



4/20/2020 – COVID-19 Update from [Amy C. Sousa, Chief Executive Officer](#)

Dear Guild Community,

I know that it's been a long five weeks away from your children, daily activities, and community. It's even more difficult to think about extending that time away. Meanwhile, we're all experiencing many mixed messages in the media about the anticipated duration of the crisis with some calling for extensions of stay-at-home advisories and others advocating for the resumption of business-as-usual. The Guild's approach to these advisories is to think critically about the needs, vulnerability, and quality of life for the people we serve.

At this point, The Guild has experienced some of the impact of the COVID-19 surge in Massachusetts. Over the course of the last five weeks, The Guild has quarantined seven (out of 19) residences due to primary or secondary exposure to someone who is COVID-19 positive.

- One adult house was quarantined briefly due to a resident's symptoms, which testing determined not to be related to COVID-19.
- Three adult houses were quarantined due to positive COVID-19 tests for staff members working in those houses. Two house remains in quarantine while we await test results for staff and residents; the other house has returned to regular operation with no infections.
- Two youth houses were quarantined due to positive COVID-19 tests for staff members working in those houses. One house remains in quarantine while we await test results for staff and residents; the other house has returned to regular operation with no infections.
- One youth house is quarantined due to positive COVID-19 tests for two students. Guild staff members are quarantining 24/7 alongside of the students in this house until students' symptoms resolve and the post-symptom isolation period has been completed.

Fortunately, no Guild community member—resident, student, or staff—has experienced critical illness. Nonetheless, the illness takes its toll and individuals at The Guild are not immune to the full impact of COVID-19. As such, The Guild remains committed to continuing the social distancing procedures and stay-at-home advisories that have been put into place by public health officials. We cannot predict an end-date to these measures until the level of exposure to the individuals we serve subsides.



We know that you have many questions. Please feel free to contact your house manager, leadership team, or me to get individual questions answered. As a starting place, here are some responses to frequently asked questions regarding The Guild's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will I be notified if my child's residence needs to quarantine?

A house will be quarantined in the event that a resident has a presumptive or diagnosed case of COVID-19 or if a staff member in that house has a diagnosed case of COVID-19. If and when this occurs, information will be shared with public health officials, family members, and people in close contact. The Guild will call guardians individually if their child has been diagnosed or in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

What does a quarantine look like at the Guild?

The treatment and care for an individual with COVID-19 is determined by medical professionals. The Guild's response is governed by those directions as well as by the guidance of public health officials.

In general terms, qualified Guild staff work extended hours to support the individuals served and limit the spread of COVID-19 infection. These employees remain isolated in the residence 24/7 for one week at a time with one week renewals offered as needed by The Guild and as accepted by employees. Individuals and staff members are provided with personal protective equipment as appropriate. Deep cleaning of the residence is provided. Supplies are delivered to the doorstep as needed throughout the quarantine period. Daily activities within the residence continue so long as individuals are well enough to participate.

How will I keep in contact with my child through this extended process and learn what's happening with her/him?

- All parents/guardians should have access to daily electronic communication with their children, i.e. email, Facetime, Go-to-Meeting, etc.
- All parents/guardians are sent weekly email updates from youth and adult residential programs with activity descriptions and pictures.
- Each Guild School student has a remote learning plan that includes access to curriculum, specialists, teachers, and peers.
- The Guild is available for electronic IEP and ISP meetings with families and LEAs/government officials for the duration of the crisis.
- The Guild community receives policy and protocol updates from executive leadership by email and updated web postings that can be found [here](#).



How does The Guild get direction from and give information to state leaders and public health officials?

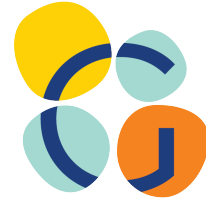
- The Guild's leaders meet (electronically) on a daily basis with state government officials, including the Departments of Developmental Services, Department, Children and Families, Public Health, Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Public Health.
- The Guild meets (electronically) on a weekly basis (at minimum) with our state policy associations, including the Association of Developmental Disability Providers (ADDP) and Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (maaps).
- The Guild communicates with local boards of health on a regular basis to ensure compliance with community best practices. The Guild notifies both the Department of Public Health and the local board of health when quarantining any Guild facility.
- The Guild's leadership team of chief officers and directors meets (electronically) three times weekly to review policy and procedure updates, status reports on houses and individuals, and to problem-solve challenges relating to our new way of life.
- Residential managers have daily leadership phone calls with one another to share information and respond to current needs.

When will The Guild School reopen for day students?

At present, Governor Baker's school closure order is in effect until May 4, 2020. However, we've been paying attention to our neighbors to the north who have closed schools through June. While we have not heard from Governor Baker on this matter, The Guild anticipates that The Guild School will be closed beyond May 4 given the current trajectory of the illness. We will keep families apprised of developments in this area; however, we are making plans in the event that distance learning procedures remain in place for longer than May 4.

What happens if some adult day programs reopen and others do not?

As long as adult day programs are closed, The Guild Adult Residential Program will continue to operate from the residences 24/7 for individuals who cannot access day program. The Guild will work with individuals, guardians, medical professionals, and providers to determine the safest and most appropriate course of action for individuals to return to normal activities.



What happens if I want my child to return to The Guild after an extended stay home?

As stated on March 18, Guild residents who go home must remain home for the duration of the public health crisis. Should you wish for your individual to return to The Guild, the individual must pass a COVID-19 screening before returning to a Guild residence. Unfortunately, there can be no exceptions to this directive, not even for psychiatric crisis, as we must protect the health of all individuals' served. We recognize that this is a stressful time with limited access to supports and resources. Please feel free to reach out to your individual's clinical team for ideas, support plans, and options for individuals while at home.

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Thank you for all of your calls, emails, and notes. Your questions, concerns, and ideas are relevant and useful for all of the individuals we serve. Again, if you have ongoing questions about your child's experience at The Guild during this unprecedented time, please do not hesitate to reach out to her/his residential manager or clinical team. And, as always, you are welcome to contact me directly.

Be well,

Amy C. Sousa
Chief Executive Officer