps, with the information available, regarding:
  - Services or service points
  - Hours of operation
  - Personnel

Please see Appendix A for a sample of Walworth-Seely Public Library's Services Plan during a pandemic

- Draft a press release or statement to the public



- Document in detail the sequence or timeline of events before, during, and after the declared public health emergency.
- Prepare for recovery.

## **COMMUNICATION**

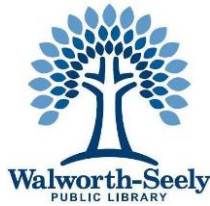
Once approved by the Board of Trustees, this Pandemic Response Plan will be published in a clear and conspicuous location at the Walworth-Seely Public Library and on the library's website. A copy will be provided to all employees.

## **ONGOING USE EVALUATION**

This Pandemic Response Plan was as required by law with the health and safety of the library's employees and community as the top priority.

The Pandemic Response Plan will be evaluated annually by the Director and Board of Trustees and updated as needed.

Questions or concerns regarding Walworth-Seely Public Library's Pandemic Response Plan should be directed to the Director.



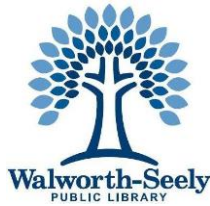
## Appendix A: Library Services Plan During A Pandemic

- Based on recommendations and guidance from NY state, Wayne County Health Department, the Town Supervisor of Walworth, and/or Pioneer Library System, decisions about the level of library services will be determined at the discretion of the Library Director and Library Board. Depending on the circumstances, services can be moved in either direction and some levels may be skipped entirely if deemed necessary.
- All changes to library services will be announced on the website and social media, and when possible, the local paper.
- Staff will report to work unless directed otherwise, but should be prepared for their duties and responsibilities to shift temporarily. PTO is granted through normal procedures, with the realization that notice may be less than usual due to illness or caretaking for an ill family member.
- If necessary to quarantine items, quarantining returns will be stored in the smaller half of the meeting room, and quarantining delivery will remain in the receiving room.

### Levels of Service

- Business as Usual – *Preparedness*. All library services are provided as scheduled. Cleaning and health supplies are regularly restocked, and staff is informed on general pandemic risks and responses. Director will check that emergency contact information for all staff is accurate and up to date.
- First Level – *Business as Usual but staff are on alert*. Staff and public are informed about risks and preventative measures, such as extra cleaning of highly touched areas in the library. Online resources for reliable information about the pandemic are posted on the Library's website and social media. Staff continues to report for work and are educated about specific risks, safety supply instructions, and how to find, interpret and share reliable information with the public. The Director will consult with the Town Supervisor to ensure that the Town's Disaster Response Plan is ready to go into effect if needed. The Director and Board President will also regularly assess risk and plan appropriate response. Furniture, schedules, and staff work stations may be rearranged to allow social distancing. Preparations for Business as Usual and/or Second Level are made. Otherwise, business as usual.
- Second Level– *Limited Library services are available by appointment only to discourage public assembly*. The majority of seating and all children's toys will be removed to discourage prolonged library visits. Services may include Contactless Item Pickup, and in person appointments for browsing, printing, copying, faxing, and computer use. Appointment lengths and spacing will be determined at the





discretion of the library director and will allow for cleaning surfaces such as computers and the copier between appointments. Programs will be held virtually, but supply kits may be available for pick up for certain projects. All outreach and external group meetings will be suspended. Preparations for First and/or Third Levels are made.

- Third Level - *Library shifts to contactless services only.* The library will provide contactless item pick up by appointment, as well as contactless printing, copying, & faxing. Patrons can request items by calling the library, emailing [walworthseely@gmail.com](mailto:walworthseely@gmail.com), or placing holds on their owl.org account. Programs and library board meetings will remain virtual unless the board has a need to meet in person following social distancing protocols. Preparations for Second and/or Fourth Levels are made.
  
- Fourth Level - *Library will close to the public entirely.* On the recommendation of the Wayne County Health Department and/or Town Supervisor of Walworth, and after consulting with the Board of Trustees, the Director may decide to close the library to public use. Depending on the situation and staff available, virtual services that do not require direct public contact may continue. The Library Director and Library Board will decide what public and support services to maintain, as well as how to administer core operations including but not limited to:
  - Payroll
  - Communication with Staff
  - Maintaining the website, social media, and signage to keep the public informed on the Library status and pandemic response
  - Virtual Programming (if possible)
  - Security of the Library building, collections, and equipment
  - Caring for Otis the turtle
  - Preparations to resume full or limited Library services

Preparations to return to Third Level are made.

**Revision History:**

*Reviewed -1/14/2021*

*Revised - 3/14/2024*