

Post-Lockdown Preparation for Public Libraries

Recommendations and Guidelines – May 2020

General

1. Plan procedures and processes in advance using virtual meetings where possible.
 - a. The means of conducting these meetings and/or conversations will depend on each individual's circumstances.
2. Prepare staff emotionally as this is business unusual.
 - a. Keep lines of communication open.
 - b. Ensure that the details of employee assistance programmes in your municipality are prominently displayed and brought to staff's attention.
3. Identify who will be going back to work as per Government notices as well as those not recommended and identified under vulnerable staff members.
 - a. Vulnerable staff members include:
 - i. Staff members over 60 years of age,
 - ii. Staff members with chronic diseases,
 - iii. Staff members 28 weeks pregnant,
 - iv. And breastfeeding staff members.
4. Draw up a comprehensive roster for staff members with clear guidelines on what to do, and what to communicate to the public.
5. You may need to do a dry run of your daily activities.
6. You may need to consider phasing in operations:
 - a. Level 3 – Open for pick-ups and drop offs.
 - b. Level 2 – Phasing in of programmes adhering to social distancing, open study areas and computer sessions.
 - c. Full services while still adhering to all social distancing regulations.

Level 3

1. Open the library when all staff have PPE and are clear on proper usage.
2. Phase in the return of staff to accommodate planning e.g. Librarian-in-Charge may need to go back to work first, and Cleaners to prepare or clean the library.
3. Signage promoting social distancing and hygiene regulations should be visible for all patrons to see.
4. Mark all floors to accommodate 1.5m social distancing, including outside the library.
5. Displays of how to cope with Covid19 to be made visible throughout the library using notice boards or screens.
6. Rearrange furniture to open space to easily access shelves.
 - a. The removal and storing of furniture needs to be considered to enforce this measure
7. Clean all shelves almost immediately after usage, where possible.
8. Returned items:
 - a. All returns should be quarantined immediately after check in. Clearly mark spaces and areas for the purpose of returning library materials. These include but not limited to the use of boxes or trolleys in halls, meeting rooms, or a pre-identified office space.
 - b. Returned material should be quarantined for at least 24 hours.
 - c. Before returning items to shelves after the 24 hours, all covers should be wiped with an alcohol-based solution, e.g. methylated spirits.
9. Consider reducing opening hours where possible to accommodate staff limitations while service is being rendered to users. Remember you need to clean books and shelves to keep the library hygienic.
10. Consider expanding borrower privileges for those who would like to take more books and keep them for longer.
11. Where possible create clear entry and exit points for the public to utilize.
12. Create sanitizing stations throughout the library.

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