

COVID-19

With the rapid spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), we began taking steps in late February to prepare ourselves, both staff and patrons. We have ordered extra supplies of hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and tissues to help prevent the spread of germs. We have asked everyone to pitch in by periodically wiping surfaces like computer mice and keyboards, phones, and door handles with disinfecting wipes. We advised the following to staff on March 1:

- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.*
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't convenient, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.*
- *If you are sick, please stay home. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and then throw the tissue in the trash.*
- *The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases like coronavirus disease.*

We have made every effort to emphasize and reinforce this message. Fred has coordinated with Clean Team to adjust our cleaning strategy to best minimize surface contact with germs. I have held several meetings with staff to discuss our strategy and take questions.

I have worked with staff to develop a Pandemic Policy to bring to the board in March. It will actually be a series of updates to our existing policies to allow for the current scenario of a pandemic outbreak. I will also bring a set of related procedures we plan to follow, and indeed are already following.

We hosted a meeting at the library on March 11 with representatives from the City of Carmel, Carmel Police Department, Carmel Fire Department, Carmel Schools, Carmel Parks Department, and the Center for the Performing Arts. This group participated in a conference call with the Hamilton County Health Department. Here are some facts from the meeting:

- As of March 11, there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hamilton County
- Carmel Schools were operating at normal capacity, but preparing for a likely closure
- All represented organizations, including the library, will take direction from the health department regarding closures and other protective measures
- The health department representative affirmed that the library is developing the right strategy for the current situation

On Thursday evening, March 12, Carmel Clay Schools announced their intention to close, beginning March 16 through April 10. On Friday morning, March 13, Carmel Clay Public Library announced the following:

Due to current guidance from public health officials, the Carmel Clay Public Library is suspending all programs and events, as well as mobile library/bookmobile service, through April 12.

At this time, the Main Library, the Joyce Winner West Branch, and the Digital Media Lab continue to operate under regular hours. [View library hours here.](#)

Here are the additional steps the library is taking currently to address concerns over coronavirus in our public spaces:

- *We have implemented elevated cleaning measures at all library locations.*
- *We are reminding staff and patrons of proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.*
 - *Cover coughs and sneezes with something other than your hand*
 - *Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds*
 - *Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth*
 - *Routinely wipe and disinfect frequently touched surfaces*
- *Staff are encouraged to stay home if they are ill or have a fever.*
- *Teen Volunteer Corps activities have been suspended through April 12.*
- *All remaining sessions of AARP tax preparation assistance have been canceled.*
- *Activity kits, puzzles, toys, iPads, and other hands-on activities have been temporarily removed from our Youth Services Department.*
- *Board game checkouts have been suspended through April 12.*

Remember that libraries are shared public spaces. For the health and safety of others, please be thoughtful about coming into a library or any public space if you are exhibiting any [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Please do your part to stop the spread of germs and disease.

The library has [many digital services you can access from home](#). You may also reach out to the library by phone at 317-814-3900 or through [our online chat service](#) during regular library hours.