



**HAMILTON EAST  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC POLICY**

### **Purpose**

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or other public health emergency.

The Library should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. In addition, during any public health emergency organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness such as closing by order of county, state or federal health or government officials. It is important to ensure that core business activities of the Library can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director.

### **Continuity of Operations Plan—Epidemic/Pandemic**

This plan differs from a general emergency preparedness policy or procedure. With an emergency preparedness policy, there is an assumption that staff will return to the building or begin recovery work almost immediately after the event or crisis (such as after a fire or storm). If there is a serious infectious disease outbreak, recovery may be slow and limited staff, services, and hours may be necessary for several weeks or more.

### **Library Closure**

Hamilton East Public Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency such as an epidemic/pandemic in the event that any of the following occur:

- A. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by Hamilton County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other local government officials.
- B. If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the epidemic, HEPL will temporarily close that location.
- C. At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees
- D. At the discretion of the Library Director

In addition, Hamilton East Public Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the possible spread of the contagion. In the event of



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closure, overdue fines will be suspended. The exterior book drop may be closed or kept open and cleared periodically.

### Types of Library Closures:

- Complete Closure: no staff in the building at any time.
- Library Closure with Essential Services Only: exempt and other essential library employees may be required to work from home or on site during closures to perform necessary duties, such as payroll, bill paying, building maintenance, emptying book drops, etc.
- Library Closure with Reduced Services - staff may:
  - o be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
  - o be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
  - o be assigned to clean the building

### School Closures

In the event that Noblesville or Hamilton Southeastern schools are closed because of an epidemic, Hamilton East Public Library will remain open unless one of the above conditions under the “Library Closure” section above are met.

### Compensation in an Epidemic/Pandemic

The Library will compensate an employee their regularly scheduled hours if they:

- contract the disease
- are required to care for a family member with the disease
- receive a mandated or doctor-directed self-quarantine

In the event of closure, the library will follow current closure compensation policies per the Staff Handbook.

### Impact on Staff with Child Care Concerns

In the event of school districts and day care closures due to an epidemic, staff may choose to use their accrued leave or take unpaid time off to stay at home.

### Communication

In the event of cancellation of services, programs, meeting room usage or Library closures, administration staff will:



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- Notify staff, trustees, and Friends board members, custodial staff and public via email, social media and the website
- Call or email scheduled program presenters, community room reservations, outreach sites, program attendees (if we have contact information)
- Provide information regarding the epidemic/pandemic on the Library's website's homepage
- Create signage for updating patrons inside the library
- Notify local media and other government entities as deemed necessary

### **Employee Absences**

Hamilton East Public Library Employee Handbook outlines the regular PTO policy. This policy shall continue to be followed in the event of an epidemic/pandemic or public health emergency while the library remains operational. Pre-approved time off will be honored unless voluntarily cancelled.

### **Social Distancing**

If recommended by local, state or federal health officials, Library staff will follow suggestions and directions to implement social distancing within the Library buildings.

### **Additional Cleaning Measures**

During the epidemic/pandemic, the Library will ask staff and contracted custodians to increase cleaning within each location. The Facilities Manager will devise new cleaning procedures for HEPL during the epidemic.

### **Responsibility for Library Operations**

If, for any reason, the Library Director is unable or unavailable to perform the responsibilities and decisions outlined in this policy, administrative authority for this policy and all Library operations shall be provided by the Deputy Director.

*Approved by Hamilton East Public Library Board of Trustees—March 2020*



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