



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

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

**April 9, 2020**

If you need this document translated, please call your child's school principal - Si necesita este documento traducido, por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo - Se você precisa este documento traduzido, entre em contato com a escola do seu filho - Si vous avez besoin de traduire ce document, s'il vous plaît contacter l'école de votre enfant - 如果你需要这份文件翻译，请联系您的孩子的学校 - إذا كنت تحتاج/تحتاجين إلى ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلاتك

The Bedford COVID-19 Task Force met Wednesday, April 9, 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*

### Active Cases

As of today, April 9, 2020, there have been a total of forty (40) positive cases of COVID-19 in Bedford reported to the Town of Bedford Board of Health by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH). This total case number includes residents of the Town of Bedford, Hanscom Air Force Base and the Bedford Veteran's Administration (VA) Campus as reported to us by the MA DPH. This increase over yesterday's numbers is a reflection of the recent testing done of residents at the Bedford VA which resulted in thirteen (13) new cases reported today from that facility alone.

The Bedford VA reports that the impacted Veterans are being cared for in respiratory isolation in the new community living center ward on the Bedford Campus established specifically for treatment of patients with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis and any impacted staff are at home in isolation. The VA reports that the new ward has staff dedicated exclusively to the patients housed there, following the operational guidelines of both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Veterans Health Administration. The Bedford VA is conducting the close-contact tracing and surveillance of COVID-19 positive residents in their care.

Eight (8) of the total Bedford cases have already recovered and have come off of isolation and there is currently one (1) 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.

The Board of Health continues to do the appropriate follow-up and outreach to those residents and close contacts known to us. 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.

Social distancing, staying home except for necessary, essential and allowable errands, frequent handwashing, use of sanitizer, regular sanitizing of common-touch surfaces and wearing a face covering when you must go out in public, are all the ways we can slow the spread of COVID-19. Although a difficult request around the religious holidays that are upon us, the Bedford Board of Health asks all residents to be respectful of each other and our desire to stem the growth of this epidemic by staying home and not gathering outside of your immediate households for any ceremonies or celebrations in the coming days. No public religious services shall be held or attended.

### Town Update

#### **Food Bank Hours-Tomorrow, April, 10, 2020 1-4 PM at JGMS.**

To assist and support Bedford residents in need, the Town of Bedford has established a temporary food bank at John Glenn Middle School (JGMS).

This week, the Food Bank will be held Friday, April 9, 2020 from 1-4 PM at John Glenn Middle School. As a reminder, the Food Bank is for the following groups: school-aged children/families of the Bedford Public Schools in need of food support at this time (including, but not limited to, students currently on free or reduced breakfast and lunch), previously identified vulnerable seniors and veterans, and existing clients of the Bedford Food Pantry. For more information on the Food Bank, please visit [www.bedfordma.gov/bedfordfoodbank](http://www.bedfordma.gov/bedfordfoodbank).

When picking up food from our drive through food bank at JGMS on Fridays, Town and School officials will now be asking if you have a child in the Bedford public schools and, if so, what the child /children's name(s) is/are. This is not specific to families on free or reduced lunch status, but pertains to any family of school-age children receiving food. This is necessary for the District to receive federal reimbursement for a substantial portion of the meals' cost.

There will be a separate food bank delivery system for homebound seniors and disabled residents. If you are homebound resident, and in need of food assistance, please e-mail [bedfordfoodbank@bedfordma.gov](mailto:bedfordfoodbank@bedfordma.gov).

#### **Stay Home, Stay Safe and Slow the Spread of COVID-19**

The Board of Health encourages Bedford residents to take actions to control the rate of spread of COVID-19 and lessen the height of the case curve and subsequent impact on our healthcare system. As a reminder, the following are some ways you can help:

#### **Comply with the Stay at Home Advisory**

Staying home means:

- Only leave home for essential errands such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy. When you do leave home, practice social distancing by staying 6 feet away from others.
- If you are at high-risk, you should ask about special hours at your local pharmacy or grocery store for high risk individuals.
- When going to the pharmacy ask if you can fill your prescriptions for 90 days if possible; for some medications this is not allowed. If you are at high-risk, try to use a mail-order service.
- You can still go to the gas station, order and pick up take-out food, and receive deliveries.

- You can still go outside to get fresh air, but make sure you practice social distancing and avoid touching surfaces frequently touched by others. Don't participate in close contact activities such as pick-up sports games.
- Use remote modes of communication like phone or video chat instead of visiting friends or family. Refrain from visiting nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, or other residential care settings.
- Non-essential medical care like eye exams, teeth cleaning, and elective procedures must be rescheduled.
- If possible, health care visits should be done remotely.
- Parents should not have play dates for children

Taking these steps helps prevent the spread of the virus, helps preserve our hospital capacity for very ill patients, and preserves our supply of PPE (personal protective equipment) so critically needed by our medical workers.

### **Wear a Face Covering**

We now know from recent studies that a significant portion of individuals with coronavirus lack symptoms ("asymptomatic") and that even those who eventually develop symptoms ("pre-symptomatic") can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity—for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing—even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. In light of this new evidence, the CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

### **Maintain Social Distancing**

It is critical to emphasize that maintaining 6-feet social distancing remains important to slowing the spread of the virus. So, stay at least six feet away from anyone who is not a household member. The following actions are NOT considered social distancing: going for a walk with one of your close friends and talking while two feet apart on the sidewalk, playing pickup games or any group sport or activity, hanging out and talking in a close group in a parking lot or at the beach, or having friends over to your house.

We are all depending on each other to take these actions seriously and consistently now to Slow the Spread.

### **Outlets for stress and resources for coping during COVID-19**

It is natural to experience anxiety during stressful events like the current worldwide coronavirus pandemic. Whether it's the fear of contracting COVID-19, worries about loved ones, financial difficulties, school schedules, or a myriad of related challenges and concerns, anger, anxiety, depression and fear are all typical responses to stressful and uncertain situations.

The following are some suggestions and resources on how to cope:

- Practice self-care: Find ways to relax and unwind. Free online yoga classes are one option to take care of your mind and body, or try listening to a relaxing playlist.
- Reach out: Call and check on others' emotional and physical well-being. Share what you are experiencing. If you have the capability, video chat with friends and loved ones who live outside your household. Consider playing a game together via Zoom or FaceTime or watch a Netflix movie together while chatting online.
- Keep your mind occupied: Try not to ruminate on fear, anger or worry. Sometimes scheduling a deliberate time in the day for dedicated worrying can help compartmentalize the worry. Try to keep it brief, for example 10 minutes, twice a day. Mindfulness is an effective practice to help develop inner calm and resilience. Meditation and other compatible Apps downloaded on portable devices, such as

smart phones and tablets, can provide an ideal platform for stress relief. Or maybe you'd like to take a virtual walk through a museum, zoo or theme park for a change of scenery.

**Maintain your health:** Try to eat right, get fresh air and sunshine appropriately distanced from others, stay hydrated and build in some physical activity, even if it's just walking around your block, yard or living room. Here is a list of free fitness classes you can join from your living room.

**Be a good steward of public health:** Be socially aware and responsible to minimize and mitigate exposure by following social distancing and other guidelines offered by the Town of Bedford and the CDC.

### General Guidance

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)).

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.

- 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](http://www.mass.gov/covid19)

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

You can also the Town of Bedford website for local updates and actions: [www.bedfordma.gov](http://www.bedfordma.gov)

Town and School officials, and the Bedford Health Department, remain in continuous communication about this issue, and further updates will be provided to the community as we receive them.