



TOWN OF BEDFORD
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BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01730

Town of Bedford Update on COVID-19

March 24, 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/طفلتك

The Bedford COVID-19 Task Force met Tuesday, March 23, 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, March 24, 2020, there have been a total of four (4) presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 reported to the Town of Bedford Board of Health by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH). Three (3) of these cases have already recovered and have come off of isolation and quarantine, and there are two (2) People Under Investigation. There are anticipated to be more 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 the original three (3) cases never exhibited symptoms, have completed their required quarantine period and have been released from quarantine by the Board of Health. The Town has also been informed of one (1) presumptive positive case at Hanscom Air Force Base. This individual has been in quarantine since returning from overseas, and has no close contacts that the Town of Bedford is required to follow up on.

Anyone exhibiting flu-like symptoms should immediately self-quarantine, isolate from household members and contact their healthcare provider for further guidance on whether testing is warranted.

School Update

Like Bedford, the vast majority of districts in the Commonwealth, at the behest of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, have taken an enrichment approach during these initial two weeks of school closure. In recognition of the likelihood of an extended closure, however, we are busy at work preparing for more structured learning. Moving forward, we will be guided by the importance of:

- factoring in the anxiety and other impactful conditions that this crisis is imposing upon our students, our educators, and all of our families. While many will welcome more structured learning for their children, others will find the challenge of juggling working from home, caring for an infant, and helping their children to engage in the work difficult
- maintaining and nurturing our connections with our students
- providing work that is meaningful and that mitigates skills regression
- promoting choice, flexibility, engagement and creativity
- reinforcing past learning and, where appropriate, moving students forward

We ask for your patience as we organized this complex process, create reasonable expectations, and ensure equitable access for all.

Town Update

Attention Jordan Garden Gardeners, due to health and safety concerns as it relates to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Town of Bedford has postponed Jordan Garden signups until further notice. If the situation changes, this information will be updated.

Food Bank Update-Hours Change 12-4 PM

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 held Friday, March 27, 2020 from 12-4 PM at John Glenn Middle School. Last week, students and families had a designated time separate from vulnerable seniors/veterans, and existing clients of the Bedford Food Pantry. This week, the aforementioned groups are welcome to come anytime between 12-4 PM.

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.

General Guidance

Town officials continue to urge residents to deploy social distancing, and limit social gathering. In accordance with Governor Baker's Updated Assembly Order issued today, March 23, 2020, gatherings are now limited to no more than 10 people. Town officials continue to urge residents to deploy social distancing, and limit social gathering. Go for a socially distanced walk, order take-out, get your coffee to-go, pick up a gift certificate, and support the local business communities from a distance.

Public health officials strongly discourage activities that promote gathering of people, including play dates, sleepovers, parties, social visits, and other activities where closer contact is the norm.

The Town has stated and continues to advise that those — including municipal employees, residents, or students — who are feeling sick with fever or flu symptoms should stay home, self-quarantine, not report to work or school, and contact their medical provider to determine if they should be tested for COVID-19.

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

It is important to remember that while the COVID-19 outbreak is evolving quickly, influenza is currently circulating in the area. 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.
- Employ social distancing 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

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

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.