



**TOWN OF BEDFORD**  
97 MCMAHON ROAD  
BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

## **Bedford Public Schools Update on COVID-19**

**April 21, 2020**

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Dear Families, Faculty and Staff,

In today's update is news about the governor's decision to keep schools closed through the end of the school year. More information will follow.

Jon Sills  
Superintendent of Schools

The Bedford COVID-19 Task Force met Tuesday, April 21, 2020 to review the latest guidance from the Department of Public Health (DPH), the office of Governor Charlie Baker, and Town Legal Counsel.

The COVID-19 Task Force is comprised of the following Town officials:

*Sarah Stanton, Town Manager*  
*Jon Sills, Superintendent of Schools*  
*Heidi Porter, Director of Health and Human Services*  
*Robert Bongiorno, Police Chief*  
*David Grunes, Fire Chief*  
*Taissir Alani, Facilities Director*

### Current Case Report

As of today, April 21, 2020, there have been a total of ninety-five (95) positive cases of COVID-19 and three (3) deaths reported to the Town of Bedford Board of Health by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH). The total case number includes residents of the Town of Bedford, including but not limited to those in: single-family homes, apartments, the VA campus, Hanscom Air Force Base, special needs group homes and any and all other larger assisted living/care facilities in Bedford as reported to us by the MA DPH.

Please note, in part to alleviate the community concern, the VA does do a daily report of their numbers, which includes inpatients, outpatients and staff, many of whom do not call Bedford home. The information can be found here: <https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/Healthcare/COVID19NationalSummary>

Sixteen (16) of the total Bedford cases to date have already recovered and have come off of isolation and there is currently zero (0) known Person Under Investigation. There are other individuals impacted by COVID-19 in the community that have not sought medical attention, and/or have not been tested and are isolating at home regardless. Those individuals do not appear on the surveillance reports the Town receives from the MA DPH. Many of the identified close contacts of some of the Bedford cases never exhibited symptoms, have completed their required quarantine period and have been released from quarantine by the Board of Health.

By all accounts, the country, state and Town of Bedford are on the brink of a surge in cases. In conjunction with this, the MA Department of Public Health is promoting a program for long term care facilities to do wide-scale testing of staff and residents, due to the vulnerability of the population these facilities serve. Given the presence of these types of facilities in Bedford, there is a possibility that this testing will result in an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 residents in Bedford in the coming days and weeks. The Board of Health will continue to work with these facilities to ensure proper isolation of any impacted residents or staff while they receive any necessary treatment and will continue to promote enforcement of use of proper personal protection and hand hygiene.

To continue to make strides towards slowing the spread of COVID-19, it is imperative to strictly adhere to all the proper personal hygiene and protective practices that have been presented and encouraged since the start of this outbreak: abide by social distancing, stay home except for necessary, essential and allowable errands, don't touch your face, engage in frequent handwashing, use sanitizer, regularly sanitize common-touch surfaces and wear a face covering when you must go out in public. Thank you for your anticipated support and diligence in taking the necessary precautions to slow the spread.

For previous updates on COVID-19, please review the COVID-19 News and Announcements Page at on the Town website ([www.bedfordma.gov](http://www.bedfordma.gov)).

### School Update

Today, April 21, 2020, Governor Baker announced that schools would remain closed until the end of the year. While the District has been discussing the likelihood of this decision during the past several weeks, we will now focus our attention on this new reality relative to its implications for remote learning, graduation, etc. As well, in the superintendents' weekly chat with the Commissioner this morning; he shared that a clarification of the guidelines for the last day of school calculation will be coming out at the end of this week.

While parents are aware of how teachers are providing remote learning to their children, we have received questions about how we are operating as a district during this time. Please know that all of our efforts are being planned, coordinated and evaluated on a regular basis via virtual meetings and daily interactions over email, Zoom and the telephone. As well, District leadership coordinates with Town leadership daily.

The district leadership team, (superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of finance, director of special education, director of counseling, director of technology and library media, the METCO director, and all four principals), meets weekly and usually twice a week. The following virtual meetings occur weekly as well:

- Each principal meets with his or her leadership team
- Each principal meets with his or her entire faculty
- The assistant superintendent meets with all of the curriculum leaders in the district.
- The special education director meets with her program administrators

### Town Update

Today, in addition to announcing the closures of public and private schools for the remainder of the school year, the Governor also extended the closure of non-essential childcare facilities until June 29, 2020. As a result, the

Kids Club will remain closed until June 29, 2020. Additionally, in light of this information, all spring recreation programs will be cancelled, and all fields and play structures will remain closed until further notice. For those who have signed up for recreation programming, youth or adult, refunds will be issued over the next several weeks.

### General Guidance

It is important to remember that while the COVID-19 outbreak is evolving quickly, influenza is still circulating in the area. Many of the things you do to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect you against COVID-19:

- Comply with the Governor's Stay at Home Order and non-quarantined residents should only leave the house for grocery shopping, doctor's appointments or some socially distanced fresh air. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- While fresh air and exercise are important components to staying healthy during the COVID-19 epidemic, please be mindful that if you are using the Minuteman Bikeway or the Bedford Trails, it is important to maintain social distancing of 6 feet from others and you are encouraged to cover your face when out in public.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs, countertops, cell phone, television remote, computers, sink faucets, etc.) with household cleaning spray or disinfecting wipes.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Employ social distancing and keep 6 feet apart from others if you are not otherwise required to be in quarantine and must go out.
- For those at home, a little moderate exercise or meditation goes a long way. Get up, stretch, and maybe have a short walk.

The best source of guidance and recommendations is the DPH website: [www.mass.gov/covid19](https://www.mass.gov/covid19)

Alternatively, if you are without internet capabilities, please call the State hotline: 2-1-1.