



TOWN OF BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Sigalle Reiss, MPH, RS/REHS
Director of Public Health
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Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, Health Commissioner Sigalle Reiss announces that the Town of Brookline is reinstating a mask requirement in town-owned buildings where the public gathers such as the Library, Senior Center, and Public Schools, effective Monday May 23rd. This is envisioned to be a temporary measure and data will be re-evaluated on a weekly basis.

The Department continuously reviews [local case count data](#), [MWRA wastewater data](#), [hospital admissions](#) and hospital capacity data. For the past several weeks the CDC has identified [Norfolk, Suffolk, and Middlesex Counties as areas of high transmission](#). In addition, the [Advisory Council on Public Health held a meeting about COVID-19 with public comment on May 18th](#) to gather input from residents and advise the Commissioner. ACPH also reviewed data of COVID cases among Brookline Public School students and staff, and compared those rates to other school districts in Massachusetts that did not lift mask requirements, and agreed that a temporary reinstatement would be an important mitigation measure to limit disease spread and reduce disruptions due to student and staff absenteeism.

“We consistently look at COVID-19 data trends and hope this is a short term requirement following CDC guidance for counties designated as high risk. The Department will lift the mask requirement once Norfolk County drops to the CDC moderate or low COVID-19 risk levels or Brookline specific data suggests that we are no longer in a surge.” said Reiss.

Although this public health order only covers public gatherings in town-owned properties, businesses and other facilities can still require masks and Brookline continues to recommend masks in all other public spaces. The Commissioner is encouraging private businesses such as grocery stores to offer times when masks are required so that seniors and medically vulnerable residents can shop at lower risk.

The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is to get vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19. For more information visit the [CDC's COVID-19 vaccine page](#). To find a vaccination site near you, visit the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Vaccine finder](#).

In addition, the Health Department continues to offer free COVID-19 antigen test kits. Distribution will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12PM - 3PM while supplies last. Residents and employees of Brookline businesses may pick up test kits at the Brookline Health Department, 11 Pierce St., Brookline, MA during distribution hours.

On behalf of the Health Department, the Commissioner wants to thank the entire Brookline community for all their efforts to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 throughout the pandemic.