

South Country Library Phased Reopening Guide

Approved by board on 5-21-20

As outlined in this guide, the library will be reopened in phases and in accordance with state and county metrics, guidelines and protocols. *This will be a flexible, adaptable “living document” that will be modified as needed.* Each phase is expected to last approximately 2 weeks, however the precise timing of each transition and the exact contents of each phase will be decided as circumstances unfold. Regardless of phase, the following essential measures are the foundation of our ability to keep the library open and safe for both staff and patrons.

- **Adherence to the 6 ft. social distancing protocol whenever possible**
- **Use of personal protective equipment (masks, gloves), particularly when unable to maintain social distancing or when handling incoming library materials.**
- **Hygiene (regular hand washing/sanitizing)**
- **Regular disinfection of the building and its contents**
- **Mandatory, daily self-screening of personal health**

Much is still not known about COVID-19, and the library will continue to monitor information from government sources and local health authorities, and adjust our plans to offer services safely according to developing information and guidance.

100% Workforce Reduction

This measure began for the library on March 13 and was formalized by New York’s PAUSE stay-at-home order for non-essential businesses on March 22. For the library this stage is characterized by the following:

- Excepting payroll and essential visits, the building is closed to the staff and public.
- Staff that are able to telework will do so and staff that are unable to will engage in relevant online training overseen by and submitted to their supervisor.
- Regular staff meetings conducted via online conferencing platforms.
- Library services offered include online resources and information, phone and chat support, online programming.

In the event that the library is forced to return to this stage, administrators will work with staff to outline procedures to do so quickly and smoothly.

Phase 1

Staff will begin to re-enter the building in staggered, limited-capacity shifts in order to reduce density and allow for social distancing. Staff who are able to work from home will continue to do so or will divide their workday between home and the building. Entrance to the building will be restricted to the following: staff performing the operations outlined at this service level, staff obtaining supplies needed to work at home and entry for essential visitors (contractors, etc). Only essential tasks/projects will be carried out in the building during this time. Programs and services will remain as is. This period would be used to accomplish the following.

1. Reconfiguring the building to provide for the necessary social distance spacing (offices, furniture, computers, seating areas, etc).
2. Examining all library procedures for creative ways that they can be modified for staff and patron safety.
3. The necessary preparation needed to begin offering curbside service in phase 2.
4. Implementation of a facial recognition staff time-clock.
5. Establishment of a quarantine procedure for returned items. Materials will be quarantined for a 72 hour period unless we receive further guidance from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
6. Installation of wall-mounted hand sanitizing stations.

Phase 2

This phase would see the following increases to library operations.

1. Increase in staffing levels and operating hours.
2. Start of curbside service. This service will continue throughout all remaining phases.
3. Reopening of the book drop to accept returns in accordance with the established quarantine procedure.
4. Addition of virtual programming conducted from inside the library by staff.
5. Preparation for restricted patron access to the building in phase 3.
6. Installation of sneeze guards, proper building signage and social distancing floor markers.
7. Resumption of limited inter-library loan via SCLS and subject to the established quarantine procedure.

Phase 3

While continuing curbside service and with programming remaining as is from phase 2, phase 3 would see the following increases to library operations.

1. Increase in staffing levels.
2. Limited access to the building by patrons for essential library tasks such as computer use, business center use, reference support, materials browsing and checkout. Access will be limited to 1 hour visits and a TBD building occupancy.
3. Computer use will be limited to ½ hr and can be extended to an hour if no one is waiting.
4. Library staff will provide in-person materials checkout and reference support using face masks and physical barriers.
5. Visiting patrons will be required to wear face masks and maintain social distancing.
6. Staff will disinfect public computer equipment after each use including mouse, keyboard, CPU housing and monitor bezel.
7. Only 1 restroom will be open to the public initially.
8. Patron Services staff will perform all faxing, scanning and copying for patrons. They will also retrieve all reserves from the hold shelf for patrons.
9. Staff will prepare for a phase 4 return to further access for the public.

Phase 4

During this phase, the library will be *open to the general public* subject to restrictions on visitation time and building capacity.

1. Visiting patrons will be required to wear face masks and maintain social distancing.
2. Library staff will provide in-person materials checkout and reference support using face masks and physical barriers.
3. Limited, properly spaced seating will be added to the cafe, quiet study area, sanford room, career and education room, reference tables and the children's department.
4. All restrooms will be open to the public.
5. Computer time limit will be expanded to an hour.
6. Newspapers and magazines will return.
7. Staff will continue to disinfect computer equipment patrons contacted after each use including mouse, keyboard, CPU housing and monitor bezel.
8. Addition of in-house virtual programming conducted by outside programmers. Programming should be focused on topics essential to our patrons during this crisis including health and wellness, education on COVID-19, employment, mental health, and recreation/entertainment.

Following the successful transition into the last phase of this guide, library administrators, staff and the board of trustees will self-evaluate how our services and public access levels are working in terms of health, safety, productivity and effectiveness. In accordance with what guidelines NYS and Suffolk County have in place and what the state of public health is at that time, the library will then decide whether to continue with phase 4 or to expand our operations further, including the possible elimination of time limits and building occupancy restrictions, unlimited computer access, and the beginning of small in-house meetings, programs and events.

Additional Guidance

Items that will *not* be returning during the course of these phases

1. The children's department will remain closed to the public until the board of trustees decides to reopen (**UPDATE: children's reopened on 9/8/20**). Access to children's materials will be provided by the children's librarians without public entry.
2. In-house programs and meetings. The return of these may be included in an eventual "phase 5" and would be dictated by the track of the virus, as well as NYS density restrictions.
3. Returning items to the patron services desk. Returns will only be accepted via the book drop in order to more easily enter those items into our quarantine procedures and to minimize both the amount of patrons approaching the desk and the amount of materials being handled by staff.
4. Donations of any kind will not be accepted.
5. Tutoring rooms and the lower level will not be open to the public.
6. In-house patron use of shared items including headphones, board games, community puzzle, etc. will remain off-limits.
7. Library staff will not attend in-person community events, meetings or conferences outside of the library.
8. Library will remain closed on Sundays for the remainder of 2020.