

BANCROFT PUBLIC LIBRARY

PANDEMIC OPERATIONS POLICY

1. PANDEMIC POLICY

A. PURPOSE

To establish a protocol to be used in the event of a pandemic. If there is a pandemic, Bancroft Public Library may be required to operate with limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness, including service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure by order of local public health officials.

Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, as compared to a natural disaster or other physical crises. It is essential to ensure that core business activities of Bancroft Public Library be maintained for several weeks or more with limited staff and reduced hours due to a pandemic.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Pandemic Plan:** A pandemic plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. In an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building or begin rebuilding, almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm, or if there is a utility shortage). Recovery from a pandemic may be slow, and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for an extended period. Reopening will be in accordance with the Board of Trustees approved Bancroft Public Library Safety Practices Policy.
2. **Pandemic:** A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. (World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>)
3. **Appropriate Staffing Level:** Appropriate Staffing Level refers to the minimum number of qualified staff necessary to provide service safely and efficiently, as determined by the Library Director or his/her designee.

C. PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATE

Bancroft Public Library will close due to pandemic in the event of a mandated order or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level. Reopening shall comply with the Bancroft Public Library Safety Practices Policy.

D. DISCRETIONARY SERVICE LEVEL CHANGES

At the discretion of the Bancroft Library Board of Trustees, the library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily if there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels or if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety. In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain communication with staff, the Library Board of Trustees, and the SALS member libraries.

E. STAFFING

The minimum staffing level for a temporary period is defined as one healthy employee available to be present at Bancroft Public Library during all open hours with a maximum of 7-hours. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to continue this temporary minimum level for more than two consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing.

In providing service safely and efficiently, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director or designee.

1. Increased health/safety measures for staff including providing appropriate PPE (e.g., wearing face masks and gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.).
2. Social distancing practices.
3. Reduction of open hours.
4. Cancellation of all programs, special events, and meetings.
5. Reallocation of employee responsibilities.
6. Closure of Proudfit Hall.
7. Closure of Bancroft Public Library.

If Bancroft Public Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the established policies and employee handbook. In the event of a closure, the Library Director and Library Deputy Director shall be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours. If the library is closed or hours reduced, healthy employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed in their paid hours.

Accommodations may be given to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments.

F. COMMUNICATION

In the event of closure necessitated by pandemic, information about any reduction in services or open hours will be announced promptly. Library staff should follow the standard procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation, which includes posting on social media, the Bancroft Public Library website and Facebook pages, newsletter, texts, and emails that will be sent to SALS and trustees.

Meetings will be held virtually if possible, instead of in-person meetings. Library visits will comply with the Bancroft Public Library Safety Practices Policy.

G. PRIORITIZATION OF SERVICES

In the case of reduced staffing or reduced hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plan to staff.

2. CONTINUATION OF OPERATIONS PLAN

In compliance with Chapter 168 of New York State Labor Law amendment 27-c the Bancroft Public Library herein describes our plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease.

A. ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES AND JOB DESCRIPTION [§27-c.3.a]

As defined in the law, “Essential” is a designation made that a public employee or contractor is required to be physically present at a work site to perform his or her job. For Bancroft Public Library, the staff positions that fit this definition during a state-ordered reduction of in-person work force include:

1. **Library Director:** Primary staff employee responsible for daily operations of the library, oversees staff, manages library services, communicates with the public, works with the Board of Trustees to develop policies and procedures for the library, oversees the care and maintenance of the library facility.
2. **Library Deputy Director:** The Deputy Director works in partnership with the Library Director. The job description is the same as the Director's.

B. TELECOMMUTING POLICY [§27-c.3.b]

In the event that a system, local, state, or national emergency prevents all staff from entering the Bancroft Public Library building, the Director and/or Board of Trustees will grant permission for non-essential staff (as defined by the law to be an employee who is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform his or her job) to telecommute. The Bancroft Public library does not currently have and/or needs a telecommuting policy.

C. RE-OPENING SAFETY PLAN INCLUDING CLEANING, DISINFECTION, AND CONTACT TRACING PLAN [§27-c.3.c through §27-c.3.f]

In all circumstances, Bancroft Public Library will observe directions from local health officials for best practice for staff and public health safety if a staff member reports developing symptoms or tests positive for the communicable disease. See the Bancroft Public Library Safety Practices Policy.

D. SITES FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING [§27-c.3.g]

The law requires “a protocol for how the public employer will work with the locality to identify sites for emergency housing for essential employees to the extent applicable to the needs of the workplace.” This is not applicable to Bancroft Public Library.

Adopted: March 26, 2020
Revised: February 2, 2021
Reaffirmed: May 10, 2022