



TOWN OF BEDFORD
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BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

COVID Update

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Friday, October 23, 2020

Dear parents, caregivers, and guardians:

RE: 3 New positive COVID-19 cases at BHS - 9 Pending Cases - Close Contacts being Notified
New and recent cases related to gatherings outside of the school environment

Sadly, we were informed today that a number of school community members (i.e., student or staff) at Bedford High School have been diagnosed with confirmed cases of COVID-19. This is of course very disappointing news. We have learned that there have been multiple gatherings that have occurred outside of the high school but have involved Bedford High School students and families.

These cases involve gatherings where safety precautions were not taken by both adults and students to protect against the spread of COVID. Since October 1, 2020 there have been 9 COVID-19 positive cases at the high school among students. Of those cases, 4 have become positive since October 21, 2020. Since contract tracing is still being conducted, there may be more pending positive cases or close contacts identified that result from the gatherings. Currently, 15 high school students are under quarantine.

Upon receipt of the positive reports, the Bedford school health personnel in collaboration with the Bedford Board of Health immediately began case investigations. The first step in a school case investigation is to determine whether or not the positive case attended school during the infectious period. According to MA Department of Public Health (MDPH) guidelines, the infectious period for COVID-19 is two days prior to becoming symptomatic or, if asymptomatic, two days prior to testing.

The investigation to date has revealed that these COVID-19 positive school community members may have been present at Bedford High School during their infectious period, and close contacts are being identified among the school community in this situation. All close contacts will be identified and instructed to quarantine for 14 days after the last exposure to the person who tested positive, regardless of a test result. We will continue to monitor this situation over the weekend and decide if the number of positive cases and close contacts requires Bedford High School to move to an ALL REMOTE model for the 14-day quarantine period.

The Board of Health is currently awaiting receipt of COVID-19 testing results for numerous close contacts of the aforementioned individuals. This data will enable us to determine how widespread the situation is at this time. Based on the analytical results of these pending tests, I am letting you know that it is very possible that we may need to close Bedford High School and transition from the Hybrid Model to the Full Remote Model. I will make this decision in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Director, Town Manager, and the Bedford School Committee and will communicate to the community Sunday, October

25, 2020. If this were to happen, BHS would be closed from Monday, October 26, 2020 and reopen on Monday, November 9, 2020.

Please note that state guidelines do not allow high school athletics to take place while the school is in the Full Remote Model. Therefore, if we go to the all remote model there would be no athletic activities through at least Sunday, November 8th.

These cases are linked to Bedford High School students. The Davis Elementary School, the Job Lane Elementary School, and the John Glenn Middle School will remain in the Hybrid Model.

Collectively we agree that this action may need to be taken as we take the most prudent course of action given what has taken place. After the intensity of hard work and planning that has been done to be able to successfully start school with students in a hybrid model, we are profoundly disappointed to be considering the transition to our full remote model at BHS.

When we brought students back to school we were able to do so by assuring our community that we have done our best to ensure safety in school for all of them and our staff. During this pandemic, it is important to reaffirm that as hard as we have been working, a safe continuation of in-person school cannot be done without everyone in the community doing their part to practice measures known to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Every person, student or staff, who comes to school, must be able to trust every other person coming to school is doing what they can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to protect themselves and every other person. If one person assumes risky behavior upon themselves, it is not fair or safe to bring that risk upon others in a shared community. We urge everyone to limit your social gatherings and take all the necessary precautions we have all been doing throughout the pandemic. As you know our community has recently seen an uptick in cases causing us to go from Green to Yellow on the Massachusetts COVID-19 map [MA COVID Map](#).

We are deeply sorry to be considering this abrupt disruption to your and our plans. However, if we want to be able to continue to have our children in school and to enjoy school sports, we must come together as a community to continue to take the necessary precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

We have planned for such contingencies since the start of school and are very much looking forward to having our high school students back in school when it is determined it is safe to do so. We need your help, diligence, and cooperation in making this a possibility. Principal Galante will send additional information to families and staff on Sunday if we change to our All Remote model.

As always, thank you for your patience, your participation, and your continued commitment to our schools.

Wishing you continued health,

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad, Superintendent of Bedford Public Schools
Dan Brosgol, Chair, Bedford School Committee
Sarah Stanton, Bedford Town Manager
Heidi Porter, Bedford Health and Human Services Director

Resources/Questions

For some Frequently Asked Questions on how the Bedford Board of Health responds to COVID-19 positive cases and the contact tracing protocols, please navigate to: <https://www.bedfordma.gov/bedford-board-of-health/files/responding-to-positive-cases-of-covid-19-and-contact-tracing-faq>

Parents should be aware of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19. If you believe you or your child may have symptoms of Covid-19 , you can check your symptoms at: https://www.buoyhealth.com/symptom-checker/?configuration=ma_covid&concern=coronavirus

Anyone exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 should avoid contact with others and contact their healthcare provider and/or get a molecular diagnostic Covid-19 test. For more information on COVID-19 symptoms and free testing sites, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing#where-can-get-a-test?-.>

You can also find a map of testing sites at:

<https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eba3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13>.

Please contact your school nurse immediately should you or someone in your home begin to show symptoms