Reviewed and Approved: 07/21/2026

INDIAN RIVER AREA LIBRARY

Inclement Weather Closing Policy

1. STATEMENT of PURPOSE

The *Indian River Area Library* (IRAL) recognizes the importance of maximizing the number of days and hours open to the public as a service to the community. On occasion, inclement weather may cause conditions that render opening or keeping the Library open unsafe for the public and Library employees. The Library will not automatically close or delay opening based on any other institution's actions. The decision to close Library facilities is the responsibility of the Library Director. If the Library Director is unavailable, the senior Librarian on staff will make the decision after conferring with a Board member.

2. LIBRARY CLOSURE NOTICES

In the event of closing for inclement weather, a notice will be posted on the Library website, Library Facebook and Instagram accounts. The Director will also notify local television and radio stations, all Library employees and Board members of a closure.

3. PROCEDURES

A. Tornado

a. Library staff will announce when there is either a tornado watch or tornado warning in effect. Issuance of a *tornado watch* by the U.S. Weather Service means weather conditions are favorable for the development of a tornado. A *tornado warning* means a funnel has been spotted in the vicinity and all persons should take cover immediately.

b. *Tornado Watch Procedure:* In the case of tornado watches, business will proceed as usual and staff will monitor the U.S. Weather Service for any changes.

c. *Tornado Warning Procedure:* Library staff will shut down and unplug all electronics, turn off the main lights, and encourage the public to gather in the designated tornado shelter in the building. Doors will remain unlocked. Unattended minors will be asked to stay in the building until a parent/guardian picks them up or until the "all clear" is sounded. When an "all clear" is issued for either a watch or warning, Library staff will advise patrons and resume regular business.

B. High Wind or Straight-Line Wind Warnings

a. In the event that the National Weather Service issues high wind or straight-line warnings, staff should follow the Tornado Procedures if the National Weather Service issues the warning that high wind speeds may pose a hazard or is life threatening. In Michigan, a high wind warning may be issued when sustained winds greater than or equal to 40 mph last for one hour or longer, or winds greater than or equal to 58 mph last for any duration.

C. Ice/Snowstorm
    a. In the event of a winter storm with road conditions becoming extremely dangerous, the Library Director will consult the following sources to determine whether or not the Library should close:
        i. National Weather Service alerts and notices
        ii. MDOT Cameras via michigan.gov
        iii. Request for closure by local, county, or state law enforcement officials, including the Tuscarora Township Police Department
        iv. Straits Area Scanner
        v. Inland Lakes Schools and local area school closings
        vi. Availability of staff to open and operate the Library. Minimal staffing levels are defined as a minimum of one Library Assistant. The Library can operate with reduced staff when the number of patrons is expected to be abnormally low.
    b. Patrons and staff should consider their own safety to be paramount when deciding to drive to or from the Library when road conditions are hazardous.

D. Equipment Failure
    a. The Library will be closed when vital equipment in the building fails (e.g., furnace malfunction, no water in the building, no electricity, etc.).

E. Library Board of Trustees Meeting Cancellation
    a. In the event that a Board of Trustees regularly scheduled or special meeting may necessitate cancellation due to inclement weather or other conditions, the Library Director will contact the Board President to make a final decision. If the Library Board Meeting is cancelled, the Board must reschedule and notify the public of the rescheduled date within three (3) days of the originally scheduled meeting per the Michigan Open Meeting Act.

4. <u>EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION</u>

A. On occasion, the Library Director will announce an inclement weather closing and other conditions may necessitate the closing of the building. Under these circumstances, employees are not to report to work. Compensatory time is not granted to those employees already scheduled to have that day off.

B. Full-time and part-time staff scheduled to work will be paid their regular salary or rate of hourly pay for time missed because of an emergency closing, which is announced before the Library is scheduled to open.

C. Library Pages will not be paid for emergency closings, but will have the opportunity to make up the hours in the same payroll period.

D. If hazardous weather conditions exist when the Library is open and employees feel it is impossible to report to work, PTO (Paid Time Off) may be utilized for time missed. When no PTO is available, the absence will be unpaid. This policy applies even if the Library closes after opening normally in the morning.

E. If the Library is closed two or more days due to fire, tornado, or other unplanned lengthy closings, employees regularly scheduled to work will continue to receive pay on their workdays for up to two weeks, if the Library remains closed during that time frame. An improvised interim work schedule may be developed to handle existent work needs. Job descriptions or duties may be temporarily altered or reassigned, based upon unusual need. A reasonable effort

will be made to maintain a useful work schedule and provide continuous employment opportunities.