



# TOWN OF BEDFORD

97 MCMAHON ROAD  
BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

## Coronavirus COVID-19 Information

March 10, 2020

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### **Town of Bedford Announces First Presumptive Positive COVID-19 Case and Updates on Town/School Response**

The Bedford Health Department, the Town Manager, and the School Superintendent would like to provide an update on the status of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in Bedford. We recognize that these are trying times. Our thoughts are particularly focused on our family members, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who are of a vulnerable age, or who themselves or loved ones close to them have an underlying condition that puts them at risk.

As previously reported, the Town was notified by the Department of Public Health (DPH) late Saturday, March 7, 2020 that a Bedford resident who attended a Biogen employee conference developed symptoms related to COVID-19. The impacted residents' child attends Bedford High School, and the student, as well as other household family members, were quarantined. In immediate response, all public buildings, including Bedford High School, were sanitized and disinfected.

At 5:30 PM this evening, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) notified Bedford Town Officials that the resident test results were presumptive positive. As a result of this status change, the resident will now enter isolation at his residence. His family will remain in quarantine. The student is currently not symptomatic.

The Bedford presumptive positive case was included in the cases announced by state public health officials during Governor Baker's press conference this afternoon. In Massachusetts, as of today, 1 case of COVID-19 have been confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and 91 cases have been deemed presumptive positive, with 41 of said presumptive positive cases based in Middlesex County. The Massachusetts State Public Health Lab's results are considered "presumptive positive" and the specimens will now be sent to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for final confirmation.

All individuals who are considered close contacts of this Bedford resident are being notified by public health officials and will be given appropriate instructions.

Additionally, a Town Hall staff member has notified Town officials that they have had direct contact with a presumptive positive person while attending a professional conference last week. In an abundance of caution, the staff member has been directed by Town Public Health officials to self-quarantine, and await further guidance from their primary care provider, the applicable local Board of Health and the Department of Public Health. The staff member is currently not symptomatic, and as such, has not been tested for COVID-19.

Prior to this recent news, the Town/School COVID-19 task force made the following decisions in response to the public health emergency declared today by Governor Baker:

- All non-essential Town and School meetings will be postponed, cancelled and/or structured for social or remote distancing until further notice. Further clarification will be provided over the next 24 hours of what public meetings are considered essential. Please note, the Office of Attorney General has not relaxed the restrictions associated with the Open Meeting Law. If there are any changes regarding quorum requirements, or remote participation, that information will be shared.
- The Wednesday, March 11, 2020 Bedford High School performance of Legally Blonde is cancelled. Large audience performances will be postponed until late May. In the meantime, the School department will provide a teacher audience for the musical, and is exploring the possibility of one other small audience showing that would allow for social distancing. This decision was not taken lightly, given the incredible hard work of the students, director, and other adults have put in to preparing. We will update on the status of future performance within the next 24 hours.
- The School Department will cancel the EdCamp, and use the time for teachers to prepare for the possibility of using remote learning should students need to be quarantined, or should school close if the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education allows remote schooling to count as time on learning.
- The School Department will postpone the Tenacity Challenge, which would have brought over 200 high school students and 75 adults together for a day of competition.
- Sports banquets will be cancelled due to close contact, and food.
- Unless the MIAA cancels interscholastic sports, the schools will hold spring try-outs.
- The School Department will structure the community and faculty forums for the superintendent search (spread out to rooms, live-stream) to mitigate contact. Details to follow.

In advance of the municipal election, Saturday, March 14, procedures have been put in place to ensure the safety of residents, and election officials. The municipal election is not considered a large gathering. Town Facilities Department staff will be on site at John Glenn Middle School to provide hourly cleaning. Election officials will be provided with personal protective equipment (gloves, sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes).

As the recommended guidance from DPH is to discourage large-group meetings, Town officials are evaluating the ability to hold Annual Town Meeting on March 23. The COVID-19 situation is evolving, and the Town will share information as it becomes available.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has provided the following information for all residents:

DPH strongly advises that anyone who feels ill to remain at home and call their primary care provider to see if they meet the criteria for COVID-19 testing

Although the risk to Massachusetts residents of the novel coronavirus is generally low, the risk for influenza is currently high. Many of the things you do to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect you against other respiratory viruses:

- 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 and countertops) with household cleaning spray or 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.

The best source of guidance and recommendations is the DPH website:

[www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus).

You can also visit:

<https://www.bedfordma.gov/bedford-board-of-health/pages/covid-19-coronavirus>

Town 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.