



## JAMAICA LIBRARY SERVICE COVID-19 GUIDE FOR RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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The following is an interim **JLS Guide for the Re-opening of Public Libraries** while adhering to the Disaster Risk Management Act, Enforcement Measures of the government and safety and hygiene protocols of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The document is a work in progress and is subject to modifications as situations evolve.

There is still a lot to learn about COVID-19 and infection prevention and control measures will need to be adapted internationally for the unique features of libraries. Therefore, as we plan to reopen spaces and deliver programmes and services with expectations that social distancing will be necessary for an extended period of time, re-opening is recommended to be done in stages.

Not all service points will have the ability to offer services at the same level or along the same timeline as other libraries. Therefore, each parish library network will be required to determine some levels of access, physical item service handling, and delivery based upon its ability to abide by public health protocols for staff and patrons. The guide is intended to allow libraries to make the best possible decisions for staff and patrons.

The safety of library staff and communities is of paramount importance while evaluating the services offered. All interactions and service to the public must be handled with the highest level of tact, decorum, professionalism and patience as the new normal is navigated.

**All libraries are encouraged to also work with the Ministry of Health and Wellness local health departments to ensure compliance with any additional local rules to mitigate outbreak of COVID-19.**

## ***Hygiene and Sanitization***

- ✓ Have installed sanitization stations using the following options or combination
  - Handwashing stations
  - Sanitizing dispensers (preferably touchless)
  - Labelled hand spray containing alcohol

***Porters, Senior Library Aides, Library Aides and Cleaner Attendants may be assigned at entry points to assist with monitoring the process***
- ✓ Coordinate scheduled cleaning times to sanitize high touch public and staff areas, seating, computers stations etcetera.
- ✓ Monitor access to public bathrooms and sanitize hourly depending on usage.
- ✓ Provide tissue, hand soap and hand towels for staff and public bathrooms.
- ✓ **Ensure availability of at least three (3) weeks of cleaning supplies. Develop a reliable supply chain**

## ***Safety for Users and Staff***

- ✓ Anyone entering the library should be mandated to:
  - wear a face mask
  - have their temperature taken
  - have their hands sanitized
  - adhere to social distancing markers

Patrons refusing to comply should be prohibited from entry and management team advised. Staff or patrons with high temperature readings are not recommended to be granted access to the building.

- ✓ Provide safety gears for staff such as:
  - Mask for performing special tasks. *All staff should also have their personal mask.*
  - Face shield/visor for staff at the circulation desk
  - Gloves to handle any incoming material

- ✓ Enable/enhance natural workplace ventilation. Eg. Door and windows kept open.
  - These opened spaces must be monitored for timely closure and ensure they are secured before end of work day.
  - Risks must be evaluated in considering ventilation of spaces

### ***Space and Social Distancing***

- ✓ Reorganize tables and chairs and other library fixtures to maintain at least 3 – 6 feet distance between library users. These include distancing of computer workstations.
- ✓ Where possible, install glass/plexiglass enclosures at circulation desk, where logistically possible. Recommended to be done incrementally as budget allows.
- ✓ Re-configure flow of traffic in library from entrance to exit, as necessary. Increased visibility and monitoring of the entrance by porter or other designated staff member.
- ✓ Mount attractive social distance markers/decals at circulation desks, computer laboratories and other necessary areas.
- ✓ Limit the number of users accessing various services in the library at any one time.
  - This will vary depending on the size of each library and capacity to offer the services
- ✓ Limit users' time in the library and or section especially if there are others waiting, to allow equal access to everyone. The following would be subject to discretionary adjustment depending on user visits and demand on a particular service area.
  - Maximum of one (1) hour recommended for access to general information and recreational services
  - Maximum of two (2) hours recommended for study purposes.  
**Appointments encouraged.**
  - Maximum of 45 minutes recommended for ICT services

- ✓ Consider waiting area arrangements, with social distancing as necessary to manage number of persons waiting to enter building. Create ticketing system if necessary.
- ✓ Limit congregation in office areas.

### ***Programme and Service Delivery***

- ✓ Phased reopening
  - Full-time libraries offer limited/controlled services
  - Part-time libraries to offer limited service based on capacity
- ✓ Libraries will remain closed to the public on Saturdays until September 2020.
- ✓ Mobile Library Service to communities remain suspended until further notice.
- ✓ Outreach programmes and events that encourage groups of over 10 persons remain suspended until further notice.
  - Developing programmes for children compliant with social distancing measures.
- ✓ All returned material are to be placed in quarantine for 72 hours/3 days. Drop box to be placed in the vicinity of circulation desk and removed to a designated holding area known to all staff at the end of each day. Clean items before re-shelving. **All overdue fines will be waived through to August 30, 2020.**
- ✓ All printing, photocopying, scanning and facsimile services are to resume.
- ✓ Wireless services to be promoted and users encouraged to:
  - bring own device
  - Access to wireless services from parking spaces for those locations with appropriate parking conveniences. Usage data to be digitally collected.
- ✓ Limit computer use on a first-come, first-serve basis for 45 minutes in the first instance if there is no one waiting.

- ✓ Encourage members and users who require extended research and other information services to **make appointments.**
- ✓ Expand the use of video and phone conferencing, social media, and other internet platforms to **deliver programmes virtually.**
- ✓ Encourage members to utilize the Koha Integrated Library System remotely to browse the catalogue, access digital resources and reserves books.
- ✓ Encourage the use of the JLS website, social media pages, electronic mail services and telephone lines to access:
  - E-books, audiobooks, digital resources
  - Reference/ Homework Assistance
  - Online registration for membership
  - WhatsApp service
  - *Ask A Librarian* live chat service
  - Remote access to EBSCO database
  - Recorded Storytime and other virtual services that can be accessed online

### ***Enable Staff***

- ✓ Convene frequent meetings to discuss experiences, share new ideas and make recommendations to improve service delivery.
- ✓ Utilize staff notice boards, electronic mail and other platforms to share information between meetings
- ✓ Discuss possibilities of transitioning and changing roles, responsibilities and duties that may arise for every position due to this global pandemic. Highlight the new developments affecting operations in every industry.
- ✓ Encourage flexibility among staff.
- ✓ Ensure staff is trained in all aspects of social distancing protocol.
- ✓ Reinforce the importance of personal responsibility and safe hygiene practices.
- ✓ Ensure that the mental and emotional needs of staff are met.
- ✓ Revisit customer service training.
- ✓ Seek out and encourage staff development/participation in webinars and other free online seminars locally or internationally.

## **General**

- ✓ Mount notices (*clear, clean and laminated*) at strategic points to inform readers of protocols. *Post clear signage about washing hands and using hand sanitizer.*
- ✓ Ensure patrons with special needs are accommodated safely.
- ✓ Monitor building for security and safety breaches.
- ✓ Conduct checks of fire equipment including alarms, extinguishers and all other fire protection equipment.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following listed documents are also provided to guide the process.

1. *Ministry of Health and Wellness - Self-Assessment Checklist for Workplaces, Public Facilities/Spaces COVID-19*
2. *Ministry of Health and Wellness - Public Health Inspection Checklist for Workplaces and Public Facilities/Spaces COVID-19*
3. *Ministry of Health and Wellness - COVID-19 Preparedness and Response - Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance for Public Establishments*
4. *Ministry of Health and Wellness - Environmental Health Interim Guidelines and Procedures for the Reopening of Public Facilities/Spaces for COVID-19*