To: UG and PGT students  
From: coronavirus.information@durham.ac.uk  
Subject: Covid-19 Update 11.09.2020  
To be issued: Friday 11 September 2020

Dear students,

This email contains important Covid-19 updates. Please take the time to read it carefully.

Latest decisions and updates from Durham University

- Reopening University buildings and campuses
- Reporting symptoms of Covid-19
- Developing an Outbreak Response Plan
- Privacy notice updates

Updated Government guidance for reopening University buildings and campuses

This week the UK Government issued new guidance regarding reopening University buildings and campuses. We are currently reviewing our plans for the safe return to campus across our research, education and wider student experience operations in light of this new advice and will continue to update you regularly.

We are looking forward to welcoming you back to campus, in a way that prioritises your health, safety and wellbeing as well that of our staff and wider communities. We are working closely with our partners in Durham City to support the development of plans to reduce the risks and mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and we will communicate health and safety messages extensively around campus.

The Government message to students is simple: "Please for the sake of your education, your parents and your grandparents' health, wash your hands, cover your face, make space and socially gather in accordance with government Covid-19 guidance." It is in everyone’s interest that all members of our community continue to follow closely public health guidance.

If you have any questions relating to the new Government guidance, please email coronavirus.information@durham.ac.uk.

Reporting symptoms of Covid-19

If you have Covid-19 symptoms, you must immediately self-isolate and book a Covid-19 test (via nhs.uk/coronavirus). We are also finalising our internal reporting systems so you can inform the University if you develop Covid-19 symptoms – this will enable us to support you in the best possible ways. We will update you again in due course.

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?

Follow the advice provided to you to help protect yourself and protect others. By working together, we can maintain a healthy community.
Developing an Outbreak Response Plan

Working closely with Durham County Council Public Health team, we have developed an Outbreak Response Plan. The Plan outlines the process, roles, responsibilities, and terms of reference for responding to clusters or outbreaks of Covid-19 that might adversely impact upon Durham University students, staff, operations or the local community.

The Plan is designed to provide detailed guidance, whilst being flexible enough to respond to any variations in size, severity and duration of an outbreak. The processes outlined in the Plan are aligned with national policy, guidance and mechanisms including outbreak control and NHS Test and Trace. They are subject to continual development as the University responds dynamically and innovatively, revising our approach as the national coronavirus action plan and recovery strategy evolves.

We will continue to update you on our outbreak response planning as work in this area continues.

Privacy notice updates

As part of our work to manage any outbreaks of Covid-19 among the University community, we will share data with our public health partners and any other relevant public health body to best protect our University community and the wider city.

In most cases the data will be anonymised and will not identify any individual staff member or students. However, where we have a legitimate interest, and we are advised that we need to identify individuals to our public health partners, we may do so. We have updated our GDPR Privacy Notices and the notice for students can be found here.

Conclusion

We hope that you find the regular Covid-19 communications informative and useful, recently we released a short video to give new and returning students an insight into the measures we’re taking to ensure that you have the best possible teaching and learning experiences this coming academic year. The video is available on our YouTube channel.

We also continue to add to our Covid-19 information pages, please keep checking in for updates. Recently we have updated FAQs relating to travel on public transport.

We look forward to welcoming a large cohort of international arrivals this weekend and staff in Colleges have been working hard to ensure that we can provide appropriate support for those of you who need to self-isolate. On arrival at your College you will be provided with detailed guidance but in the meantime the UK Government guidance is available at gov.uk.

If you are preparing to join us in Durham in the coming weeks, please try and limit your contact with others in the lead up to your arrival to help control the spread of Covid-19. By working together, we can maintain a healthy community.

Best wishes,

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