



438 Park Avenue
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 1W1

Email: npl@newmarketpl.ca
Website: www.newmarketpl.ca
Phone: 905-953-5110

Library Board Report

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Tracy Munusami, CEO

Date: October 20, 2021

Re: Vaccination Requirements for Participation in Library Programs and Facility

Background

The Provincial Government mandated that starting September 22, 2021 “Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated (two doses plus 14 days) and provide their proof of vaccination along with photo ID to access certain public settings and facilities.” Their approach focuses on higher-risk indoor public settings where face covers cannot always be worn.

On September 21, 2021 Town of Newmarket held a Special Council Meeting to determine the vaccination requirements to enter any Town Facilities. Town Staff were directed to go beyond the Provincial Regulations for the Vaccine Passport and to require proof of identification and proof of vaccination against COVID-19 for those 12 and over for entry into all Town of Newmarket facilities and programming, including Customer service, beginning September 22, 2021; and

That the Newmarket Public Library Board be informed of this decision and be requested to consider COVID-19 vaccination requirements and provide clarity of their approach to the Town of Newmarket as soon as possible.

Discussion

As per the Provincial Government mandate entry into Public Libraries are exempt from the Vaccination Certificate because they are not considered high-risk, but the Town of Newmarket is requiring proof of vaccination to enter all Town of Newmarket Facilities.

Option 1 – Follow the Ontario Regulations as Written

The majority of libraries in Ontario are following the Ontario Regulations as written. The Provincial Government mandate has not asked libraries to require patrons to show proof of vaccination status to

gain entry to libraries. Public Libraries are low risk settings. Our furniture is spaced, desks and tables divided with plexi-glass and our staff and customers stay masked while out on the floor. Public Libraries have been allowed to let the public into facilities to access information and computer access since Friday, June 19, 2020. Library services are more than circulation, browsing, information research and computer access. Libraries defend and promote the advancement of people through literacy, life long learning, social engagement and cultural enrichment. Library services provide valuable social services to the entire community, attempting to do so with as few barriers as possible. Following the Regulations as written would allow the Library to continue to offer services with fewer barriers.

Option 2 – Develop a Library Policy that prohibits entry into any facility for all individuals aged 12 and up unless fully vaccinated

The Library could require proof of vaccination for customers wishing to access to the collection, computers, programs and study spaces, but still allow customers to do basic transactions similar to the “Concierge” service that was offered before the Library could open to the public. Unvaccinated individuals would be able to pick up Holds and use the self check-outs to check out items. Customers would be able to pay fines or ask quick account questions of staff if necessary. Everyone else coming into the building would need to be screened by showing ID and proof of vaccination at the door. This option would be similar to how Customer Service interactions are taking place at the Town Offices.

For staff safety, this recommendation comes with a request to use reserve funds to hire a security guard for vaccine passport screening, and to escort out anyone in the building not following COVID-19 safety protocols.

Option 3 – Develop a Hybrid Library Policy that requires proof of vaccination to attend in person programs, but vaccination is not required for other library services

This approach would clear up the grey area of meeting spaces for libraries. The current regulations require proof of vaccination for participants to enter meeting and event spaces, but the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) has let libraries know that proof of vaccination for attendees is not required for the purpose of the provision of social services. The MHSTCI has advised libraries to seek clarification from their local public health authorities or legal counsel. We are in the process of seeking advice from York Region Public Health in collaboration with the other N6 Libraries to clarify what would be considered a social service.

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Vaccination Requirements for Participation in Library Programs and Facility be received
2. That the Library Board provide direction to Library staff on a preferred option as highlighted within the report;
3. That Library Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution