



TOWN OF WESTBROOK

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear Parent and Legal Guardian of a Westbrook Public School Student,

4/24/2020

I hope this letter finds you and your family in great health and comfort during this extraordinary time. The purpose of this message is to bring awareness of responsibility during this COVID-19 pandemic in regards to Westbrook's young adults, teenagers, and children. COVID-19 infection persists in our community and remains in community transmission mode in the Connecticut. We all must continue to do our part in preventing further spread.

To prevent COVID-19, all Westbrook residents, including our young adults, teenagers, and children, must adhere to social distancing guidelines by maintaining at least 6 feet away from one another, refraining from gathering in groups of more than 5, and by staying home unless absolutely essential to go out. These are simple preventative illness measures that will continue to stop COVID-19 transmission.

As Westbrook Director of Health, residents reach out to my office with valid concerns. Recently, the concerns received, and that I share, address the gathering of our youth in public places and in private residences. These gatherings increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission throughout our community, to your loved ones, and to those at greater risk of suffering severe COVID-19 related health complications. I sincerely request and encourage all parents and legal guardians to ensure their young adult, teenager, or child is adhering to social distancing and physical separation. As the predicted peak of COVID-19 approaches Connecticut, right now is the time to ensure our young adults, teenagers, and children are strictly adhering to the preventative illness guidance set forth. The simplest way to prevent COVID-19 infection is to avoid being exposed to the coronavirus.

Until further notice, refrain from allowing young adults, teenagers, and children from participating in non-essential travel and from visiting friend's homes. Travel out of the house should be strictly limited to essential purposes, such as to retrieve food or medical care. If they must go out for an essential purpose, ensure they keep at least 6 feet of physical separation from others, refrain from gathering in groups of more than 5, and wear a mask or cloth face covering if it's difficult to maintain social distancing in a public setting, unless a medical condition prevents them from safely doing so.

Per Governor Lamont's recent Executive Order 7BB, masks or cloth face coverings are required to be worn in public settings when an individual is unable to maintain a safe social distance of approximately six feet from every other individual. Nothing in Executive Order 7BB shall require the use of a mask or cloth face covering by anyone for whom doing so would be contrary to his or health or safety because of a medical condition, a child in a child care setting, anyone under the age of 2 years, or if the mask or cloth face covering cannot be safely placed on the child's face by the parent or legal guardian. Along with the other preventative illness measures set forth, please ensure your young adult, teenager, or child is wearing a mask or cloth face covering when out in public, such as grocery stores or pharmacies, as social distancing may be difficult to maintain in these public settings.

To learn how to make your own cloth face covering view this instructional YouTube video by the United States Surgeon General: <https://youtu.be/tPx1yqvJgf4>

Additionally, you can view a guided tutorial with questions and answers by the CDC at this website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

The Westbrook Health Department understands this is an extraordinary time in our history, and a time like this may contribute to stress, fear, and anxiety. This can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults, young adults, teenagers, and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and our community stronger.

If your loved one is feeling stressed or uneasy during this time, there are some things you can do to bring comfort:

- Take time to talk with them about COVID-19 basics and reassure them its normal to be feel uneasy about this situation
- Reassure them that they are safe
- Try to keep up with a regular routine, including sleep, exercise, and structured learning
- Have them take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting
- Connect them with friends and family through phone calls, video calls, texting, or email

For information on how to cope with stress, visit this CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/index.html>

Additionally, the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has issued a guide of telephonic and online ways for individuals to get support and stay connected. This guide can be viewed at this website: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DMHAS/COVID-19/Resources/digital-social-connectedness.pdf?la=en>

Finally, the Westbrook Health Department continues to ask all residents to adhere to the simple preventative illness guidance set forth:

- Implement social distancing by avoiding close contact with others and maintaining 6 feet of physical separation
- Stay home as much as possible and only go out for essential purposes, such as to retrieve medical care or food, or to conduct essential work
- Wear a mask or cloth face covering in public settings, such as grocery stores or pharmacies, as it may be difficult to maintain social distancing in these environments
- View the guidance on how to make your own cloth face coverings on the Town of Westbrook Health Department website: <https://www.westbrookct.us/152/Public-Health-Department>
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, such as doorknobs, countertops, light switches, keyboards, toilets, and telephones
- Adhere to Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders, which can be viewed on the Governor’s website: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/Governors-Actions/Executive-Orders>
- Maintain daily healthy practices, such as consuming nutritional food and doing in-home exercises
- Monitor the Westbrook Health Department website for daily COVID-19 updates

If you’re experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, contact your health care provider first before going to their place of work. If an individual is exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, coughing) and is unable to contact a healthcare provider, please reach out to one of the following hotlines:

- Yale New Haven Health: 833-275-9644
- Hartford Healthcare Hotline: 860-972-8100
- Bristol Hospital: 860-261-6855
- Stamford Health: 203-276-4111

For more information on COVID-19, please visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

State of Connecticut COVID-19 website: <https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

Town of Westbrook Health Department website: <https://www.westbrookct.us/152/Public-Health-Department>

Sincerely,

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