COVID Safety Factsheet – Further information for Public Libraries – Commencing 27 June 2020 (updated 26 June 2020)

The Western Australian Government has implemented a staged lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and developed guidelines to assist businesses and community activities to reopen or recommence.

Safety requirements and accompanying guidance to reopen are contained in the COVID Safety Guidelines Phase 4.

A local government that operates a public library that was required to close under Directions made under the *Emergency Management Act* and not yet reopened, is required to complete a COVID Safety Plan and display a COVID Safety Certificate before reopening.

Libraries that have reopened are required to revise their COVID Safety Plan in line with Phase 4 Guidelines. You may be able to increase your premises' capacity which should be reflected on your COVID Safety Plan Certificate.

This applies to all public libraries including joint-use and co-located services (including libraries in Community Resource Centres). If your local government has more than one library service point, you must prepare a COVID Safety Plan for each library before reopening.

The purpose of this document is to outline further considerations specifically for the reopening of public library services and should be read in conjunction with the above COVID Safety Guidelines and COVID Safety Plan.

Other considerations

Physical and social distancing:
- In instances where physical distancing may not be possible, physical barriers like Perspex screens may reduce exposure between staff and patrons. The effectiveness of such measures against COVID-19 is still not known, therefore, these screens will be more effective when used in combination with good hand hygiene and regular cleaning.

Library materials handling:
- Self-checkout machines will help to minimise the handling of library materials by more than one person and clients should be encouraged to use them where available.
- Local governments should decide what materials safe handling practices are implemented including if materials will be quarantined after use:
  - Gloves may be used by staff to handle materials.
  - DVDs and other materials with plastic covers may be wiped down after each use.
  - Paper based products (books, newspapers, magazines) may be left untouched in a dedicated quarantine area for at least 24 hours prior to handling and recirculating.

We're all in this *together.*

Hygiene considerations:
- Ensure thorough and regular cleaning of common surfaces, 'high touch' items and shared amenities e.g. computers, equipment, self-check machines, trolleys, door handles, tables, chairs and toilets.
- Remove communal items where possible e.g. soft toys, games, play equipment and stationery items.
- Ensure your library has the appropriate cleaning products and equipment to perform cleaning and disinfection (detergent, disinfectant, sanitiser, wipes).
- Toilets and water dispensers within library premises can be made available to patrons. Increased cleaning regimes should be put in place.

Additional information on cleaning is available from the WA Heath website, these include:
- [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19;](#)
- [Environmental cleaning in non-healthcare settings;](#)
- [Information for public transport and other transport vehicles](#) (provides information on cleaning of vehicles).

Group activities:
- For group activities, like Story Time and Baby Rhyme Time, it is recommended good practice physical distancing principles are applied including:
  - maintain a minimum of 2 square metres (2sqm) per person; and
  - maintain physical distancing between people who are not from the same household.
- Joint-use libraries should do a risk assessment with their school to determine if class groups will be able to visit the library.

Food businesses within libraries:
- If the library includes a café or other food service arrangement, there are specific requirements that must be met. The [COVID Safety Guidelines: Food and Licensed Venues (Phase 4)](#) outlines the mandatory conditions on the re-opening of food businesses, or where food businesses are expanding beyond takeaway only.

Appendix A – Checklist: Additional items for public libraries to consider prior to reopening

To be read in conjunction with the checklists contained the COVID Safety Guidelines and COVID Safety Plan.

Physical distancing

- How are you implementing good practice physical distancing principles during group activities like Story Time and Baby Rhyme Time?
- If you are a joint-use library, have you done a risk assessment with your school before you allow class visits?

Library Materials handling

- Reinforce with staff and patrons the use of self-checkout machines for circulation of library materials.
- Ensure your library has the appropriate cleaning products and equipment (gloves and wipes).
- Decide if materials will be quarantined after use. If so:
  - Ensure there is a process for quarantining returned library materials and those used within the library.
  - Have you set aside an area in the library for the quarantine of materials?

Hygiene considerations

- Ensure thorough and regular cleaning of common surfaces, 'high touch' items and shared amenities e.g. computers, equipment, self-check machines, trolleys, door handles, tables, chairs and toilets.
- Have communal items been removed where possible? E.g. Soft toys, games, play equipment, public water dispensers and stationery items.
- Ensure your library has the appropriate cleaning products and equipment to perform cleaning and disinfection (detergent, disinfectant, sanitiser, wipes).