



## **Old Forge Library Pandemic Operations Plan**

### ***Narrative***

The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure to be used in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency.

This policy differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. In the case of an event such as a fire, storm, or utility outage, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building and normal library services will resume shortly after the event or crisis has ended. In the case of a public health emergency, recovery may be slow and limited services, and hours may be necessary for extended periods of time.

In the event of a pandemic or other serious health emergency, the library may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of the illness. These measures may include temporary closure of the library to the public and/or service restrictions such as limited hours of operation, restricted access to areas in the library, increased health and safety measures for staff, cancellation of programs, special events, and meeting room reservations, etc.

### ***Essential Positions***

Essential workers are as defined by New York Library Association (NYLA).

Employees and contracted employees and Board of Trustee members who will be allowed in the building are individuals who are needed to check and maintain the building, perform bookkeeping duties, complete payroll, complete tasks vital to library operations, and prepare for virtual programming.

Non-essential workers are as defined by NYLA. Non-essential employees will be asked to keep a record of their activities and time spent on those activities (i.e. webinars, calling patrons and collection development).

If non-essential workers cannot work from home, Old Forge Library may furlough non-essential workers. Should a furlough take place, employees may opt to do the following:

- Use vacation or accrued time
- Take an unpaid leave of absence
- Apply for unemployment benefits

### ***Scheduling Protocols***

People who can work from home will be encouraged to do so, thereby limiting the number of employees in the building.

Work shifts may be altered to accommodate fewer people working together at one time.

Each employee will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting their work station at the beginning of their shift.

### ***Remote Work Protocols***

Telecommuting is the concept of working from home or another location on a full or part-time basis. Old Forge Library may allow under certain circumstances the privilege of telecommuting, on a discretionary basis, as determined by the Director. Telecommuting is not a universal employee benefit. Old Forge Library has the right to refuse to make telecommuting available to an employee. Eligible positions must be ones that can be performed at a remote site without diminishing the quality of the work or disrupting the productivity of the Library.

All forms of telecommuting continue an employer/employee relationship, with the employee generally receiving the same benefits and having the same responsibilities as a non-telecommuting employee unless otherwise specified. A telecommuting employee must abide by all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations as well as with all library policies and rules, including strictly adhering to policies regarding computer/internet usage and procedures concerning information security.

The operational needs of the library as determined by the Director will at all times take precedence over any existing telecommuting agreements.

### ***Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***

To ensure employees comply with protective equipment requirements, Old Forge Library will:

- **Provide employees with acceptable face coverings at no cost to the employee and will have an adequate supply on hand.** Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled. They may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded. Staff can request additional masks if theirs become damaged or soiled. Staff

will be allowed to bring in their personally owned masks as long as they meet the CDC recommended guidelines.

- **The library will maintain sufficient supplies of PPE (gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, etc.).** Inventory will be monitored weekly and replenishments will be ordered as needed. PPE will be stored in a common area accessible to all employees.
- **Limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces.** When in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, employees may wear gloves and should sanitize or wash their hands before and after contact. Items such as computers and other technologies or items that will be shared among staff will be wiped down with approved sanitizer wipes or solutions before and after each use by an individual.
- **Hand sanitizer and soap will be readily available throughout the building.** Signs encouraging proper hand washing will be posted throughout the Library.

### ***Documentation of Work Hours and Locations; Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection***

Old Forge Library is committed to providing a safe and sanitary environment for its patrons and staff. Based on recommendations from the Herkimer County Public Health office, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other local, state or federal government entities, the Library may increase the frequency or methods of cleaning and sanitizing the building, especially high traffic areas and surfaces.

Old Forge Library will place a strong emphasis on prevention and individual responsibility for taking necessary precautions to help prevent the spread of infection. Old Forge Library will provide its patrons and staff with convenient access to hand sanitizer, hand washing facilities, and disinfecting wipes. Signs will be posted encouraging all to frequently wash and disinfect their hands to help minimize the spread of an infectious illness.

The Library itself will endeavor to clean and disinfect surfaces as often as is reasonably practical. Computers designated for public use will have a protective film covering the keyboard, and mouse. At the end of the patron's allotted time, staff will sanitize the computer station. Communal desks will be disinfected as well at the end of the employees' allotted time on the desk.

Old Forge Library is requiring patrons, visitors, vendors, and community partners who visit the library to practice the following recommendations provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases:

- Wear an appropriate mask when inside the Library. No exceptions!
- Masks must cover both the mouth and nose.
- Practice social distancing and abide by the markings and signs throughout the Library.

- Stay home when sick.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching one's eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

To ensure employees comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements, Old Forge Library will:

- Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain cleaning logs on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning. The cleaning log will be kept in a binder in staff offices.
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing and an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. Signage will be posted in all restrooms and washing facilities with the CDC recommendations on sanitizing protocols.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at least after every shift, daily, or more frequently as needed, and frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects and surfaces, as well as high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas, must be completed and recorded in the cleaning log.

### ***Social Distancing***

If directed by local, state, or federal health mandates to implement social distancing, the Old Forge Library will follow such mandates, both within the library building, and, where appropriate, upon the library premises. Further, it shall be within the discretion of the Library, acting through its Director and its Board of Trustees, to impose additional mandates as determined to be necessary to maintain appropriate social distancing and to protect the health, safety, and well-being of both patrons, volunteers, and staff.

Plexiglas barriers will be used at the circulation desk to prevent staff and patrons from exposure to airborne virus.

### ***Ventilation and Air Purification***

For reduction in the transmission of airborne viruses during the COVID-19 pandemic or any other illness associated with airborne transmission the library will be well ventilated. Fans are installed in windows or doors are left open to promote clean air flow. In areas with the highest congestion (staff alley) an air purifier will be run during hours of operation.

### ***Employee Illness***

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19 or any other illness associated with a pandemic/epidemic, Old Forge Library will cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as other employees or patrons who had close contact with

the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations. Areas of the library in which the employee worked will be thoroughly disinfected.

## ***Staff Quarantine Protocol***

### **What to do if exposed to COVID-19 or suspect an infection:**

1. Do not return to work.
2. Contact the Director.
3. Seek a medical diagnosis.

### **What to do in order to return to work:**

1. Communicate results to the Director before coming back to work.
2. Return will be based upon the latest CDC/DOH guidelines.
3. Do not return to work until you have been cleared by the Director and provided any possible changes in scheduling.

## ***Quarantine Scenarios***

**A** | *An employee with no symptoms gets tested because they come into contact with someone outside of their library work shifts who is getting tested due to symptoms or possible exposure:*

1. The employee may request to work from home or they may request other leave.
2. The employee needs to inform the Director of their test results.
3. If results are positive, Herkimer County Department of Health (DOH) will be informed and the staff member cannot return to work until they are cleared.

**B** | *A staff member comes into contact with a symptomatic individual at the library while working their shift:*

1. Any staff with limited contact with the symptomatic person will be identified and contacted by the Director or a designee of the Director.
2. Any staff member who had prolonged contact, within 6 feet or in the same space for more than 15 minutes, with that person will be asked to work from home (if applicable) with full pay until they are told by the Director or a designee of the Director to return to work.
3. If the library is notified that a symptomatic individual tests positive, then the Old Forge Library staff exposed to that employee will be contacted by the Director or a designee of the Director.
4. Employees may be told to get tested and quarantine by the DOH. If they are not directed to get tested, employees may choose to get tested on their own.

**C** | *An employee is contacted by the county contact tracers and told to quarantine:*

1. Employee must quarantine and follow the other DOH directives.
2. Employee must inform the Director.
3. If the employee does not have symptoms, they can return to work at the completion of the quarantine period.

4. If the employee is experiencing symptoms, they must quarantine. If the employee takes a test and they get a positive result, they need to inform the Director and resume the quarantine until they get a negative test result.

***D | An employee has traveled from a quarantine state:***

1. Employee should not return to work. Employee must contact the Director.
2. All must follow NYS guidelines regarding testing and/or quarantining after traveling out of state.

***E | An employee is opting be tested without having symptoms and having no contact with anyone who has symptoms or is positive:***

1. Employee will be allowed to report to work and function at the Old Forge Library as normal.
2. If the test results are positive for COVID-19, the employee must inform the Director or their designee and follow the established protocol.

### ***Quarantining Items***

Public Health authorities may recommend quarantining recently returned items. Items will remain in quarantine for the prescribed period for that material, as per the Mid-York Library System protocol.

To ensure material does not aid in the transmission of a communicable disease, the Old Forge Library requires that:

- All material be returned through the book deposit.
- Materials will be quarantined for 7 days. Quarantine periods may be altered if guidance provided to the Mid York Library Systems should change.
- Staff wear appropriate PPE while handling materials. If not wearing gloves, materials must be handled with sanitized hands.

### ***Communicating with the Public Due to Closure of the Library***

It is the policy of the Old Forge Library to notify its patrons, employees, volunteers, and community as soon as possible in the event of a library closure. If a reopening date is known that date should also be communicated.

**Methods of communication to be used include, where possible, the following:**

- Signage on the library entrance
- Notice on the library website
- Notice on the Library's social media platforms
- Announcements on local media
- Notification to Mid-York Library System
- Emails and/or phone calls to staff, volunteers, and trustees
- Any other methods of communications that may come available

If there are delays beyond the expected reopening date, regular communication should occur, using the available methods outlined above.

### ***Criteria for Suspending or Limiting Library Programs***

Old Forge Library will consider the following criteria to determine limiting or canceling library-sponsored programs:

1. mandates, orders, or recommendations regarding group sizes recommended by local, county, state and national officials and health services
2. best practices for appropriate level of physical distancing
3. amount of staff available to run or assist with programs
4. room usage and availability (for example, community room use may be dedicated to storage or quarantining items)

Public use of the Old Forge Library's community rooms for non-library sponsored programs will be subject to the above criteria.

### ***Virtual, Curbside and Outdoor Programming and Services***

The Old Forge Library will maintain continuity of library services to the greatest extent possible while working to provide a safe environment and complying with local, county, and state mandates.

The Old Forge Library will strive to minimize the negative impacts on access to resources and services resulting from procedures adopted in response to a pandemic.

The Library will provide virtual and grab n' go programming when appropriate and outdoor programming when feasible.

The Library will work to preserve access to its online resources with the help and support of the Mid York System.

**Policy Approved: March 11, 2021**