



Town of Bedford

97 McMahon Road

Bedfordps.org

Superintendent Update

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 dos seus filhos - 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

Friday, December 18, 2020

Hello Bedford School Community,

I hope that everyone stayed safe during our first snow day of the school year. I want to assure the students that I did not consult the website [Snow Day Calculator](#). Instead I relied on the expert analysis of David Manugian, our Director of Public Works, forecasts from Precision Weather Forecasting and the National Weather Service in Norton, MA. Thank you to the Department of Public Works and the Facilities Department for getting us ready for school on Friday morning.

DPH Vaccine Update

On Monday we had the opportunity to hear from Marylou Sudders the Secretary of Health and Human Services about the distribution of COVID vaccine. Currently the state is receiving doses from Pfizer. Secretary Sudders said that with the free voluntary vaccination program beginning right away that, "We are not out of the woods, but I do have hope." She went on to reiterate much of what Governor Baker had said in his press conference. She reiterated that educators would be in Phase II of the vaccination roll out. She also described the timeline for the vaccination process. The Pfizer vaccination is a two dose process with the doses needing to be three weeks apart. She also indicated that full protection was not achieved for an additional six weeks. For more information please visit [MA Vaccine Info](#)

Thinking about Travel

As we think about the upcoming vacation it is extremely important that we all follow Governor Baker's August 1, 2020. [MA COVID-19 Travel Order](#). Our ability to remain in the hybrid learning

model is dependent on all of us staying home and staying safe. Please rethink any plans to travel and do not travel out of state to a state with a higher incident rate.

The travel guidance states that all travelers to high risk states have to quarantine for 14 days unless they have a negative COVID-19 test. The guidance states that a negative result from an antigen test must be confirmed by a negative result from an FDA EUA-approved molecular (PCR) SARS-CoV2 test, on a sample obtained 72 hours or less prior to arrival in Massachusetts. So as to prevent delay in returning to school, I recommend the PCR as the gold standard. The travel order also stipulates that testing for children, 10 years and younger, who are traveling with an adult from their household is not required. In the upcoming holiday period, some staff members and families may travel out of state and will be required to follow the MA Travel Order.

Therefore, all Massachusetts residents are discouraged from traveling to high risk states. To see the list go to [MA COVID-19 Travel Order](#). If you have to travel to a High Risk Area or participate in foreign travel, Gov. Baker's Travel Order requires that all returning travelers must be quarantined upon return to MA, unless you present evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test on your return. The COVID-19 PCR test must be done either within 72 hours of your return to MA, or when you get home.

Remember that testing for children, 10 years and younger, who are traveling with an adult(s) from their household is not required, as long as the adult(s) is tested and if found to be negative. Quarantine is not necessary in this case. Please note that this travel order applies to all of us. We desperately need everyone to comply with the travel requirements as our margins for continuing in our hybrid model are razor thin. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Preparing for Break

Please keep students in class next week so that our remote students do not experience larger than normal class sizes. It is important that we remain in our Cohorts and not impinge on the Cohort D families unnecessarily. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

COVID-19 Testing Program

On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, the Town [announced](#) the launch of a free community COVID-19 testing program for Bedford residents ages 4 and older. The testing program began on Saturday, December 12, 2020, and is anticipated to take place each weekend for the remainder of the month. The Town has received a great deal of enthusiastic feedback about this opportunity. To register for an upcoming date Bedford Residents can use the following link. [Bedford COVID-19 Testing Sign Up](#)

Community COVID-19 Dashboard

The Bedford Board of Health Bedford COVID-19 Dashboard contains data related to case counts, active/recovered cases, case demographics and school case data. The majority of the data on the Dashboard will be updated Monday through Friday, with some data tables and

charts updated on a weekly basis. We invite you to view the new dashboard here:

www.bedfordma.gov/covid-stats

Board of Health

I understand that there are some questions about our COVID-19 decision making as it relates to the Board of Health. Let me say that I am sorry for any confusion caused by our use of the term “The Board of Health” to mean the Director and staff of the Department of Health and Human Services. We continue to have a collaborative relationship with the Department of Health and Human Services. While much of the conversation is beyond my or the School Committee’s purview I am open to participating in a community forum so that everyone can get answers to their COVID-19 related questions

Flu Shot Reminder

Thank you to all parents, families, and caregivers who have already sent in the documentation that their child has received the 2020 flu vaccine. As you know, the Flu Vaccine is required for all students in Massachusetts and must be completed and reported by December 31, 2020. It does not matter whether your child is hybrid or remote, the requirement is for all students. The Massachusetts guidance around the vaccine requirement can be found [here](#). If your child has not yet received the flu vaccine please be in touch with the school nurse of your child’s school so that we can comply with the new regulation.

Teaching Assistants, Educational Assistants and Building Substitutes Needed

If you would be interested in joining the Bedford Public Schools as a teaching assistant, an educational assistant, or a building based substitute please check out our openings on our website at [BPS HR Website](#) and thank you!

Bedford Fire Department Toy Drive

The Bedford Fire Department will be hosting a toy drive in the back parking lot at Bedford High School for the next two Sundays. Donations of new unwrapped toys can be made by driving up to and dropping items off in the collection box. The box will be open from 10:00 until 2:00 Sunday, December 20.

Town and School Staff Support Webinar Offered

On Wednesday, December 16th from 2-3 pm, the Bedford Health and Human Services Department and Bedford Public Schools Counseling Department are sponsoring a support webinar for town and school staff with Jon Mattleman, a mental health counselor and presenter for over 35 years. Jon will present “Supporting Families Is Rewarding...And So Challenging During COVID-19. Understanding our new norms and supporting ourselves during the COVID-19.” Recognizing that the challenges that families face during these challenging times are complex, and often exhausting, Jon’s work is grounded in delivering tools and techniques that can be implemented in real time. Please set the time aside to join us for this informative presentation for Town of Bedford Staff and Bedford Public Schools Staff with a Q&A period at the end. Please register by navigating to: <https://event.webinarjam.com/register/172/q7m5rswr>

Technology

If you have questions about this or any other technology issue or concerns please contact tech_support@bedfordps.org

Resources for Families

The BPS Counseling Department has put together a list of resources for families ahead of the holiday season. If you, your child, or anyone in your family is in need of services over the upcoming vacation please contact the service providers listed. You are always encouraged to call the counseling department of your child's school for assistance while school is in session.

Counseling Services

For **non-emergency services** contact Social Worker Christopher Bang in the Bedford Youth and Family Services Department at 781-918-4328 or email at cbang@bedfordma.gov.

In case of a **mental health emergency** or crisis, please go to your local emergency room, or in Bedford please contact the [Advocates](#) at (800) 540-5806 or at (800) 640-5432 for 24-hour Crisis Support. In Boston please contact Best Teams at 617-884-4357. For families on the Hanscom Air Force Base please contact the HAFB Mental Health Clinic 781-225-6392 (counseling support not crisis response) or the Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741. If you are anxious about coronavirus please text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

Another resource is HandholdMA.org which is a new website designed for parents who are worried about their children's mental health. The website, created by a team of mental health and child development experts in partnership with parents who have "been there," was designed for parents of school-aged children in Massachusetts. HandholdMA.org was developed with input from individuals representing the diversity of Massachusetts' communities, and is available in six languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese.

Food Needs

The Bedford Food Bank currently operates out of the back side of the Town Center Building (yellow building behind Town Hall) at 12 Mudge Way on the Town Campus. This is the side with the parking lot, and is the main entrance to the Council on Aging, NOT the entrance at the rotary. For questions about the food bank please email bedfordfoodbank@bedfordma.gov or call 781-275-7727. The schedule for the Town Center Food Bank is Thursdays from 4:00 - 5:30 pm.

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

Wishing you continued health,

Sincerely,

Philip Conrad

Superintendent