

HOWLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

313 Main Street, Beacon, NY 12508

Howland Public Library COVID-19 Temporary Policy

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Howland Public Library has developed temporary adjustments to its usual policies and procedures, with all due consideration of its standing obligations, to aid itself in operating safely and in compliance with government orders, and in the period of recovery to follow. To promote the mission of the library, the safety of all it serves and employs, and the needs of the community at this time, the following temporary changes to the following policies are made: Patron Code of Conduct, Computer Use, Room Use, and Personnel. Any changes listed supersede existing policies until the time the Board of Trustees votes to expire this policy.

Patron Code of Conduct

Until the board votes to expire this temporary policy, the library will require all people on the premises to abide by the following safety practices:

- Follow social distancing practices by maintaining a six-foot distance from other patrons and staff,
- Abide by any and all signs regarding safety and COVID-19 regulations,
- Properly wear a mask or face covering at all times while in the building. Proper mask protocol according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are:
 - The mouth and nose are fully covered
 - The covering fits snugly against the sides of the face so there are no gaps
 - The cloth face covering can be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping
- Follow all instructions given by staff,
- Any patron exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, as listed by the CDC, can be asked to leave the library.

Library staff has the authority to enforce these measures like any other of the library's rules. If a patron refuses to follow these rules, which are designed to keep our community safe while allowing access to the library, they will be asked to leave. Refusal to leave will result in the police being called. In the event an individual is not able to medically tolerate wearing a mask, please notify the Library Director.

Computer Use

In order to enact proper social distancing protocols not all computers will be available for use. Patrons are not permitted to use a computer that is marked as unusable. Only one patron is permitted at a computer at a time for a maximum of two hours. Patrons must comply with all instructions from staff or they will be asked to leave the library. Patrons must properly wear a mask or face covering at all times while at their computer station, unless they are not able to medically tolerate wearing a mask, and have notified the Library Director.

Room Use

Room use and reservations for both the Community Room and the Adult Program Room are suspended for the duration that the library is in Service Tiers A through E. When the library reaches Service Tier F, the Board of Trustees and Library Director will evaluate the library's capability of safely permitting room use and reservations according to current state and local regulations. This policy will be updated accordingly. The standing exception would be any critical business of the Board of Trustees that could not be conducted virtually.

Personnel

Dress Code and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All staff will be issued two washable masks at the time of their return to work. They will also have access to disposable masks as needed. Masks should be worn as often as possible but are required if a staff member is within 6 feet of another person except when doing so would inhibit or otherwise impair the patron or staff member's health. Washing instructions for the masks will be provided and staff are expected to wash the masks after each use.

Upon request, additional PPE that will be available to staff if necessary include disposable gloves, face shields, and hand sanitizer.

Staff is encouraged to use gloves, sanitizer, or wash hands after having contact with shared objects.

Safety Procedures

Staff will no longer be required to complete a health screening. Staff are still required to notify the Director immediately if:

1. They have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, OR
2. They have knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Library staff will practice social distancing while interacting with other library staff and library patrons whenever possible. Library staff will observe markings or physical barriers put in place to define social distancing boundaries in areas where multiple staff members share space. Only one staff member can be in the kitchen at any time. Staff may eat lunch at their workstation, or a location not being used by another staff member. Staff must disinfect the area when they are done.

Staff are encouraged to disinfect their workstation at the end of their shift. Staff that have a shared workstation are required to disinfect the station at the end of their shift.

Staff will adhere to all safety training they receive and follow the library's safety plan.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting is no longer in "general COVID-19 use" and will only be reserved for staff that have been ordered to quarantine, and/or have tested positive for COVID-19. All other staff will complete their normal work hours in the library building. For those approved for telecommuting the policy is as follows:

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home or in a satellite location for all or part of their regular workweek. This arrangement in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the library.

Procedure

Either an employee or a supervisor may suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement. In the event an employee suggests telecommuting, it must be approved by the Library Director. The hours of work and the location of such work shall be determined by the library, with input from the employee.

During this time, telecommuting will be informal, such as working from a home worksite/office or satellite location for a few hours, a day, or a short-term project. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing on safety of staff and patrons and the business needs of the organization.

Home worksite/office is a set aside defined space to conduct library work. Appropriate equipment, software, and phone and Internet access is required.

The Library Director will determine, with information supplied by the employee and their supervisor, the appropriate equipment and software needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis. Employee supplied equipment and/or software may be used if deemed appropriate by the Director, subject to change at any time. Equipment and/or software supplied by library will be maintained by the library. Equipment and/or software supplied by the employee will be maintained by the employee. The library accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment and/or software. Equipment and/or software supplied by the library is to be used for business purposes only.

Consistent with the library's expectations of information security for employees working in the library, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of confidential information

accessible from their home office. Steps include use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

All injuries occurring while working from home should be reported to the library as soon as possible. The library will report to Utica National Insurance, who will conduct a thorough investigation and advise on the compensability of the claim. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the Library Director of such injuries as soon as possible. Failure to notify the library within 30 days after the accident can result in denial of benefits in accordance with NY State requirements. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their home worksite. Howland Library is not responsible for any incident that may occur in the employee's home.

The library will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies for successful completion of job responsibilities.

NYS COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave

This law guarantees job-protected paid leave to workers who are subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation for COVID-19, issued by the State of New York, the Department of Health, local board of health, or any government entity duly authorized to issue such order, or whose minor dependent child is under such an order. This law is effective as of March 18, 2020.

Employee's Own Quarantine/Isolation

The leave available to employees if they are subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation is at least 14 days of paid sick leave, as well as job protection for the duration of the leave period. The number of paid days is in calendar days, and the pay required represents the amount of money that the employee would have otherwise received for the 14-day period.

Quarantine/Isolation of an Employee's Minor Dependent Child

Most employees whose minor dependent child is under a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation issued by the state of New York, the Department of Health, local board of health, or any government entity duly authorized to issue such order due to COVID-19, may be eligible to take Paid Family Leave to care for them. Eligibility for covered employees is the same as it is for other Paid Family Leave.

A part-time employee is entitled to leave for their average number of work hours in a two-week period. If the normal hours scheduled are unknown, or if the part-time employee's schedule varies, a six-month average may be used to calculate the average daily hours. The part-time employee may take paid sick leave for this number of hours per day for up to 14 days.

Most employees will get financial compensation through a combination of benefits. These benefits are not available to employees who are able to work through remote access or through other means, and are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

Applying for Leave

Requests for leave forms should be directed to the Library Director. The employee must fill out any required forms and submit them to the Office Manager.

Additional Information

The Paid Family Leave Helpline is 844-337-6303.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

This Act applied to leave taken between April 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, and has expired.