

TOWN OF STONEHAM

PRESS RELEASE-3/13/20

Town of Stoneham Announces Closures Due to Coronavirus

STONEHAM — Emergency Management Director Matthew Grafton, School Superintendent John Macero and Health Agent John Fralick announce the closure of Stoneham Public Schools for two weeks, as well as the closure of the Council on Aging until further notice, due to the ongoing nationwide novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation.

Officials will be constantly evaluating the health situation in town and will provide frequent updates when necessary. **As of Friday, March 13, there are currently no confirmed or presumptive cases of the virus in Stoneham.**

Stoneham Emergency Management hosted a meeting with senior town officials and stakeholders to discuss the town-wide planning and preparation with regard to the coronavirus situation. The Emergency Management leadership team is meeting on a regular basis, and will meet throughout the weekend to determine next steps and closely monitor the situation.

“We’re taking these steps out of an abundance of caution to protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure their health and wellbeing,” EMD Grafton said. “We want to remind residents, regardless of their risk level, to take the reasonable precautions outlined by the Department of Public Health and CDC so they can protect themselves and those around them.”

Schools

Stoneham Public Schools are closed today, and will remain closed through Friday, March 27. All school activities during that time period are cancelled. All school buildings are closed to the public. School, town and Emergency Management leaders are remaining in close contact, and will reevaluate and assess next steps on a regular basis.

During the closure, all town buildings will undergo deep cleaning and disinfecting.

Stoneham Public School’s breakfast and lunch programs will continue during the closure. Starting Monday, March 16, Grab-and-Go Meals will be provided at Robin Hood Elementary (70 Oak St.) and Stoneham High schools. Pick up at Robin Hood will be in the front entrance lobby, and pick up at the high school will be the Cafe. If picking up at the high school, please use the cafe entrance door by the side parking lot.

Breakfast can be picked up from 8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Lunch will be available from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

All meals will include milk, vegetable, fruit and entree.

Senior Center

The Stoneham Senior Center will close indefinitely. Officials will meet this weekend, and further announcements regarding potential closures will be made as they become available.

“Although all programs and activities have been suspended at the center indefinitely, our staff is available to answer any questions and concerns, or if you need to be connected to resources such as Meals on Wheels, please do not hesitate to give us call,” said Maureen Canova, Director of the town’s Council on Aging.

The center will continue to provide transportation to local grocery stores, medical appointments and pharmacies. The Council can be reached at 781-438-1157 Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Residents are encouraged to be mindful of their senior neighbors’ needs, while also also remaining cognizant of the acute risk COVID-19 poses for seniors.

Library

The Stoneham Library will also be closed until further notice, starting Saturday, March 14. Information regarding library services will be updated as those updates become available.

Moving Forward

The Town of Stoneham is closely following the latest guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [This includes CDC guidance for school administrators.](#)

The COVID-19 situation is very fluid, and new information and guidelines are being posted by the CDC on a regular basis. The CDC offers the following [guidance for how COVID-19 spreads.](#) The virus is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about six feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Public health officials are urging seniors and those with preexisting health conditions to avoid large gatherings, including sporting events, concerts and conferences.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is providing relief to school districts regarding attendance requirements for the rest of the school year in light of the international novel coronavirus situation, and school districts will not have to extend the school year beyond their scheduled 185th school day as a result of the coronavirus.

If anyone displays [symptoms of COVID-19](#), including a fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should not come to work or school and they are advised to contact their primary care physician. According to the [CDC](#), symptoms of the virus appear within 2-14 days of exposure.

The DPH recommends that residents continue with good hygiene practices including:

Practice good hand hygiene! Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds including under your fingernails. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content) can be used when soap and water are not available.

Keep your hands away from your face.

Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with a tissue and discard it immediately. Cough into the sleeve over your elbow instead of your hand. Wash your hands often when coughing and sneezing.

Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

For more information, visit the DPH website by [clicking here](#) and the CDC's website by [clicking here](#).

###