Dear colleagues,

The health, safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, and local community is our priority and it’s important that we do all we can to help restrict the spread of Covid-19.

We are monitoring the number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 within our community and taking pro-active steps to help limit the spread of coronavirus. More information on these steps is available on our website.

As a result of an increasing number of cases within our College community, we have taken the decision to ask all students living within St Mary’s and Collingwood Colleges to remain on the broader University campus for seven days from today (Thursday 8 October), even if they are not self-isolating or have not tested positive for coronavirus.

We are working closely with Durham County Council’s Public Health Team and Public Health England and have taken their advice in reaching this decision.

The move is an additional precaution which is over and above the requirement for all students to follow the Government and University regulations to manage the spread of coronavirus, which have been regularly communicated to the student and staff body.

Cases on campus
As of Wednesday 7 October, we have a total of 251 self-reported student cases of Covid-19 in our community.

What this means for you
Students living in St Mary’s and Collingwood Colleges, who are not self-isolating, can attend face-to-face teaching. All face-to-face teaching activity will be conducted in line with government guidelines and University health and safety policies and guidance.

This means that no member of staff will be in close contact with a student in face-to-face activities.

More information on our Covid-secure teaching arrangements can be found in our recent all staff update.

What this means for students
Students living in St Mary’s and Collingwood Colleges, who are not self-isolating, are encouraged to participate in onsite activities managed by Junior Common Rooms and societies. These students can also attend face-to-face teaching and leave campus for essential trips, such as attending a pre-booked appointment at a Covid-19 testing centre. They should not make trips into the City centre.

We have asked all students to continue to follow regulations and guidance.

Support in Colleges
All our Colleges remain open and we’re doing all that we can to support students and staff at this time. Plans are in place to ensure that students who are self-isolating in their College can access healthy and hot food, medicine and essential supplies, and domestic services.
Students have been directed to contact their College Student Support Officer if they have any concerns or questions.

Most of our students have been following general regulations and also the specific measures within their College, and for this we are very grateful. Please help us by reinforcing these messages to students within your Colleges and Academic Departments.

Identifying and reporting Covid-19 symptoms

Covid-19 symptoms include:

- **A new continuous cough.** Coughing a lot for 1 hour or more, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours.
- **Loss of, or change to, smell or taste.** Do things smell or taste different to normal?
- **A high temperature.** Do you feel hot to touch on your chest or back?

What to do if you have symptoms

If you do develop any of the symptoms above, you must:

- Self-isolate
- Book a Covid-19 test
- Inform your manager

If you haven’t already done so, you can also download the NHS contact tracing app which enables you to check your symptoms and enter test results.

We urge our entire community to continue to follow national and local restrictions, and guidelines on campus including maintaining good hand hygiene, maintaining 2m social distancing and wearing face coverings inside University buildings.

It’s important that we act now, together, to help stop further spread of the virus to other areas of the University and the wider community.

Best wishes,

Claire O’Malley
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global)