



Chelsea Public Library  
COVID-19 Closure Policy and Phased Reopening Plan  
(Phase Three updated August 18, 2020)

To protect patrons and staff from community spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, the Chelsea Public Library Board of Trustees made the difficult decision to close Chelsea Public Library to the public indefinitely beginning on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. This decision was made with guidance from Governor Phil Scott’s “Stay home, stay safe” order, the Vermont Department of Libraries, the Vermont Library Association, the New England Library Association, and the American Library Association. The Board of Trustees and Director continue to evaluate the situation and guidance from these authorities in making decisions about the services that can be offered during this time. Any updates will be posted on our website and outside the library in the poster case.

Our mission is to “... provide information, resources, and services that meet the educational, cultural, technological and recreational needs of the community.” Given the current situation, we best serve the Chelsea community by stopping the spread of the virus, which includes keeping the physical space closed. However, we still serve the educational, cultural, technological and recreation needs of the community through online resources, our public WiFi, and by making digital and physical materials available.

- I. The following are services which are available to the Chelsea community and Chelsea Public Library patrons during the COVID-19 closure:
  - a) Our website, [www.chelsealibrary.com](http://www.chelsealibrary.com), is frequently updated with relevant resources are free to use. The COVID-19 page has vital information about the coronavirus, as well as virtual learning, mental health, entertainment, and miscellaneous resources.
  - b) Patrons can use their library card to download audiobooks and eBooks using Listen Up Vermont!
  - c) Patrons may utilize the free, public WiFi available outside the library 24/7.
  - d) Patrons may pick up books, DVDs, audiobooks, and magazines from our collection by filling out the Item Request Form on our website or by contacting the library. Items are placed in a paper bag with the corresponding name on it and put in a plastic bin outside the library for pickup. Only items available in the library may be requested, the library is requesting patrons to refrain from returning items and the interlibrary loan system is currently suspended. See additional information about returns (Phase One).

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- e) Patrons may email or call the library with any reference questions they have, as well as to chat with the librarian. The librarian has also been conducting “wellness checks” on some patrons.
- f) Virtual programming – The library has offered virtual book clubs and will offer a summer reading program. Any other virtual programming ideas are encouraged, please contact the librarian.
- g) Giveaways – The library will offer materials to the public to keep.

### II. The following are services which are currently suspended due to COVID-19:

- a) Interlibrary loans.
- b) We are unable to accept donations.
- c) All in-person programs, events and services – In order to practice social distancing and prevent community spread of the virus, Chelsea Public Library has cancelled all in-person events, which includes the Chelsea Chili Challenge, Story Hours, the Annual Plant Sale, the Annual Book Sale, and Friday activities at the Chelsea Farmers Market. There will still be a summer reading program, however it will look different than it has in the past. The last two Winter Speaker Series presentations will be postponed for a later date.

### Library Reopening Policy

Chelsea Public Library will gradually reopen after guidance is given by appropriate authorities. Please be aware that **we do not know when each phase will start and how long it will last**. This policy may be changed and updated at any time as we learn more about COVID-19. The library will only be able to operate in each phase if **all necessary supplies are available** to ensure patron and staff safety. Staff will fill out a health log each day they enter the library; if staff is experiencing illness and/or a temperature the staff member must stay home, and the library will be closed. The Board of Library Trustees has granted Susan Morse, Chair, the power to close the library in the event of an emergency.

The following is our phased reopening plan:

#### PHASE ONE: Pickup Service

Patrons may request materials that belong to Chelsea Public Library. See information about pickup service (Section I, subsection d). Staff is permitted in the building during this phase to fulfill orders, work on projects in the library, clean, and to call patrons. Staff must wear a mask if more than one person is in the library at one time and sanitize shared surfaces in the Town Hall building.

#### *Returns*

There is evidence that the virus lives on plastic for 3 days and cardboard/paper for up to 24 hours, therefore we will take measures to ensure returned items are safe for circulation before

they are returned to the shelf. All items will be left by patrons in the drop box outside the library. Staff will use gloves to transfer items inside, where they will be sanitized, checked in, and quarantined. Quarantined items will be placed in the Chelsea Town Hall on designated tables grouped by the dates they were sanitized for a minimum of ten days before they are shelved or can circulate.

Returns will be accepted in two parts; 1) signs and notices preventing returns will be taken down from the book drop, website, and item request form. Patrons who ask about returns will be told they may drop off items. This will provide a gradual start to accepting returns to begin process of disinfecting and quarantining items. 2) The library will advertise that returns are being accepted in the newspaper, Front Porch Forum, and social media. This will take place about two weeks after returns are initially accepted and the first round of returns are able to be shelved.

#### PHASE TWO: Pickup Window

Update 10 of the Be Smart, Stay Safe Order on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 gives Chelsea Public Library the ability to extend services. Following guidance from the Vermont Department of Libraries, Chelsea Public Library will provide a pickup window in which patrons can directly circulate materials, ask reference questions, and ask the librarian to make copies/scans/faxes.

- Pickup window will be open Monday through Friday, 2-6 PM and Saturday 10 AM – 2 PM. Hours will be evaluated and may be updated due to usage.
- Chelsea Public Library may resume interlibrary loan requests and the courier system.
- The Director may resume purchasing new books, DVDs, and audiobooks for the collection.
- Signs will notify patrons where the window is located and guidance on using this service.
  - Patrons must social distance. Signs will recommend only one patron or family group at the window at a time.
  - Signs will encourage patrons experiencing illness to avoid using window.
  - Masks strongly recommended for patrons.
  - Mask and gloves required for staff.
  - Consistent sanitization of pickup window area will occur by staff.
- Patrons can still request items online and utilize the pickup bin outside library hours.

#### PHASE THREE: Appointments

- The library will be open to the public by appointment only from 1 - 6 PM on Monday through Friday and 9 AM – 2 PM on Saturday, with the exception of contracted holidays.
  - Each appointment will be for a duration of 20 minutes and will be scheduled every 30 minutes.
    - This will allow staff ten minutes between appointments to sanitize and maintain the pickup window.

- Patrons may request to stay for up to an hour if no other conflicting appointments are scheduled.
- Patrons will be able to browse, check out materials, use the printer/fax machine, use a public computer, utilize historical resources that do not circulate, and make interlibrary loan requests.
- Any material that has been touched by the patron but not checked out should be put on the shelving cart to be quarantined before returning to the shelf. Signs will notify patrons of this.
- The books on the free shelf in the vestibule, along with any “high touch” items in the library, will be removed. This includes any games, toys, or puzzles.
- Patrons will also be unable to use the library’s phone for private calls unless it is an emergency.
- The circulation scanner will be turned around so patrons can scan their own book. Staff will still be behind the computer ensuring the item is correctly checked out.
- Masks will be required for both staff and patrons.
- All children must be accompanied by an adult over 18.
- No food or drinks will be allowed.
- The public bathroom in the vestibule of the Town Hall will be closed to the public. This is determined by the Chelsea Selectboard.
- The Town Hall door will remain locked until each appointment. The library door will be propped open to prevent use of handle.
  - The librarian is responsible for sanitizing door handles, surfaces, equipment, and quarantining materials that have been touched.
- Patrons should not enter if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness or if they have any reason to believe they could have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Any log of patron appointments will be destroyed at the end of the day to maintain confidentiality.

#### PHASE FOUR: Limited Walk-In Service

- The library will be opened to a limited capacity of patrons at one time.
  - This number will be determined by guidance from Governor Scott, the Chelsea Fire Marshal, and the Vermont Department of Libraries.
- Patrons may use public computers for a duration of 30 minutes.
  - Patrons are required to wipe down their computer station after use.
- Patrons may use the copier and fax machine.
- The library will begin to accept donations; however, patrons must follow the Donation Policy.
- Patrons will be asked to place any items they have touched on a separate shelf to be disinfected or quarantined.

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- Mask, food/drink, and bathroom restrictions still in effect.

### PHASE FIVE: Extended Computer and Workspace Allowance

All parts of Phase Three are still in effect, except

- Patrons may use computers for up to one hour if no one is waiting, for up to 30 minutes if there is a wait (as stipulated in Library Policy).
- Patrons may use the table as a workspace for up to one hour.
- Patrons will be required to wipe down their computer station and workspace after use.

### PHASE SIX: Reopen at almost normal capacity

- Patrons may use computer stations, copier, fax machine, and workspaces with no limit unless there is a wait.
- Public programs may resume if participants are able to social distance. A limit on the number of participants may be enforced.

### PHASE SEVEN: Reopen at normal capacity

- No limit on patrons in the library.
- No limit on use of workspace or computer stations unless there is a wait.
- Public programs may resume without social distancing restrictions.
- Puzzles, games, and toys are available for children.
- Masks are not required.
- Chelsea Public Library's normal operating policy is in effect.

\*Please note that the library may choose to go back to a previous phase if necessary or guided by appropriate authority. If you have questions about how these decisions or phases were developed, please contact the library or a member of the Chelsea Public Library Board of Trustees. Information is also available at [libraries.vermont.gov/covid19/reopeninginformation](https://libraries.vermont.gov/covid19/reopeninginformation).