

Message Regarding Use of Public Parks & Playgrounds

HIGHLIGHTS

Brookline Playground Structures are CLOSED

Brookline Permits for Athletic Fields, Special Events & Picnics are SUSPENDED

Parks *Currently* Remain OPEN Daily from Dawn until Dusk for Passive Use

The Town discourages social gathering, playdates or activities that make social distancing difficult.

Information regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic

To everyone in our extended community, we want to assure you that we are monitoring the Coronavirus 2020 (COVID-19) pandemic in close coordination with officials at the Town of Brookline and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are also looking to our colleagues across the country as to how they are dealing with public park access. Our priority is to protect the health and safety of not only all who enter our parks and open spaces, but the larger community overall. Because COVID-19 can be transmitted from an infected person before they feel sick, “social distancing” –that is, limiting close contact with others-- is a very important strategy for slowing its spread through our community. Current medical and epidemiological advice recommends keeping at least six feet from other individuals when indoors. We recommend taking the same precaution while outdoors. **Small playgrounds and playground structures within parks are now closed. Play structures and park furniture are not sterile surfaces nor suitable locations for social distancing.**

As schools are closed and regular work schedules interrupted, there is a good deal of time spent in semi-isolation. We understand that exercise, sunlight, fresh air, access to nature and room to run and play are all important to our overall health and wellness. While playgrounds are closed, larger parks and open spaces currently remain open. Large parks, open spaces and nature sanctuaries can be suitable places for social distancing, as it is considerably easier to maintain a six-foot distance from other people, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest.

There are several things Brookline residents can do to further protect our community. The Brookline Department of Public Health recommends all persons:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze using a tissue or inner elbow, not your hands.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.

Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet). We strongly urge Brookline residents to avoid gathering in groups where it would be difficult for participants to maintain social distance. This includes, for example, community organization events, house parties, birthday parties, and “play dates” for children, social gatherings for older children or sports that require contact with each other or a communal ball that is touched. **To support this important health protocol, the Town is suspending all outdoor permits (athletic fields, special event and/or picnic permits) and programs until further notice.**

We appreciate your patience, assistance, flexibility, and cooperation as we navigate the challenges of this difficult time together. We will share further information as it becomes available to us. Please be prepared for additional changes as more direction is provided by Town Officials, the Commonwealth, and the Federal Government.

For more information on Brookline's response to the Coronavirus, please visit
www.brooklinema.gov/covid-19