

TOWN OF LONG ISLAND, MAINE

COVID – 19 UPDATES

DATE: March 26, 2020

RETURNING ISLAND RESIDENTS/VISITORS

(Excerpt from Statement by Rob Snyder, President, Island Institute)

All across Maine, small isolated communities are struggling with how to care for people. When we look to the islands more broadly, we find a more educational and conversational tone during this stressful time. It can be summarized as follows:

Please consider the risk you would expose our community to by coming here. Our community has an aging population that is already difficult to care for, and our resources are stretched. We don't have the ability to help care for you if you get sick. You will have to go to the mainland. It would be a great help to us if you stayed where you are right now. We appreciate you, and we look forward to seeing you when the pandemic passes.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

The State has published informational hotlines for Covid-19 questions through the Department of Health and Human Services:

- ☐ Dial 211* (or 1-866-811-5695), or
- ☐ Text your zip code to 898-211, or
- ☐ Email info@211maine.org

Cumberland County: (www.cumberlandcounty.org)

Maine Island Institute: (www.islandinstitute.org)

Maine Center for Disease Control: (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/>)

United States Center for Disease Control: (<https://www.cdc.gov/>)

MEETING CANCELATIONS & REMINDERS

- Board of Selectmen, Thursday, April 2nd, Remote Access Meeting.
- Town Hall: Closed to All Public Business and Visitors.
- Wellness Clinic scheduled for Monday, April the 6th postponed.
- Physical Therapy Clinic scheduled for Wednesday, April the 1st moved for now to Wednesday, May the 6th.
- Taxes were due on March 15th. If you had not made payment by then, please contact Barbara Johnson at taxcollector@longislandmaine.org for the revised amount due with interest. Please do not mail in without first checking with Barbara.

BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 26TH SUMMARY

- Town Hall will remain closed to public business and visitors at least until Tuesday, April the 14th.
- The Board is seeking input from island residents on the possibility of postponing the annual town meeting. (selectmen@longislandmaine.org).

LONG ISLAND SCHOOL UPDATE FROM SUPERINTENDENT

A lot has been happening since the school first closed doors to on site learning on March 17. That day, the teachers and I gathered for a final staff meeting and to develop initial work-at-home packets for all of the children, which were designed to offer learning opportunities for the rest of the week. A suggested day long schedule was included to encourage setting routines for the children, including focused time for their school work, snacks, breaks, lunch, outdoor time, creative time, etc.

Beginning this week, teachers began working with their children in real time using ZOOM class meetings for both instructional purposes and to keep social contact with their students and families. A full schedule of those daily meeting times was recently distributed to all families, offering up to an hour per day with their teacher to supplement other materials and activities that continue to be offered on line. In addition to regular academics, a creative time for art and a parent check in time with our school counselor were included using this same ZOOM technology. We are thankful all our families have internet access available at home.

In addition to our staff working with the children, others continue to support the facility's cleanliness and sanitation, and office support remains in place as well on an as needed basis.

Finally, I have been in constant contact with area superintendents through every other day ZOOM sessions. We discussed, for example, legal updates, DOE requirements, personnel issues, special education services, free and reduced lunch services, and supporting each other as questions arose. We also decided to consecutively announce throughout all Cumberland County districts, that the school closure would continue through at least April 27 (instead of the initially announced March 30) given Gov. Mill's directive that no groups larger than 10 gather prior to April 15. With the scheduled vacation week beginning April 17, the Monday following that break was identified as the earliest time we may be able to reopen. While you might wonder about continuing to offer a vacation week this year, we all truly believe our teachers quickly and intensely switched gears to offer remote learning while also dealing with their own home challenges-- they and all our families could use that break of 5 days to relax and regroup.

In conclusion, all is going as well as it possibly could and I give full credit to our very dedicated staff and our parent partners. The State of Maine has provided clear guidance about how to legally meet remotely and vote on important issues so the School Board will continue their regular meetings with posted agendas and links for the public to listen in and/or comment as appropriate. The next meeting will be April 1 at 3:30, so check the town/school website for the agenda and link to the meeting if you are interested.

I hope all of you are well and feel confident that all island residents are modeling safe practices throughout this challenging time. Long Island School is certainly doing its part during this public health crisis.