



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: **Stephanie Hawkinson**
shawkinson@wellesleyma.gov**Do Your Part for a Safe School Start!*****Community Campaign Asks Residents to Help Schools Safely Start and Stay In-Person***

October 2, 2020 (Wellesley, MA) – Wellesley Public Schools began in-person learning this week, welcoming K-12 students into buildings for the first time since March. The school district is enlisting the help of all residents, whether they're current students, future students, or were students long ago, to be COVID smart and follow all current restrictions to help ensure that schools start in-person and stay in-person.

The new *Do Your Part* community campaign is a collaborative effort between WPS administrators, Town and Health officials to remind residents that small efforts by our entire community can keep COVID-19 cases low, keep residents safe and healthy, and keep students in school.

“Adhering to strict safety protocols as a community has allowed us to keep our number of new cases and positivity rates very low in Wellesley,” said Dr. David Lussier, WPS Superintendent. “We are very aware of setbacks experienced by schools in neighboring communities when these protocols are not followed. As we move forward, it’s critical that we not become complacent but work together – all of us doing our part – to prevent future outbreaks.”

The requests are simple and straightforward, but the impact is significant.

- **Wear a mask or cloth face covering.** Repeated studies have shown that wearing a mask is the most effective means to prevent person-to-person transmission of the Coronavirus when used with other preventive efforts.
- **Wash your hands frequently.** The Centers for Disease Control continues to stress that washing hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds, or using hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, slows the spread of the virus.
- **Keep a safe distance – 6 feet – from others not in your own household whenever possible, both indoors and outdoors.** Reduce the risk of infection by staying apart from others since the virus is spread by close, prolonged contact. People can have the virus and not have symptoms or can be contagious and spread the virus before symptoms appear.

“All residents – not just school families - need to double-down COVID-19 safety efforts,” said Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director. “Wellesley and the State are moving forward with reopening, more people are back in Town, some fall activities are beginning, and kids want to get together with friends. If everyone does their part and continues to follow the restrictions, our numbers will hopefully stay fairly low. If not, they can climb quickly. We’re also urging residents to be [vaccinated for the flu](#) to help lessen the impact that flu season will have on the ongoing pandemic.”

Look for *Do Your Part* campaign messages throughout Wellesley – on playgrounds and parks, athletic fields, merchant areas, Town trails, the WPS and Town websites, social media pages, and more.

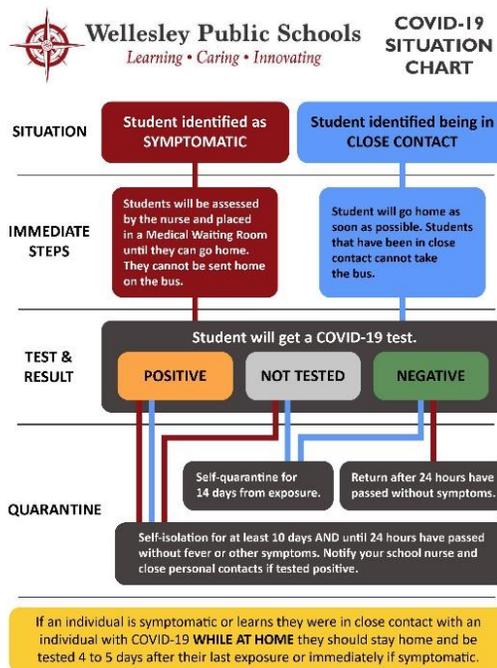


WPS Case Information and Resources

All residents can track Coronavirus cases in Wellesley online using the [Wellesley COVID-19 Information Hub](#). These numbers are updated weekly every Wednesday when the Commonwealth releases the official numbers for all Massachusetts communities.

The COVID-19 Hub includes specific WPS district dashboard metrics that track COVID-19 cases for Wellesley, Norfolk County, and Massachusetts to help school administrators monitor the safety of in-person learning.

“In spite of our efforts, it’s very likely that we will continue to see some level of positive COVID-19 cases after we reopen schools. We are well prepared to respond to and manage these situations,” Dr. Lussier explained. “Our [WPS nursing website](#) has a great deal of information for parents and the community. Our COVID-19 Situation flow chart provides an overview of the steps and timeline that will be followed in response to symptomatic individuals or those in close contact with someone who is symptomatic.”



Complete details on Wellesley Public Schools in-person learning, daily updates and messages, and more are available on the [Wellesley Public Schools website](#).

Weekly COVID-19 briefings, Health Department guidelines, and comprehensive Coronavirus information are available on the [Town of Wellesley website](#).