

## **Vineyard Haven Public Library Board of Trustees**

### **Statement regarding Pandemics and Public Health, Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies**

*Approved April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

The Trustees of Vineyard Haven Public Library establish the following policy for pandemics, public health emergencies, weather related events, natural disasters and other emergencies to supplement other approved policies. It is understood that during emergencies the Library Director is given the authority to deviate from approved policies as necessary to ensure the health and safety of patrons and staff members in between meetings of the Library Trustees or when circumstances prevent Library Trustees from meeting.

The Library Director is encouraged to continue providing in-person services and to resume in person services as soon as safely able to do so while also complying with the orders and direction of local and state authorities and guidance from the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners and National public health authorities. Internal considerations on open hours, staffing levels, services and programs will include the availability and/or health status of staff members, the need to maintain safe staffing levels as well as conditions in the community.

Some steps that may be taken by the Library Director may include:

- Closing the Library early or not opening. (When change in open hours occurs unexpectedly due to weather, emergencies and disasters, scheduled staff members receive no loss in pay.)
  - Note: the Library will generally follow the guidance of the Town in closing early or not opening but when circumstances warrant and/or such guidance is not provided; the Library Director is delegated this authority by the Board of Trustees.
- Modifying public operating hours to allow for cleaning, to set reasonable expectations for the duration of modified in-person public services, and to allow for the continuation of virtual and contactless services, curbside pickup, home delivery and online programming.
- Reducing or restricting public access to areas of the Library.
- Requiring an appointment to access certain areas of the library or to use library computers.
- Temporarily raising the age at which unaccompanied minors may come to the Library by themselves (Approved Child Safety Policy, dated May 25, 2016, sets the age at 8).
- Setting in-person total occupancy limits and limits on how long individuals may stay.
- Implementing a requirement that all patrons wear masks when inside the Library.

- Note: During the COVID19 pandemic, patrons who qualify for exemptions to wearing face coverings in Governor's orders will be directed to use curbside pickup or the home delivery program, if available.
- Eliminate or restrict the use of public restrooms, or reduce the number of restrooms available to the public.
- Limiting the number or size of print jobs, and waiving or reducing fees for printing
- Restricting consumption of food and beverages
- Canceling both Library and non-Library programs and meeting room reservations.
- Suspending or resuming in-person programs.
- Temporarily requiring advance registration for in-person meetings/programs while attendance must be limited due to occupancy guidelines.
- Determining when and which staff members are authorized to work from home and their assignments during remote work
- Temporarily approving changes to the minimum staffing levels during open hours, making necessary modifications to services and areas where patrons may go in the Library as necessary. At no time will there be fewer than three staff members when the building is open to the public.
- When a tornado warning or other weather event or emergency occurs during Library hours, the Library will remain open past its normal closing time if necessary to shelter patrons until the all clear is given by Town authorities that it is safe for everyone to leave
- Other temporary changes in Library hours, staffing levels and assignments, services and programs may be made by the Library Director as he/she deems appropriate for the circumstances.
- During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Library staff may not work if the required daily cleaning of the workplace has not been done

*Adapted with permission from the Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees Statement regarding Pandemics and Public Health, Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies*