The University of Kent

COVID-19 Code of Conduct for Students and Staff

1 As at 23 July 2020. We follow Government Guidance and this Code may well change in the light of this. Look out for any updates.
Helping keep our community safe on our socially-distanced campuses

Contents

Please use the links below to find specific information and our expectations, relating to the necessary adaptations made to ensure our sites are COVID Secure, and the behaviours we expect to maintain the safety of us all.

Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 3

Coronavirus (COVID-19) ......................................................................................................................... 4

Duty of care – Protecting our community ............................................................................................... 5

Travel to and from campus ....................................................................................................................... 7

Hygiene and cleanliness ............................................................................................................................ 7

Social distancing (physical distancing) measures ...................................................................................... 9

Face Coverings .......................................................................................................................................... 11

Vulnerable Groups .................................................................................................................................... 13

Mental Ill health (Stress/Anxiety) ............................................................................................................ 14

Addendum 1: Additional Information for Students ................................................................................. 15

Make sure you have downloaded the free SafeZone app:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/safezone/
Introduction

Although the risk of COVID-19 transmission remains, as the lockdown is eased and we begin to welcome students and staff back to campus, we must adapt to new ways of studying and working.

This Code of Conduct aims to explain the changes to our environment, the necessary adaptations made to ensure our sites are COVID Secure, and the behaviours we expect to maintain the safety of us all. Failure to follow these behaviours could lead to an increase in infections and a localised outbreak on campus.

The main ways of reducing transmission are washing or sanitising your hands regularly, practising social distancing, and wearing a face covering.

The COVID-19 Risk Assessment for the University of Kent details the control measures in place which must be adhered to by all those at risk, all University students and staff; contractors; delivery drivers and visitors. Subsequently, key safety measures have been implemented on campus, which must be adhered to by students and staff, whilst the threat of transmission remains.

All information and guidance is based on current Government advice, and we are fully aware that we will need to be flexible in our approach to returning to some form of normality as all is subject to change as the weeks and months progress.

Please note that students and staff are expected to follow all standard guidelines when on campus, in addition to those outlined in this COVID-19 Code of Conduct.

- Student Charter
If you have any individual concerns about personal risks or specific vulnerabilities, or need any support or advice; students should contact their academic adviser or the College Life Team, and staff should speak to their line manager.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 transmission is thought to occur in different ways:

- Through contact with respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are propelled into the air. The droplets are not airborne for long, but they do travel and the droplets can be inhaled into the lungs of an uninfected person.
- Through contact with a surface contaminated with the virus droplets and a person touches the contaminated surface and then touches their own eyes nose or mouth, they could become infected with the virus. It is currently believed that COVID-19 droplets can survive for up to 72 hours on plastic, 48 hours on stainless steel and 8 hours on copper.
- Recent studies show that people who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic), but are infected can also play a role in the spread of the infection.


It is absolutely essential that you and your household all self-isolate* if you, or anyone you live with, develops a:

- fever, particularly a high temperature (i.e. a temperature of 37.8 degrees or over)
- continuous cough or
- loss of sense of taste or smell

*Self-Isolation: It is very important that people with symptoms that may be due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help prevent the spread of the virus to family, friends, and the wider community. [Government Guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

You should also self-isolate if the NHS "test and trace" service alerts you that you have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus - see [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/) for more information on what happens if NHS test and trace service contacts you.

If you become unwell whilst on campus with coronavirus symptoms, you should inform your line manager or academic adviser and go home immediately, following Government advice to self-isolate. If you require collecting by a member of your household, you should go to a designated isolation area to wait.

Anyone with symptoms should arrange to have a test as soon as possible, to see if they have COVID-19. This can be done by calling the dedicated NHS hotline, Tel: 119 or online via the [NHS website](http://www.nhs.uk/)

The NHS website also provides full information about what to do once you get your test result: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/)

Any occurrences of suspected coronavirus should be reported to your line manager or school office to enable them to report this to Estates Customer Services and SHE Unit immediately.

You should also continue to report any absence in line with standard reporting procedures.

**Students:** Notify your school office as per [Student Attendance Policy](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-meANS/)

**Staff:** Notify your line manager as per [Sickness Reporting Procedure](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-meANS/)
You must identify all internal areas where you spent a substantial amount of time, i.e., not areas you have simply passed through like corridors, but areas where you have been working. It is important that you swiftly apply for a coronavirus test, as all these areas will be closed for 72 hours prior to cleaning.

Once the test result has been received, the outcome should also be reported to your line manager or school office as soon as possible. A negative result will allow these areas to be reopened.

**Duty of care – Protecting our community**

You should be aware that this is a concerning and anxiety-provoking time for many people. Please be patient with others as they learn to adopt these new behaviours on campus and please continue to offer support or highlight any concerns you have for the health and wellbeing of another individual.

Each and every one of us has a role to play in slowing the spread, and in protecting ourselves, their family, and our community at Kent. This is a very difficult time for everyone. Some people may feel more vulnerable due to either their own health risks, or those of their family, or their anxiety about transmitting the infection to other vulnerable people.

Respect and courtesy for each other should be paramount when working within the new measures and expected behaviours within the University. This can be achieved by following the guidance relevant to each area and complying politely with any reminders of potential breaches. We should also remember to be kind when reminding others of the new ways of behaving on our sites; we are all human, and others may not realise they are not following social distancing guidance, or following the new one-way system for example.

If you are concerned that someone is not adhering to the expected behaviours, or you feel uncomfortable about someone getting too close to you, it is perfectly reasonable to ask them to step back, or request they put on a face covering.

You should not feel embarrassed by politely reminding anyone of their responsibilities.

The University is proud to be an international community and all students, staff and visitors at our University must be treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination, prejudice and victimisation will not be tolerated.

If you have been the subject of, or witnessed any discrimination, harassment or victimisation linked to COVID-19 (or for any other reason), or any insensitivity linked to culture or race please report it:

**Students:** You can report this on our online reporting tool Inform Kent (InK) (There is an option to report anonymously if preferred), or directly to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office at sccoffice@kent.ac.uk using a Student Discipline reporting form.

Any students subject to discrimination, bullying or harassment will be offered appropriate support via the Student Support and Wellbeing Team.

**Staff:** Visit our Equality and Diversity webpage: Harassment step by step reporting process ([Dignity at work](#))

All reports will be treated confidentially.

If any one feels at risk or unsafe they have the right to remove themselves from campus immediately and report the incident via your harassment reporting tool/method so an investigation can take place.

The SafeZone app is designed to help students and staff summon first-aid, security or safety assistance via your mobile phone or Staff PC. There is a function where it can also be set as a “check-in timer”
where it will alert you as you are nearing the set time chosen and then it will automatically alert Campus Security 5 minutes later who will check on your welfare.

**Make sure you have SafeZone downloaded when you go onto your campus.** Further information and FAQ's can be found at: [https://www.kent.ac.uk/safezone/](https://www.kent.ac.uk/safezone/)
**Travel to and from campus**

We encourage you to minimise your use of public transport, by travelling by car, walking or cycling where possible. If travelling by car, you must not car-share with anyone outside your household.

You should wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive on campus, using the handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers provided. You should also wash your hands thoroughly as soon as you get home.

**Public Transport**

Where you need to use public transport, please think about social distancing, where possible staying away from others and avoiding touching surfaces.

*Please note that it is a legal requirement that you must wear a face covering on public transport.*

Before using public transport, you should refer to the Government’s guidance:


Local transport providers have produced their own guidance. Click on the image for information:

**Cycling**

- **Staff Cycle to Work Scheme**
  
  The Cycle to Work Scheme offers staff the opportunity to buy a brand new bike (including electric bikes) and accessories from a range of participating local stores at a discounted rate.

  Visit the [HR website](http://www.hrwebsite) for more information

- **ByCycle Long Term Bike Hire**

  We work with ByCycle to provide low cost bike hire to all attending the Canterbury campus. All bikes available are second hand but all come equipped with lights, a bell and a lock and have received a full service - they are as good as new and are ready to ride! Each bike has been security tagged and is registered to the University of Kent.

  Visit the [Estates website](http://www.estateswebsite) for more information

- **Short-term bike hire on Canterbury campus**

  The Cycle Hub is our bike hire facility on the Canterbury campus, providing short-term hire to all members. Hire a range of bikes for any type of ride and enjoy cycling around the campus or further.

  Visit [Kent Sport’s Cycle Hub](http://www.kentscyclehub) for more information

Visit the [Estates website](http://www.estateswebsite) for information on all transport discounts available to students and staff

If you are concerned about travelling on public transport, and there is no other option available, you should speak to your line manager or academic adviser, as they may be able to accommodate some flexibility to your start and finish times to prevent travel during peak times.

**Hygiene and cleanliness**

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced a number of important measures, which are set out in our COVID-19 risk assessments.
Examples include:

- the installation of additional hand sanitiser stations at main entrances to buildings
- enhanced cleaning of high touch points
- having signage and posters to provide regular reminders to students and staff to maintain hygiene standards

While we are taking these stringent additional measures, there are key hygiene behaviours we expect on campus to prevent transmission of the virus:

- washing your hands often and thoroughly, for 20 seconds
- avoiding touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose and mouth
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue, and binning it safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available
- increase natural ventilation where safe to do so by opening windows

Handwashing

Handwashing is vital in the fight against coronavirus and a behaviour that we all need to adopt on campus. Washing or sanitising hands regularly with hot soapy water and drying them thoroughly will help to wash off any virus that may be on the skin.

**Click on the image below for practical advice on washing your hands:**

![NHS poster](image)

NHS guidance, complete with a video about handwashing. It states that regularly washing hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds is central to preventing COVID-19 transmission.

We all need to ensure that we wash our hands frequently:

- when arriving on campus, and upon your return home
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- before eating or handling food
- after touching surfaces, such as doorknobs, drawer handles and printers
- after using the toilet facilities

Everyday interactions like shaking hands, handing someone a coffee, sharing food or giving a hug may all heighten the risk of interaction and, therefore, need to be avoided.

Recent studies suggest the COVID-19 virus can live up to 24 hours on cardboard, as well as three days on hard surfaces such as metal or hard plastic. Wiping down surfaces with detergent, sanitisers, warm washing up liquid and then washing your hands will help to reduce the risk of transmission to yourself.
Social distancing (physical distancing) measures

Social distancing\(^2\) (also known as physical distancing) means that we need to keep our distance from others when outside our own home. Making sure we all adhere to this on campus can help stop the spread of all infections including COVID-19. As COVID-19 is an infection where there is currently no general population immunity (“herd immunity”) and no vaccination, social distancing is a vital protection measure.

While on campus, you must maintain social distancing (in line with Government guidelines) wherever possible. Reducing social contact between healthy individuals outside of the home can help to delay the transmission of COVID-19 and reduce the size of an outbreak.

To assist with social distancing, we have introduced a number of important measures, which are set out in our COVID-19 risk assessments.

Examples include:
- reduced occupancy of all buildings and work / study areas
- staggering start and finish times to reduce overcrowding
- one-way systems, wherever possible, to reduce instances of people having to pass each other in close proximity
- spacing workstations out
- having floor markings to help people maintain social distancing
- installing screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- in limited circumstances and where there is a business critical need, allowing back-to-back or side-to-side working
- limit numbers accessing communal facilities at any one time, particularly in toilets and in break /kitchen areas
- signage and posters advising on limits to numbers entering specific areas such as lifts, break areas, toilets, showers and changing rooms.

You should continue to practice social distancing in common areas, including at building entrances, kitchens, exits, lifts, break areas, and toilets.

Example desk layouts

4-person set up, only workstation A can be used

A 6-person set up will need to have staggered workstations, allowing two workstations within the bay to be used.

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\(^2\) In public health, social distancing, also called physical distancing, describes a series of measures intended to prevent the spread of a contagious disease by maintaining a physical distance between people and reducing the number of times people come into close contact with each other. It typically involves keeping a certain distance from others and avoiding gathering together in large groups
If you feel uncomfortable about someone getting to close to you, it is perfectly acceptable to step back to ensure that you are protecting yourself and maintaining social distancing.

Often, we move around our campuses paying little attention to our surroundings and signage as this is all so familiar already. However, it is essential that you observe the signs, look out for hazards and move cautiously so you can follow any new guidance.

Examples of new signage to look out for at our UK Campuses:

There is one exception to the social distancing measures: If a fire alarm sounds, exit any building via the nearest escape route regardless of new layout and signage. On evacuation, try to social distance as best you can, and spread out when at the fire assembly point, if this proves impossible it is best to move away from the area.
Face Coverings

Although there has been much debate over the effectiveness of wearing a face covering, overall, the scientific evidence indicates they could have a role to play in reducing transmission. Face coverings help us protect each other (not necessarily the wearer) and reduce the spread of the disease when we are in an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible and where we meet other people.

As part of the Government’s advice on Staying Safe Outside your Home, they recommend that you should wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn’t possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas. It is a legal requirement to wear them on public transport and in shops and takeaway outlets. Government position on mandatory face coverings from 24 Jul 2020

Face coverings will only be effective if they are worn properly, covering the nose and mouth, fitted snugly, and kept clean. They can easily be made at home, the key thing being that it should cover the mouth and nose.

Click on the images below for practical advice on using and caring for face coverings:

UK Government

Government advice on how to wear and make a cloth face covering.

A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

YouTube video on how to wear a fabric face covering safely

A fabric mask can act as a barrier to prevent the spread of the virus. However, it must be used correctly and always combined with other measures to protect yourself and everyone else.

Advice includes that you must:

- wash your hands thoroughly before putting a face covering on and after removing it
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it
- change and wash your face covering daily

Please remember that personal, non-medical face coverings:

- do not replace social distancing - which should still be observed
- should not be confused with surgical masks or respirators
- should not be worn by children under the age of 3 or people who have problems breathing while wearing a face covering
- should not be worn where there are additional risks, for example from chemical contamination or naked flames
Exemptions to wearing a face covering where they are mandated

In settings where face coverings are mandated in England, there are some circumstances, for health, age or equality reasons, whereby people are not expected to wear face coverings in these settings. Please be mindful and respectful of such circumstances noting that some people are less able to wear face coverings.

The Government have identified exemptions to wearing a face covering. If you aren’t able to wear a face covering, although there is no requirement to provide medical evidence of your reason for not wearing one, it is a good idea to think about how you communicate this.

The Hidden Disabilities programme supports people living with non-visible disabilities to discreetly indicate that they may need additional support. They have produced a ‘Face Covering Exempt’ card, which is available to purchase online for a nominal fee.

You may wish to consider purchasing an exemption card to indicate a hidden disability and a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering. However, please note that shops and public transport can still refuse you entry if you are not wearing a face covering.

What this means for people who are deaf or have hearing loss

Many people with hearing loss rely on lip reading to communicate and face coverings make this impossible.

Thanks to lobbying by hearing loss charities, new regulations and guidance mean you don’t have to wear a face covering if you need to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading, or if you have another ‘reasonable excuse’. You won’t be acting illegally or face a penalty if you are communicating with someone with hearing loss and remove your face covering to do so. Work continues to seek clarity on whether there are any safety issues associated with wearing face coverings with clear panels. It is therefore currently unclear whether face shields meet the Government recommendations for public usage.

Visit the Action on Hearing Loss website for more information and support.

Action on Hearing Loss have also developed communication tips to help the public communicate more effectively with someone with hearing loss.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, and/or high temperature, and/or loss of, or change in, your normal sense of smell or taste - anosmia), you and your household must isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Outside of healthcare settings, the Government Working Safely guidance does not recommend the use of Respiratory Protective Equipment (face masks that protect the wearer from inhalation of virus and which need to be face-fitted to the individual to be effective) to control COVID-19 infection risk.

In line with our COVID-19 risk assessment, the use of additional PPE (such as medical standard facemasks) is not required as an infection-control measure while at work or study under normal circumstances. You should continue to wear the PPE you normally require to carry out your work or study, including safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing and safety footwear. PPE requirements for First Aiders are defined in the separate COVID-19 Guidance for First Aiders document.
**Vulnerable Groups**

There is clear evidence that COVID-19 does not affect all population groups equally. Many analyses have shown that older age, ethnicity, male sex and geographical area, for example, are associated with the risk of getting the infection, experiencing more severe symptoms and higher rates of death.

Three risk groups have been identified as having more severe outcomes from a COVID-19 infection than the general population.

- **Clinically extremely vulnerable**, i.e. are in receipt of a shielding letter or who have been told that they are in this group by their GP. This is the highest risk category.
- **Clinically vulnerable**, i.e. with conditions such as heart disease, poorly controlled asthma, and diabetes, those over 70, and people living with clinically extremely vulnerable people
- **BAME Communities**, namely Black and South Asian (Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi) people, where there is good evidence that they are at elevated risk of a more severe outcome from a COVID-19 infection

**NHS advice for people at higher risk from coronavirus**

At Kent, we will consider the equality impact of our decisions on members of our staff and student communities, and listen to the concerns and advice of those with lived experience. We have been considering the potential impact of COVID-19 upon different demographics, from a student and staff perspective, and agreed actions we can take to help mitigate the impact of key decisions upon specific and vulnerable members of our community.

It is essential that your concerns be heard as we move through these difficult times. By discussing your vulnerabilities, we may be able to help relieve any anxiety by ensuring you are clear about the precautions the University is taking, the control measures in place and the new protocols we all have to follow to allow for a safe return to campus:

**Students:** Speak to school and/or Academic Advisor to discuss any concerns and agree any adjustments, or additional support available to reduce the impact of COVID-19 as you return for the 20/21 academic year.

**Staff:** Prior to your return to work on Campus, you must have a ‘Risk Assessment and Concern Conversation’ with your line manager to discuss any concerns and agree any appropriate adjustments.

It is essential that everyone respects and understands that the COVID-19 pandemic will be affecting individuals to varying degrees. People may be in a vulnerable group themselves, live with someone who is at a higher risk, or developed mental health issues as a result of a long period of lockdown. As such, many people may have increased anxieties about being on campus.

Respecting the individual viewpoint of those within our community is essential to a successful return to campus for all – the best way you can do this is to follow the behaviours and expectations outlined in this Code of Conduct.
Mental ill health (Stress/Anxiety)
The risks to people’s health from this pandemic are psychological as well as physical. This may include anxiety about the ongoing health crisis and fear of infection, as well social isolation due to the lockdown. Social isolation, reduction in physical activity, unpredictability and changes in routine can all contribute to increasing stress.

It is important that you protect your health and wellbeing and that of those around you.

Every Mind Matters recommend 10 Ways to improve your mental health and wellbeing if you are worried or anxious about the coronavirus outbreak

1. Stay connected with people
2. Talk about your worries
3. Support and help others
4. Feel prepared
5. Look after your body
6. Stick to the facts
7. Stay on top of difficult feelings
8. Do things you enjoy
9. Focus on the present
10. Look after your sleep

Specific guidance and support is available for students and staff, and you are encouraged to access it if you are feeling vulnerable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing – Information for Students</td>
<td>Wellbeing – Information for Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Guide – Mental Health</td>
<td>Staff Guide – Health and Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big White Wall</td>
<td>Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support and Wellbeing Team</td>
<td>Occupational Health Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Union Advice Centre</td>
<td>COPE Framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may also wish to seek advice from external organisations:

Government guide to looking after your mental health and wellbeing
Mind – For better mental health
Rethink Mental Illness
NHS - Every Mind Matters
NHS - Mental well-being audio guides

“The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak means life has changed for us all. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated.
It’s important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently – for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.” (Every Mind Matters)
Addendum 1: Additional Information for Students

What we expect from you

- Adhere to the expectations and behaviours outlined in this COVID-19 Code of Conduct
- Follow the rules about regular handwashing throughout the day and use the supplied hand sanitiser. There will be plenty of reminders for you.
- Wear a face covering when required. We do however, recognise that there are circumstances where face coverings are not possible for some individuals (for example in relation to health circumstances)
- Try, always, to respect and abide by social distancing regulations whilst on campus.
- If you are not residing on campus, you should only attend for the purposes of attending lessons, accessing a study space or coming to Specialist Services.
- Follow any signs and directions that are on the campus – this is VITAL for your own safety.
- We will be asking you to use specific entrances and exits. You must do this for everyone’s safety.
- Only come onto the campus if you can travel safely.
- We expect you to follow the standard Student Code of Conduct when you are on campus as well as this COVID-19 update.

What you can expect from us

- A University environment that has been adapted for social distancing and other COVID-19 Government guidance.
- Safeguarding, Prevent and welfare support available at all times.
- Constant monitoring of our health & safety measures.
- Lecturer and Tutor support when you are at University.
- Support to work from home if your situation changes.

Individuals need to be aware that, even if they do not feel at risk of infection from COVID-19 there are many members of our community for whom the possible risk of infection is both high, and represents a serious threat to their personal safety, and that of their friends and family members.

We request that all students and staff follow the advice and guidance outlined in this COVID-19 Code of Conduct for their own safety, and the safety of their community on campus.

Furthermore:

1) Large social gatherings (in line with governance guidance) in indoor and outdoor spaces that do not adhere to social distancing regulations are not permitted.
2) Students are expected to abide by the Respect at Kent policy and the Non-academic discipline regulations.