

Hooksett Library Pandemic Policy

To establish a protocol that will be used in the event of a pandemic, as defined by local, state, federal or world health organizations. If there is a pandemic, the library may be required to operate with limited staffing or take unique measures to help slow the spread of the illness, including service restrictions, limited hours of operation, or possible closure by order of local public health officials.

The Library should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak. 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 and Board of Trustees.

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

Hooksett Library may temporarily close or limit services because of a public health emergency such as a pandemic in the event that any of the following occur:

- A. A mandate, order, or recommendation for closure is issued by public health or government officials on the local, county or state level.
- B. If a Library employee has been diagnosed with the pandemic illness, the library will temporarily close if unable to maintain adequate social distancing for health and safety.
- C. At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees.

In addition, the Hooksett Library may temporarily close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services in the event that there is insufficient staff and/or personal protective equipment and supplies to maintain basic service levels or to reduce the possible spread of the contagion. In the event of closure, overdue fines will be suspended and due dates for borrowed materials may be extended. 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:
 - be allowed to work inside the building, although the building is closed to the public
 - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
 - be assigned to clean the building

School Closures

In the event that Hooksett School district is closed because of an epidemic, the Hooksett Library will remain open, but with reduced hours and services, unless one of the above conditions under the “Library Closure” section above are met. However, library programs and special events may be canceled on any day on which Hooksett Schools are closed because of illness.

Staffing

Minimum staffing level for a temporary period of time is defined as three healthy employees available to be present at the library during all open hours with a maximum 8 hour workday and 40 hour workweek per full-time employee, and no more than 29 hour workweek per part-time employee. An inability to maintain this temporary minimal level or a necessity to maintain this temporary minimal level for more than two consecutive days will result in reduced hours or closing the library.

In providing service safely and efficiently, the following actions may be taken at the discretion of the Library Director or designee:

- Increased health/safety measures for staff (e.g., wearing face masks, wearing of gloves, wiping down work areas, etc.);
- Restricted access to areas in the library (e.g., closing meeting rooms or unmonitored areas for safety);
- Social distancing practices in public areas;
- Reduction of open hours;
- Cancellation of all programs, special events, and meeting room reservations;
- Reallocation of employee responsibilities and shift/schedule changes to provide coverage during open hours;

If the Library is open, employees are expected to report to work on time as scheduled, excluding any excused absences following the established Personnel policy. In the event of closure, employees may be compensated for their regularly scheduled hours.

If the Library is closed or hours reduced, employees may be assigned work-at-home tasks to be completed in their compensated hours. When appropriate, work tools (e.g.,

laptops, supplies, etc.) will be checked out to employees by the Library Director or designee for work-at-home assignments. Failure to complete work-at-home assignments without a qualifying reason (e.g., illness, FMLA, etc.) will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with established performance protocols.

The Library may compensate an employee for their regularly scheduled hours if they are unable to work due to:

- contracting the disease;
- are required to care for a family member with the disease;
- receiving a mandated or doctor-directed self-quarantine and are unable to work remotely.

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 pending approval by the Library Director.

Communication

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

- Notify staff, trustees, and Friends board members, 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 --both print and digital (eSign) for updating patrons inside the library
- Notify local media and other government entities as deemed necessary
- Change voicemail messaging

Prioritization of Services

Priority will be given to the following essential services:

- Information services for the public, online (virtual) and in-person when possible;
- Payroll;

- Accounts Payable;
- Facility Maintenance.

In the case of reduced staffing or reduced hours of operation, the Library Director or designee will prioritize service-related tasks and assign the daily work plan to staff.

Employee Absences

Hooksett Library Personnel Policy outlines the usage of regular sick, holiday and vacation. 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 and Precautions

If recommended by local, state or federal health officials, Library staff will follow suggestions and directions to implement social distancing within the Library buildings. The Library may require patrons wear masks when entering the building or receiving in-person services. Patrons unable to wear a mask will be provided with alternative services such as curbside pickup of library materials, virtual browsing of in-library materials, virtual computer support and other services developed as needed.

The Hooksett Library Director or designee is authorized by the Trustees of the Hooksett Library to take any measures up to and including closing the library, at his or her discretion, for violations of the Trustees' rules regarding compliance with COVID 19 safety rules.

Additional Cleaning Measures

During the epidemic/pandemic, staff and custodians will implement additional cleaning measures within all areas of the library. The Library will follow the CDC guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting as cited in the [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes | US EPA](#).

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 Board of Trustees or their designee.

Amendment 08/18/20: The Library may require patrons wear masks when entering the building or receiving in-person services. Patrons unable to wear a mask will be provided with alternative services such as curbside pickup of library materials, virtual browsing of in-library materials, virtual computer support and other services developed as needed.

Amendment 09/15/20: The Hooksett Library Director or designee is authorized by the Trustees of the Hooksett Library to take any measures up to and including closing the library, at his or her discretion, for violations of the Trustees' rules regarding compliance with COVID 19 safety rules.