



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR



MASSACHUSETTS
MARY SKIPPER
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Statement from
Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone and
Somerville Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper

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Contact:

media@somervillema.gov or

Denise Taylor dtaylor@somervillema.gov at 857-523-9905

Susana H. Morgan smorgan@k12.somerville.ma.us or 617-629-5221

Somerville Announces COVID-19 Social Distancing Measures
Certain events to be suspended, postponed, or reconfigured through April 30th

SOMERVILLE, MA –The rapid spread of COVID-19 around the globe and Gov. Baker’s declaration of a state of emergency have understandably prompted concerns within our community. The City’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) has been actively monitoring the situation and the ERT, City, and Schools are taking all necessary steps to protect the health, safety, and well-being of our community members during this evolving situation. To safeguard against the spread of 2019 novel coronavirus, and the impact of COVID-19, the City and School District have modified City- and School- sponsored or permitted events, sports, and meeting activities effective immediately.

Given the uncertainty surrounding this virus, we need to make careful choices to protect the health of our community. Some of these measures, like postponing events, may cause unwanted disruptions to our daily lives and we will seek to minimize those where possible, but our top priority is protecting the health and safety of all who live, work, and visit here. One of the most important things we can do now is to take the necessary precautions to minimize the risk.

This balanced approach led us to consider the City and School event schedules to ensure the safety of all our community members and reduce opportunities for the virus to spread. We have carefully weighed the impact changes in scheduled events will have on our residents of all ages and will continue to make modifications and respond to this evolving situation.

These guidelines represent practical steps we can all take to reduce risk for ourselves and for each other:



- City- and School-sponsored public events and permitted public events scheduled through April 30, 2020, and which are projected to have 50 or more attendees in one location, will be canceled or postponed until a later date.
- City- and School-sponsored public events and permitted public cultural events with 49 or fewer attendees will implement social distancing guidelines AND all such private events are strongly advised to comply with the following protocols as well:
 - The event must be held in a space large enough to prevent crowding for the expected attendees. Social distancing for attendees must be possible (six feet apart or more).
 - If food is served:
 - arrange for prepackaged foods such as boxed lunches or food to be served by staff who are trained in safe food handling;
 - do not serve foods where multiple hands will touch the food (e.g., buffet style) (again, served food by staff trained in food handling could be substituted);
 - ensure hand-washing facilities are accessible and supplied with adequate soap and paper towels;
 - if available, provide hand sanitizer for attendees for in-between hand washing opportunities.
 - All commonly touched surfaces will be cleaned before and after events (doorknobs, railings, sink handles, etc.).
 - All attendees should be reminded not to attend if they are feeling unwell, coughing, or sneezing.
 - All attendees should be reminded to avoid social touching (handshaking and social hugs/kissing should be avoided).
 - Wherever possible, events will be recorded and cablecast by the City's Somerville [City CableTV and Educational Access](#) channels.
- City- and School-sponsored public sports events and City-permitted sports events will follow these social distancing guidelines:
 - All sports events both indoor and outdoor:
 - Only athletes, staff, and coaches will be allowed to attend these events. Spectators will not be allowed.
 - Guidelines have been established for cleaning all commonly touched surfaces and equipment before and after the event (doorknobs, locker knobs, sports equipment, railings, sink handles, etc.)
 - Wherever possible, events will be recorded and cablecast by the City's Somerville [City CableTV and Educational Access](#) channels.
- Somerville Public Schools will suspend permitting of publicly attended events in their facilities by outside entities or persons.
 - Entities currently holding public event permits, school building reservations, etc., will be contacted and informed of these measures.
 - Existing permits for large events through April 30, 2020, will be postponed.
- At this time, the City and School District will continue to regularly schedule City Council and School Committee meetings. Official public hearings of our Council, Boards, and Commissions will also continue. Additional guidance about public hearings and essential meetings will follow. Again, this is an evolving situation and these measures may be subject to change.

We are encouraging our staff and partners to consider alternative meeting options such as webinars, webcasts, phone conferences, or video broadcasts for events during this period when appropriate.

If you have questions regarding a particular event or these general social distancing measures, please contact 311 (617-666-3311).

The City and Somerville Public Schools will continue to post updates at www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus as more information becomes available. When appropriate, information will also be shared via City alerts. Sign up or check your subscriptions at www.somervillema.gov/Alerts. Sign up for every method you are able to receive: phone call, text, email.

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