

November 2, 2020

The Valley City Barnes County Public Library will be making some changes starting November 1<sup>st</sup> to help increase patron access of library materials and resources.

First: we will be resuming Saturday hours. Starting on Saturday November 7th the library will be open from 1-5pm. With the weather curtailing outdoor activities the board decided it was a good time to make the schedule change. Appointments will still be necessary, mandatory mask wearing and social distancing requirements will continue to be followed.

Second: we have received numerous comments and complaints regarding our current restrictions on building access for school age children. The board decided at the October meeting to allow teens thirteen and over to use in-building library resources utilizing the same appointment protocols we currently have in place for our adult patrons.

Additionally, we will be adding “family library time” the last hour of every day. Parents and/or adult guardians of school age children (6+) will be able to make a half hour appointment so they and their school age children can come in the building and browse for books and DVDs. During family library hour, we will be increasing the number of patrons in the building to six (6) so we can accommodate two average sized families at a time. Family library time appointments will be available MWFS 4-4:30 and 4:30-5 and TR 6-6:30 and 6:30-7.

There are a couple restrictions everyone needs to follow:

1. Families will need to make an appointment.
2. Masks will continue to be mandatory. Adults and children who are unwilling or unable to wear a mask are encouraged to utilize our curbside service. Everyone entering the building will be required to practice hand hygiene by washing hands or using hand sanitizer.
3. An adult parent or other responsible adult must be present at all times in the children’s department, while their children are picking out materials. Older teenage siblings will not be considered an acceptable parental substitute.
4. Children five and under will not be allowed in the building.
5. Our younger patron will be encouraged not to linger, and we ask parents to assist them finding materials. Staff will, of course, be available to help parents and children find just the right book or DVD.
6. For hygienic and safety reasons toys and computers will not be available. All library programs will continue to be 100% virtual.

These restrictions may be upsetting to some; however, they are necessary so we can continue to reduce the risk of infection to patrons and staff. The board and staff do not make these decisions lightly. We are trying to balance risk to staff and patrons against

ease of access to library materials. Professional library literature regarding information seeking behavior in public libraries overwhelmingly shows browsing as the primary way patrons choose materials. In children the numbers are even higher particularly for younger children. This is a large part as to why the board and staff decided to expand youth access.

The library is just not the same without children coming in. We are excited to invite our younger patrons back and following these rules make that possible.

Additional information:

Changes to circulation rules -

1. Patrons will now be able to reserve and check out ten (10) items at a time and families can check out thirty (30) items
2. DVD check outs are back to our pre-Covid limit of three (3) per patron, six (6) per family
3. The library is currently not charging any late fees, including DVDs. Please note; Per the Circulation Policy, Amended September 12, 2019, "Any items more than six months overdue will be considered lost and the patron will responsible for the replacement cost of all items." The full Circulation Policy is on our website and available at the main desk.

Curbside service -

Pickups will continue as it has the past several months. Particularly with winter closing in, we would like to encourage our patrons with mobility issues to utilize the service. It is not an inconvenience to staff. Consider it an extension of the personal service you have come to expect at VCBC Public Library.

In library services –

Patrons who wish to browse in person or use the computers will still be required to make an appointment. Mask wearing, social distancing, and hand hygiene are mandatory. Appointment are available noon to close Monday through Saturday. We are often not at capacity so if you are driving by and want to stop, give us a call and you might be able come in immediately.

Library programs –

All library programs will continue to be virtual only.