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| Respect the Rule of Six To Protect Yourself and Others |

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| **Dorset residents are being urged to play their part and prevent the spread of coronavirus after new regulations have come into effect making it illegal for groups of more than six people to gather socially.** In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the so-called rule of six means that anyone gathering in a group of more than six people in any inside or outside place will be dispersed and could be subject to a £100 fine if they refuse to comply. Dorset Police will be adopting a 4Es approach to the new legislation using engagement, education and encouragement to ask members of the public to comply with the regulations. Enforcement remains a final option. Assistant Chief Constable Sam de Reya said: “Preventing the spread of COVID-19 is a shared effort and Dorset Police will play a part alongside the Government, businesses, hospitality owners, local authorities and others.“The change to COVID-19 legislation, and subsequent change in the law, means everyone has a legal responsibility to play their part and not gather in a group of more than six people. “Those doing so will be proactively challenged and engaged with by police, but my hope is the vast majority of communities and visitors to Dorset will comply and we will not see large numbers of fixed penalty notices being issued.“The new rules are clear and very easy to understand. We all have a personal responsibility for following them to help stop the spread of a deadly virus.”There are some exceptions to these rules, including if everyone in the group is a member of the same household or two linked households. The new regulations do not refer to schools or other childcare, education or training, the workplace, for voluntary charitable purposes or providing support to a vulnerable person. The regulations do apply to the majority of public spaces, whether indoors or outdoors. Gatherings of more than six, but no more than thirty, may be permitted at weddings or civil partnerships, funerals and other religious or belief-based life cycle ceremonies. Police will have the ability to issue an on the spot £100 fixed penalty notice, which can rise to a maximum of £3,200 for repeat offending. Assistant Chief Constable de Reya added: “Demands on Dorset Police are back to pre-COVID levels and indeed have been extraordinary at times this summer.“It makes it even more important that people respect the change in the law and take personal responsibility.“My hope is that in the majority of circumstances where police do challenge a group, people will disperse and no fine will be issued, but the powers are there should officers need them.“The pandemic has not gone away and everyone must play their part to protect themselves, their families and our communities.“I know we are seeing large numbers of younger people returning to university in Bournemouth in particular and campus life is likely to be very different with these measures.“But I would ask everyone to respect yourself, others and comply with the law to make Dorset a safe place for all.”Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner Martyn Underhill said: “I can appreciate that many people feel weary about what feels like yet another set of regulations coming into force, but sadly COVID-19 is still with us and we all have a duty to stop its spread.“I know the vast majority of Dorset residents have acted sensibly throughout the pandemic, and I would ask everyone to please abide by these new restrictions, help protect our communities and avoid putting our hard-working officers, staff and volunteers under any undue additional pressure.”**If members of the public are concerned that the law is being broken or they are experiencing anti-social behaviour, they can report this to Dorset Police. We will consider the most appropriate response and will target the most problematic behaviour. Reports should be made through online reporting wherever possible via** [**https://www.dorset.police.uk/do-it-online/**](https://www.dorset.police.uk/do-it-online/)**.**https://ci6.googleusercontent.com/proxy/y41T5Fbpqn-gRVPC9tWVWgII5CMTI2H7f1OCDy-pDNPCV8xBAwEjdnBFP7_lvgZGR70J1psKuSKwxaTgXRWX57f3Ti3JCi04kNUTdEXp=s0-d-e1-ft#https://assets.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/398589141/email.gif  |
| ***Message Sent By***Julie Heath (Dorset Police, Neighbourhood Alert Officer, Dorset) |