

East Kingston Public Library Community Health & Safety Policy and Procedure

I: Purpose

To establish the protocol to be used in response to local or regional public health or infection concerns, in response to a local safety concern, as well as to outline emergency closing procedures.

In the cases of a local public health or safety concern, such as but not limited to inclement weather or an infectious outbreak, the library may reduce hours and/or adjust available services as needed at the discretion of the Library Director and/or Town emergency management officials.

II: Definitions

Public Health Concern: For the purpose of this policy, Public Health Concern refers to the occurrence of more cases of disease, injury, or other health condition than expected in a given area or among a specific group of persons during a specific period. Usually, the cases are presumed to have a common cause or to be related to one another in some way. (As defined at CDC.gov, <https://www.cdc.gov/csels/dsepd/ss1978/glossary.html>)

Public Safety Concern: For the purpose of this policy, Public Safety Concern refers to any internal/external event or force which may be injurious to the safety and health of the community or a significant subset of the community. Examples include but are not limited to weather related events, or threats/acts of violence or bodily harm at the library and/or in local schools.

****See Appendix for more examples of possible scenarios****

Appropriate Staffing Level: For the purpose of this policy, appropriate staffing level refers to the minimum number of qualified staff necessary to provide service safely and efficiently, as determined by the Library Director or their designee.

III: Library Closure

Public Health Mandate

The East Kingston Public Library will close for any public health concern in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by public health or government officials on the local, county, or state level.

Public Safety Mandate

The East Kingston Public Library will close for any public safety concern in the event of a mandate order or recommendation for closure issued by law enforcement, emergency management, government officials on the local, county, or state level, Library Director, or Board of Trustees.

Discretionary Service Level Changes

Approved February 2023

At the discretion of the Library Director, the Library may close, reduce its operating hours, or limit services temporarily in the event that there is not sufficient staff to maintain appropriate staffing levels or **if unable to provide adequate health and/or safety measures for the concern at hand.**

If a discretionary service level change is required in response to a public health or safety concern, all library programs, special events, meetings will be cancelled.

In the event of closure or reduction in operating hours, the Library Director or designee will maintain communication with staff, Library Board of Trustees, and the Town Administration.

IV: Closing Procedure

In the event of closure necessitated by a public health or safety concern, effective communication about any reduction in services or open hours must be announced in a timely manner. Library staff should follow the normal procedure used for any unexpected closure/program cancellation. The following steps should occur:

- Library Director assesses the public health/safety concern with guidance from local or state government or law officials
- Director notifies the Board of Trustee Chairperson or members
- Building is secured and “Closed” sign posted on door
- Notice of Closing posted on website, social media, and anywhere else that may seem necessary.

In the absence of the Library Director, the Assistant Director or staff member with seniority assesses the emergency, and will consult with the Board of Trustees Chairperson or member to make the determination to close the library in place of the director.

V: Staffing/Pay

All full time employees scheduled to work during hours when the library closes unexpectedly shall receive their normal day’s pay, whether or not the employee has already reported to work. It is expected that full time employees in this station will work from home if at all possible.

All part time employees scheduled to work during hours when the library closes unexpectedly shall receive pay for the time worked, but in any case, a minimum of two hours pay, if they have already reported for work. If the Library closes prior to the part time employee reporting for work, then they will not be paid.

Appendix

Possible Scenarios Causing Library Closure:

- No electricity and/or the building is unsafe
- Parking lot and/or sidewalk has not been cleared of snow or ice before and during scheduled open hours
- Inclement weather causing unsafe conditions for staff and patrons
- Fire, flooding or other building disaster
- Robbery or assault of library staff or patrons
- Mechanical problems causing a lack of serviceable bathrooms for the public and staff
- If the library heating or cooling systems fail, causing the temperatures in the library to go below 55 or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, for an extended length of time
- Possible outbreak - for reference, Coronavirus 2020
- Lack of staffing (due to illness or otherwise)