

Rochester Public Library Pandemic Policy Supplement November 2020

INTRODUCTION:

In March 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic caused libraries across the State of New Hampshire, including the Rochester Public Library, to cease normal operations for an extended period of time.

This Pandemic Policy Supplement is intended to “overlay”, and work in conjunction with both the Library’s existing Pandemic Policy and the City of Rochester’s Covid-19 Screening and Travel Policy. The purpose of this supplement is to establish protocols which the Library can utilize during a pandemic that impacts the State of New Hampshire, and the citizens of the City of Rochester, specifically.

All other Rochester Public Library policies in effect at the onset of a pandemic shall remain in effect except as modified by the combined Pandemic Policy and Supplement. In the event of any conflict, the provisions of this Pandemic Policy shall supersede and take precedence over any provisions contained in other Rochester Public Library policies.

DEFINITIONS:

Adequate Staffing Level: The number of qualified staff necessary to provide service safely, effectively, and efficiently, as determined by the Library Director or his/her designee.

Close Contact: Having been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Contact Tracing: The process of working with a patient who has been diagnosed with an infectious disease to identify and provide support to people (contacts) who may have been infected through exposure to the patient. This process prevents further transmission of disease by separating people who have (or may have) an infectious disease from people who do not.

Isolation: The separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious from those who are not infected to prevent spread of the communicable disease.

Quarantine: The separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but not yet symptomatic from others who have not been so exposed to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease.

STAFF CASES:

The protocols below are taken from the most recent (as of October 2020) city policy regarding Covid-19 and reflect current (as of October 2020) Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. In the event that DHHS guidelines change, the stricter of the two shall apply.

In the event a Rochester Public Library staff member tests positive for Covid-19, the Library will close to the public for at least twenty-four (24) hours to allow maintenance staff to disinfect the building, focusing on all areas where the infected staff member worked.

- Any Library staff member who tests positive for Covid-19 must self-isolate at home for at least 10 days since symptom onset, and at least 24 hours have passed since last fever (without the use of fever reducing medications) and other symptoms have improved.
- Any Library staff member who has had close contact with another staff member who has tested positive for Covid-19 must self-quarantine for 14 days even if they test negative.
 - In the event that staff quarantines result in inadequate staffing levels, the Library may close to the public, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily.

PATRON CASES:

The protocols below are taken from the most recent (as of October 2020) city policy regarding Covid-19 and reflect current (as of October 2020) Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. In the event that DHHS guidelines change, the stricter of the two shall apply.

If, in the course of contact tracing, the Rochester Public Library or a Library staff member is identified as having had close contact with an infected patron:

- Any Library staff member who has had close contact with a patron who has tested positive for Covid-19 must self-quarantine for 14 days even if they test negative.

- The Library Director or his/her designee will contact the Library Board of Trustees, and the EOC for guidance on closure, disinfection and quarantine response.
 - In the event that close contact to patron cases results in inadequate staffing levels, the Library may close to the public, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily.

CONTACT TRACING:

“Article VII of the Library Bill of Rights states that "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." The right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others.” *America Library Association*

The Rochester Public Library is committed to preserving the privacy of its patrons and does not keep information on patrons’ library use for the purpose of contact tracing. Contact tracing is a highly effective tool in managing the spread of diseases such as Covid-19. The Rochester Public Library recognizes the value of such a tool, and if contacted by the CDC, DHHS, the EOC or other organization conducting contact tracing, would cooperate to the best of its ability.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK:

While the Library Board of Trustees takes all safety guidelines and precautions seriously and will ensure that all action is taken to make the Library as safe and sanitary as possible, patrons should understand that it is not possible to guarantee that the Library is free from infectious disease. Those frequenting the Library during the Covid-19 pandemic do so at their own risk and in recognition that, in entering the Library there is unavoidable risk of contracting an infectious disease. Therefore, in entering the Library, patrons shall be deemed to have voluntarily assumed the risk of contracting an infectious disease and shall not hold the Library or the City of Rochester responsible in the event that the patron contracts an infectious disease.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 11-17-2020.