

Putnam County Public Library  
Epidemic/Pandemic Policy  
*Adopted October 2020*

**Purpose:**

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

The Putnam County Public Library (PCPL) should plan for staff being unable to report to work in the event of a serious infectious disease outbreak or other public health emergency. During such an event, organizations may be required to take measures to help slow the spread of illness. It is important to ensure that core business activities of PCPL can be maintained with limited staff and reduced hours as determined by the Library Director with input from the library board.

**Library Closure:**

PCPL 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 Putnam County Health Department, Indiana State Department of Health or other local government officials
- B. A library employee has been positively diagnosed
- C. At the direction of the Library Board of Trustees
- D. At the discretion of the Library Director

In addition, PCPL 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 a contagion. In the event of 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:
  - be allowed to work inside the building, even if building is closed to the public
  - be assigned to provide services to patrons in newly determined ways
  - be assigned to clean the building

**Compensation and Leave during an Epidemic/Pandemic**

The Library will follow all pertinent federal and state laws regarding additional leave or benefits during an epidemic or pandemic. 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:

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

#### Employee Absences

The PCPL Employee Handbook and Human Resources policies outline regular procedures regarding paid time off (PTO). These procedures 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.

#### Safety Recommendations

Library staff members will be expected to follow all safety precautions/procedures recommended by local, state or federal health officials while on library grounds.

#### 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 PCPL Board President or a board designee appointed by the PCPL Board President.