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NEW STATE ORDERS RESTRICT INTERACTIONS, PROTECT HIGH RISK GROUPS TO HELP SLOW SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

The Wellesley Health Department, Town, and School officials continue to urge all residents to limit interactions and protect high risk groups to help slow the spread of Coronavirus. The number of identified cases of COVID-19 in Wellesley remains at six: one case confirmed by CDC testing and five presumed positive (which means positive tests that have not yet been confirmed by the CDC).

Today Governor Charlie Baker and state officials issued new orders for all communities in Massachusetts that include:

- **Restricting all gatherings to 25 people or fewer** (this includes civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, sporting events with spectators, concerts, and venues like fitness centers, private clubs, and theatres) from now until April 17
- **Temporarily eliminating all on-premises dining** at bars, restaurants, cafes and other eating establishments until April 17 and allowing take-out options ONLY (grocery stores are exempt from this order to allow people to purchase food and supplies)
- **Closing all public and private schools until Tuesday, April 7.** Complete information is available on the [Mass.gov website](https://www.mass.gov).

Wellesley Public Schools Remote Learning: Information and details on remote learning for students will be provided by Wellesley Public Schools officials beginning tomorrow, Monday, March 16.

Town Elections: Town officials are waiting for further guidance on Local Town Elections planned for Tuesday, March 17. The Town Election is currently scheduled to proceed with [election guidance provided by the CDC](#) and with restrictions to limit voters in polling areas and precautionary measures to protect election workers. Town Hall will be open for absentee voting Monday, March 16 from 8 am to 12 pm.

Closures of Municipal Buildings: In Wellesley, Health Department, Town and School officials have closed all municipal buildings, except Town Hall, closed all schools, and canceled programs and activities. Town Hall will be closed to the public beginning on Wednesday, March 18. Following the Governor's orders, these closings will remain in place according to the dates set by the State.

Playing Fields: The Recreation Department has closed all fields to public use. Residents are asked to exercise, socialize, walk dogs and enjoy other activities by spreading out in small groups and not congregating.

Guidance on Social Distancing: Public Health officials agree that social distancing – keeping people as physically separate as possible – can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and “flatten the curve” to limit

the numbers of cases of infection on any given day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has detailed resources for our community and the Wellesley Health Department is providing guidance provided below to help our community.

1. Hold gatherings only with family members and people you know who aren't sick; keep groups to small numbers; refrain from interacting with vulnerable groups or individuals – grandparents, chronically ill; immune compromised.
2. In public, try to avoid touching things that have been touched by many others – doors knobs, push buttons, credit card machine buttons, etc. If you must use a high touch object, wash hands immediately.
3. Don't go to necessary places like grocery stores during high peak hours; remain at least 6 feet away from others when shopping or in lines; use delivery services if possible.
4. Opt for activities that allow you and family members to keep distances from others. For parents, this means limiting playdates to a few close friends; not allowing students who are out of school to congregate together in large groups, both inside homes and outside.
5. Stay at home as much as possible. Businesses and employers are encouraging people to work from home. Look for ways to stay in contact with others by phone, social media, online meeting platforms and other remote technology.

Specific questions can be submitted online though the [Wellesley Health Department website](#).

We appreciate the cooperation and understanding from everyone in our community as we all work together to continue to work to keep everyone in Wellesley healthy and safe.

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