Library Building Re-opening, A Phased Response

The re-opening of the Library building, and the expansion of Library services, in response to a pandemic, epidemic, public health concern, and/or public infection concern will come at the direction of the City of White Plains and the Library Board of Trustees, informed by opinion from the Health Department of Westchester County, State of New York, the State of New York’s Division of Library Development, Center for Disease Control, and other public health authorities.

Return to the Library building will not mean an immediate return to a pre-pandemic environment. This undertaking will happen in five phases, guided by the health, safety, and well being of our staff members and public. New health and safety protocols will be in place, and will be modified as needed. We would rather introduce services incrementally rather than have to subtract services.

As much as possible, the Library will work with other members of the Westchester Library System to support a system-wide response.

It is expected that it will take several years before the phases are complete and the Library is as fully operational as it was pre-pandemic, however, some services may never return while others will take their place. The development of a successful vaccine is key to full operation.

In addition, Library management needs to remain alert to the possibility of reversion to early phases of operation if the rate of infection increases and government mandates to shelter are reinstated.

Re-opening, Phase One

Staff members return to the Library to prepare for the reopening of the building.

- **Timeframe:** a minimum of two weeks before the Library reopens to the public.
- **Context:** The stay-at-home order is lifted by local authorities for the phase that includes libraries; presently this seems to be phase two. Physical distancing and PPE are required of staff. The Library has successfully stockpiled PPE and sanitation supplies for three months.
- **Summary:** Library staff work to prepare the building for safe practices including the implementation of social distancing, reconfiguration of public and staff space, new signage, and reduced technology.
- **Circulation:** The Library will use this period to accept the return of material via the external book drop, and material will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours then
checked in and re-shelved. Material owned by other libraries will be returned to the lending library; however, the Library will not initiate fulfilling interlibrary loan requests through the Westchester Library System.

- Circulation: The Library initiates no-touch, curbside pickup
- Public services points, like reference and circulation desks, are redesigned utilizing acrylic walls and barriers to eliminate as much as possible staff and public contact. The Welcome Desk will move to the Hub area.
- Procedures to eliminate or minimize high touch areas and physical interaction are implemented.
- The six conference rooms on the first floor will be converted to staff offices and six staff members will be relocated to these offices.
- Staff workrooms will be reconfigured to support social distancing.
- Staff will wear PPE and will be trained in use of PPE and new hygiene procedures. Staff will be provided with a new mask daily.
- Elevator will be used by one person at a time.
- Reference Services: Will continue via phone, text, and email.
- Programs: Will continue on the virtual platform.
- Staff will continue to work both onsite and from home at their manager’s discretion.

Reopening, Phase Two

The Library is open to the public. External book drops are open 24/7.

- Context: Stay-at-home order is lifted by state and local authorities. Physical distancing and PPE are required of staff and public. The Library has successfully stockpiled PPE and sanitation supplies for three months.
- Summary: the Library will open primarily to lend materials and answer reference questions. Holds will be fulfilled utilizing only the White Plains Public Library’s collection. Seating will be removed from all public areas. Public computing will be put on hold. Extended stays or gatherings will be prohibited.

To provide a safe environment for all, the library will:

- Allow access only to those 12 years and older
- Allow access to the Trove or the Edge by appointment only.
- Limit all circulation activities to the first floor.
- Begin lending hotspots, museum passes
- Put on hold high touch services: copy machines, printers, and other services.
- Hire excellent security staff that will be charged with overseeing public conduct.
- Elevator use will be by one person or family at a time.
- Implement interlibrary loan through the Westchester Library System

To provide a safe environment for all, the Library may:

- Close all or some of the stacks and retrieve material.
- Limit the number of patrons allowed into the building.
- Modify Library hours.

Other modifications may be implemented.

- Circulation: The Library will begin circulating material through self-checks and returns through the book drop. Curbside pickup may continue or be replaced by our regular holds system. Material will be quarantined for at least 72 hours before being checked in and reshelved. In-person assistance will be limited. Payments can only be made with a credit card.
- Reference Services: Limited reference services will begin. Patrons can make appointments for one-on-one consultations. Telephone, texting, and email references will continue.
- Computing: Public computing is not available. Laptops may become available by appointment for job searching, with support via screen sharing.
- Programs: Will continue on the virtual platform. There will be no in-person classes or room rentals. Partners such as BOCES and Westchester Community College will be encouraged to host classes and workshops online. SCORE will reconfigure its offices to support social distancing. Classrooms 1 and 2 and the Community Room can be used by library staff and SCORE for one-on-one meetings.
- Public behavior: The public will be required to wear masks, which the Library will provide, and gloves if they wish. Social distancing, especially on waiting lines, will be in effect. Elevators will be used by one person/family at a time. Public behavior will be enforced by security staff; patrons who refuse to comply will be removed from the Library and, if necessary, banned.
- Staff will continue to work both onsite and from home at their manager’s discretion.

**Reopening, Phase Three**

Additional services will be added.

**Anticipated Date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk.

**Context:** Physical distancing is still recommended, but infections have significantly declined. PPE and sanitizing supplies are predictable and plentiful.

**Summary:** Some seating is introduced to public areas but configured to allow for physical distance. Computers become accessible at socially distant intervals.

- Implement public computing. Provide computer users with gloves, and provide disinfectant wipes for cleaning washable keyboards before and after sessions. Provide computer assistance through screen sharing.
- Circulation: The Library will continue circulating material through self-checks and returns through the book drop and material will be quarantined for 72 hours before being checked in and reshelved. In-person assistance will be limited. Patrons borrowing
material will have to adhere to designated social distancing. Payments can only be made with credit card.

- Reference Services: Staffing at service desks will expand. Most services, such as lending hotspots or museum passes, will be reintroduced. Patrons will still be encouraged to book one-on-one sessions with staff. Telephone, texting and email references will continue.

- Programs: Will continue on the virtual platform. There will be no in-person classes or room rentals. Partners such as BOCES and Westchester Community College will be encouraged to host classes and workshops online. Classrooms 1 and 2 and the Community Room can be used by library staff and SCORE for one-on-one meetings.

- Public behavior: The public will be required to wear masks, which the Library will provide, and gloves if they wish. Social distancing, especially on lines, will be in effect. PPE and social distancing will be enforced by security staff; patrons who refuse to comply will be removed from the Library and banned.

- Public computers will be introduced.

- Staff will continue to work both onsite and from home at their manager’s discretion.

Reopening, Phase Four

Anticipated Date: dependent on local and state assessment of risk

- Context: Infection threat is low. Physical distancing guidelines have been relaxed. PPE may become optional for some staff.
- Summary: All seating and most computers are returned to the first and second floor.
- Circulation: Will continue to emphasize self-checkout and return by book drop. Payment can be made by cash and credit card. Quarantining of materials may be lifted.
- Reference Services. All service points fully staffed and all services restored.
- Programs: Allow for smaller group programs for all ages. There may be limitations on larger group gatherings. No room rentals. Many programs will continue on the virtual platform or blend in-person and virtual attendance.

Reopening, Phase Five

Anticipated Date: dependent on local and state assessment of risk.

Context: Infection threat is considered low or non-existent, there are successful medical treatments or a vaccine.

Summary: While all services will be restored to their pre-pandemic levels, the experience of the pandemic will continue to inform library operations. This will include heightened awareness of personal and building hygiene and the retention of distance in interactions, such as meeting online.
• Programs: Larger group gatherings for meetings or library programs are allowed. Room rentals are reinstated. Staff can resume outreach, community engagement, class visits, off-site programs.

Reopening, Staff Behavior

The Library’s most precious resource is its staff. Successful reopening after a pandemic, epidemic, public health concern, and/or public infection concern will require the commitment of everyone, both Library management and Library workers, to create a healthy environment. In addition to the public health measures outlined in section III, the following measures should be applied at all levels of reopening, from Phase One through Phase Five.

• Library management will provide PPE and abundant sanitary and cleaning products. If a staff member chooses to use gloves, he or she should replace the gloves several times a day and continue to wash their hands regularly.
• Library management will oversee the daily cleaning of the Library, including all public surfaces.
• The Library will contract with professional cleaners and utilize our regular maintenance staff to maintain a clean facility. However, we all need to pitch in. Staff is expected, in the course of the day, to disinfect personal areas, shared workspaces—such as service desks—when ending a shift, and commonly touched items in staff areas such as copy machines, coffee pot handles, and more.
• Staff should avoid meeting people face-to-face. Staff is encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible.
• Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short and held in meeting room where people can sit at least six feet from each other. Hand shaking is prohibited.
• Eliminate unnecessary travel. Seek out online training opportunities.
• Do not congregate in workrooms, staff rooms, or other areas. Keep six feet apart at all times.

COVID-19 Best Practices Policy

To allow patrons access to the White Plains Public Library (Library) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library Board of Trustees (Board) adopts this COVID Best Practices Policy (CV-19 Policy).

The Board’s authority to adopt this Policy is found in the Library Charter, Board Bylaws, and New York Education Law Sections 255, 260, 226, and 8 NYCRR 90.2. The Board has determined this CV-19 Policy is necessary to maintain accessibility to Library resources and services while maintaining the well-being of staff and patrons. The CV-19 Policy will remain in effect until concerns about pandemic health concerns subside to such an extent that the Board determines modification and or termination of the CV-19 Policy is warranted.
WPPL Staff have the authority to enforce the measures set forth in this CV-19 Policy as they would any other Library Code of Conduct. Concerns about this CV-19 Policy should be directed to Library Director Brian Kenney.

We appreciate and thank you for your adherence and commitment to the CV-19 Policy measures, and keeping staff, patrons and the community safety when accessing the Library and its resources.

**Best Practice Measures**

**Activity Practices**

Only the following routine activities may be performed at the Library:

- Browsing and borrowing library materials.
- Seeking reference assistance.
- Placing materials on hold and retrieving holds.

The Library may implement limited public use of the Library for personal computer use in the future.

**Protective Practices**

All staff and patrons must abide by the following protective practices:

- Use a face mask at all times.
- Utilize social distancing, including while on line for library services.
- Elevator use by only one person or family at a time.
- Disinfect computer keyboards and workspaces before and after use.
- Practice good hygiene, including covering coughs and sneezes, coughing into a shoulder or bend of arm.
- Wash hands frequently or use alcohol hand sanitizer. Wear gloves where practicable.
- Do not gather or socialize in groups.
- Employ other routine practices to help minimize the spread of germs as defined by the Library.

**ADA**

In the event any best practices measure is not practicable on the basis of a disability, please contact Assistant Library Director Kathy Degyansky to explore a reasonable accommodation.

**Communication**

To aid the community in honoring the CV-19 Policy and best practices measures, the Library will transmit the CV-Policy through social media, the Library’s newsletters, and other available means of communication.

**Code of Conduct**
Adherence to these best practices shall be enforced as a requirement of the Library’s Code of Conduct until such time as this CV-19 policy is modified or revoked.