



March 14, 2020 Public Message from First Selectman, Jayme Stevenson

The best way to protect yourself and your family from contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19) is to avoid being exposed to the virus. We all play a critical role in protecting our community by slowing the spread of the virus by avoiding social contacts.

The Town of Darien, Darien Health Department and Darien Public Schools are reminding residents today that social gatherings of any size are strongly discouraged until community transmission of COVID-19 has run its course. Community gatherings of 250 persons or more have been ordered unlawful by Governor Lamont's Emergency Declaration.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious new virus which can and is being transmitted here in Darien, even among individuals who have no symptoms. Adults and children alike, who continue to congregate, risk becoming infected or infecting others unknowingly. People over the age of 60 and those with underlying health conditions are particularly vulnerable to severe COVID-19 symptoms and are recommended to avoid social contacts as much as possible.

The Town of Darien has not, at this time, imposed a mandatory community-wide quarantine but is requiring everyone to practice vigilant social-distancing strategies regardless of the presence of illness. Mandated community quarantines may become necessary as we learn the extent of community transmissions.

For the benefit of all our residents, neighbors and friends, anyone who has a test-positive case of COVID-19 must self-isolate. Self-isolation means: staying away from **any** situation where you could infect other people by being in 'close contact' (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more). Close contact can happen at home, work, school, faith-based gatherings, social and sports gatherings, restaurants, clubs and all public places. We ask that those who test positive for COVID-19 notify anyone with whom you have come in direct contact.

The Darien Board of Education has issued the following statement. "We are asking for your help. School districts throughout the State have taken the extraordinary step of closing as a coordinated response to slow the spread of COVID-19. This type of social distancing is our strongest current defense against this virus. We need your cooperation to limit social contact and help protect our community. We understand it can be tempting to organize group outings, or even have "just have a few friends over", but this can seriously undermine efforts to slow community spread. Please remember school campuses including fields remain closed at this time. We thank you for your partnership in ensuring the safety of all those in Darien and the surrounding areas."

It is important for community members to understand the following terms:

Quarantine: Governments use quarantines to stop the spread of contagious diseases. Quarantines are for people or groups who don't have symptoms but were exposed to sickness and are intended to reduce the spread of the illness. Darien residents and people who work in town are asked to "self-quarantine" if you know you've been exposed.

Isolation: Isolation and Quarantine are often confused. Isolation in the case of COVID-19 is for those people who are sick and have tested positive for the virus. A member of a household can be in "isolation" while other members of the household are in self-quarantine.

The CDC provides the following guidance on determining your risk of exposure to COVID-19:

- **High Risk:** Individuals living in the same house with or are the intimate partner of a symptomatic, test-confirmed case of the virus. Also, the elderly and those with underlying health conditions are at high risk for contracting this disease and should be especially diligent in practicing social distancing.
- **Medium Risk:** An individual who has had close contact (within 6 feet) with a symptomatic, test-confirmed case of the virus.
- **Low Risk:** An individual who was in the same place (room, classroom, waiting room, etc.) with a symptomatic, test-confirmed case of the virus but was not in close contact (within 6 feet) with the sick individual.
- **No Identifiable Risk:** Interactions that are limited and do not fall in the categories above.

Guidance for local businesses and restaurants will be forthcoming.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an emerging crisis in Darien and surrounding communities. Take personal responsibility for the health and well-being of yourself and your family. Virus mitigation mandates may be required and forthcoming.

Please stay informed about local mitigation mandates and policy changes at www.darienct.gov. Visit www.CDC.gov, www.WHO.int and www.ct.gov/coronavirus or call 2-1-1 for non-medical, general COVID-19 related questions. Call your doctor if you have virus symptoms.

Jayne J. Stevenson
First Selectman, Town of Darien