



COVID-19 STAFF RETURNING TO WORK

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

St Edmund Hall is committed to keeping its students and staff safe and healthy as we return to College life. Below are some questions, answers and guidance on how we will return to work at the Hall during 2020-21.

WHEN WILL THE ACADEMIC YEAR BEGIN?

We are planning for the 2020/21 academic year to start in October as usual, in a flexible format for some that will blend the best of our College environment and digital provision from the University to support our students whatever their individual circumstances.

Some postgraduate students have already returned and those students coming from countries on the UK quarantine list will be arriving early in order to accommodate the 14-day self-isolation period.

WHEN CAN STAFF WORKING REMOTELY COME BACK INTO THE OFFICE?

To maintain safe distancing the number of people that can be in our buildings at one time is limited. At this time, staff will only return to working at College where it is essential for them to do so. The Domestic Bursar in conjunction with line managers and the HR Manager will be reviewing what work needs to be done on site and what can continue to be done remotely and talking to the relevant members of staff about returning to their offices.

I WORK IN A SHARED OFFICE – HOW WILL WE WORK SAFELY?

The College is working on a plan to reopen all our offices safely and in accordance with government advice. The plan may involve a gradual and controlled return to work for those currently working at home. This will include careful risk assessments and measures to help protect our staff, which may include continued working from home on a rotational basis to ensure there is adequate distance between workers and for safe movement around College buildings.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT ON MY FIRST DAY?

When you return to work your line manager will give you an induction briefing. Given the current requirements for social distancing, some of this may be done remotely in advance

but you should also have a face-to-face meeting with your manager or another designated colleague when you return to the College. The briefing will include:

- information, instructions and reassurance about health, safety and wellbeing, including the risk assessment(s) applicable to your role;
- a reminder of any changes in ways of working, work patterns, tasks to be carried out as already discussed with your manager;
- a discussion of any ongoing support which you may require and the support that is available to staff on your site;
- who you should contact if you become ill while at work or at home, in particular if you develop COVID-19 symptoms;
- if you are returning from furlough it may include any recent changes that have happened since your furlough began;
- an opportunity for you to raise any questions or concerns with your manager or the HR Manager.

I HAVE CHILDCARE OR DEPENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES, WHAT MEASURES WILL BE IN PLACE TO SUPPORT ME RETURNING TO WORK?

It is expected that all children will return to school normally in September if the current infection rates remain as they are currently. In the event of any changes, the College will advise managers and staff of what action and support is available. These are likely to include temporary adjustments to working hours, use of annual leave or working from home where possible. Further advice can be obtained from the HR Manager.

I AM A MEMBER OF STAFF WHO IS STILL FURLOUGHED – WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO RETURN TO WORK?

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough leave) ends on October 31, 2020. The College is constantly reviewing the situation and will contact all furloughed workers prior to the current end date to provide an update. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your line manager or the HR Manager for advice.

I AM FEELING ANXIOUS ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK – WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

You can be confident that we have taken every possible measure to make sure the workplace is safe. We know this will be an anxious time for many colleagues. There are a number of support services available to you during this period including the Care First Employee Assistance Programme, which can be used to access 24/7 telephone counselling or access to online services via the website www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk. To speak to a counsellor confidentially, please call **0800 174319** or to access the online service please log in using the details below:

Username: **stedmundhall**
Password: **employee**

Support is also available from the [NHS talking therapy services](#).

You can discuss any concerns that you have with your line manager who can support you with adjustments to your work or speak to the HR Manager, who is a Mental Health First Aider, if further advice is needed. If you are experiencing significant anxiety, you should contact your GP for advice and treatment if required.

University Staff are also eligible to register with [Big White Wall \(now together all\)](#), which is a 24/7 online, anonymous community where members can support each other over mental health concerns, with trained professionals on hand to provide additional support as required.

I WOULD LIKE TO WORK FROM HOME PERMANENTLY, HOW DO I REQUEST THIS?

We are delighted with how successfully our staff have adapted to working from home during this pandemic; however, it is important that we maintain a complete College experience for our students and therefore the College will transition all those working from home gradually to enable staff to return to their offices safely. As such, temporary arrangements and additional flexibility will be given in line with government advice. If a member of staff wishes to make a request for flexible working on a permanent basis, this request should be made to their manager via the Flexible Working Policy.

ANNUAL LEAVE FOR STAFF WHO HAVE NOT BEEN FURLOUGHED

The College recognises that since lockdown, staff who have been working have done so as their role required it and the work had not diminished. We also appreciate that some staff have had an additional workload. Therefore, it is agreed that staff who have not been furloughed and have been unable to use their full annual leave entitlement for 2019-20 will be able to carry forward up to five days to be used by the end of December 2020. In exceptional circumstances, where for operational reasons, staff are not able to take this leave by the required date a short extension may be approved at the discretion of the Domestic Bursar and Finance Bursar.

Staff are however encouraged to take leave if possible before the end of September 2020 to ensure they maintain their wellbeing.

ANNUAL LEAVE FOR STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN ON FURLOUGH

Staff who have been on furlough will be expected to take all their leave prior to returning to work and for those who have been unfurloughed or on flexible furlough by the end of September 2020.

FOR BAME COLLEAGUES

The [UK Government has stated](#) that there is clear evidence that COVID-19 does not affect all population groups equally. We understand this can cause increased concerns for our BAME colleagues. The College is committed to ensuring that we do everything we can to protect our whole community and we recognise our duty of care to all colleagues and

students regardless of background or ethnicity. We are working on a plan to reopen the College safely to all, in accordance with government advice. This will include measures to help protect all staff including allowing staggered start and finish times and the implementation of social distancing measures for those at work. We remain clear about the need for respect, kindness and compassion for all. If you experience or witness any inappropriate behaviour, harassment or violence, please report it to your line manager, the HR Manager or in serious cases the police immediately.

FOR PREGNANT COLLEAGUES

If you are pregnant, please follow the government advice on social distancing measures. Your line manager or the HR Manager will offer maternity risk assessments for any pregnant staff working at College or remotely.

WHAT FACILITIES WILL BE IN PLACE FOR REST BREAKS E.G., FREE COLLEGE MEALS, COFFEE, TEA MAKING, FRIDGES, TOILETS?

Unfortunately, free meals for staff are suspended until further notice as the College Kitchen will be closed during the day.

All water fountains will be open and additional drinking water is available from all marked taps.

Kitchen areas will remain open but due to size are likely to operate on a 'one in, one out' rule with staff being required to wash hands before and after handling any communal items.

Toilets will be open but with physical distancing rules in place to allow safe navigation routes in and around the toilet and sink areas. Regular hand washing for 20 seconds and/or sanitising is the main way to clean any potential contamination from your hands and dry them with paper towels or hand dryers. The HSE have confirmed that hand dryers can be used, however, paper towels are also being made available in each location.

I AM A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR COMMON ROOM – CAN I USE IT?

The SCR will be closed for meals during Michaelmas Term. The Coffee Room will remain open but with reduced seating and this capacity will be advertised on the door. We will operate a full-capacity system where, once full, no-one can enter until someone else has left this room. Staff will be cleaning the room at regular intervals throughout the day.

TRAVELLING SAFELY TO WORK

The Government advice is to avoid public transport where possible. If you live close enough, please consider walking or cycling to work and try to pick less busy times and routes to take the pressure off the transport system. We understand the need to be flexible

in all our working arrangements, so please talk to your line manager if you are returning to work and/or about staggering your hours so that you can get to work in the safest way possible.

The College has signed up to Cyclescheme, an employee benefit which saves you 25-39% on a bike and accessories (up to a maximum value of £1,000). You pay nothing upfront and the payments are taken tax efficiently from your salary. Further details can be found by visiting the [Cyclescheme website](#) and quoting the employer code **1e13b81**.

WILL I BE ABLE TO PARK AT ONE OF THE COLLEGE PROPERTIES?

We are currently considering options around parking and will update colleagues further on this as soon as we have more details. We are looking at the opportunity for parking spaces on some of our off-site properties (Tamesis, Norham Gardens). These spaces will be allocated on a rota/needs basis and details will be made available in the next few days.

I HAVE A BUS PASS THAT I HAVE CONTINUED PAYING FOR VIA PAYROLL; CAN I GET AN EXTENSION FOR THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD?

Yes. Staff who have been unable to use their bus passes are advised to contact the bus companies directly at least one week prior to recommencing travel as follows:

Oxford Bus Company – keylink@oxfordbus.co.uk
Stagecoach – oxford.enquiries@stagecoachbus.com

WHAT IS THE CURRENT TRAVEL ADVICE FOR TRIPS ABROAD?

Advice for those intending to travel abroad and for those returning to the UK from overseas is changing rapidly.

There remains in place a COVID-19 exceptional travel advisory notice, advising against all but essential international travel. Travel to some countries and territories is currently exempt from the notice. Please stay up to date with specific advice and guidance on the [government website](#).

Staff are instructed not to travel abroad or to book international travel for business reasons until further notice.

Staff who have booked holidays abroad should discuss the implications of any quarantine arrangements with their line manager or the HR Manager. If you are unable to work from home then, depending on the reasons for your travel and what travel restrictions and advice were in place at the time you travelled, you may be required to take additional annual leave or unpaid leave to fulfil the period of quarantine. Line managers should seek advice from the HR Manager before making a decision.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE IN PLACE TO KEEP STAFF SAFE WHEN WE RETURN TO COLLEGE?

When you return to College there will be clear instructions available for everyone on how to maintain a safe environment in the workplace, and regular reminders of health and safety precautions and any changes to requirements and safe working practices. These will be provided before you return.

The instructions will include:

- use of designated entrances and exits;
- social distancing within College buildings – in offices, corridors, staircases, etc.;
- a one-way system around the College;
- use of communal facilities – kitchens, meeting rooms etc., as it may be necessary to stagger usage or to continue to hold remote meetings so as to maintain social distancing;
- any restrictions on the use of communal equipment such as printers and photocopiers;
- other health and safety instructions such as hygiene practices.

These instructions will constitute a reasonable management request and all staff will be expected to follow them. If you commit a minor or inadvertent breach, your manager will remind you about the requirements and support you in observing them. If you repeat the breach, your manager may decide to send you home pending consideration of next steps. If you deliberately refuse to follow the instructions or commit a major breach, that would be a disciplinary offence and you risk being denied access to College premises and being suspended.

It is going to take some time for the guidelines to become routine for everyone and supporting each other will help to keep everyone safe. If you notice someone is not following the guidance please encourage them in a friendly and polite way and if someone reminds you please do not take offence – we need to work together as a community.

WHAT OTHER PROTECTIVE MEASURES IS THE COLLEGE IMPLEMENTING?

- cleaning regimes will be significantly enhanced and extended to cover the hours of 06:30 to 17:30 with regular cleaning of contact points such as door handles, rails and toilets.
- hand sanitizers will be available across College properties.
- all College spaces will be adapted to ensure social distancing and appropriate ventilation.
- signage and markings will be available to enable all to safely enter and move around College premises.
- the College Library will operate social distancing through capacity limits with spacing of seats and enhanced cleaning measures.
- where social distancing is more difficult, we will adopt further measures such as the use of Perspex screens or barriers.

WHAT PPE SHOULD I BE USING WHEN I RETURN TO WORK AND WHERE CAN I GET THIS?

Use of PPE is a control measure determined by risk assessment and identifying risk mitigation measures in accordance with the usual hierarchy of controls. Social distancing is higher in this hierarchy than PPE, but for some workers PPE will be needed to control risk. The risk is highest for those working in a student or customer facing role as they are more exposed to COVID-19; for other staff, the government advice there is very little scientific evidence of widespread benefit from PPE. Your line manager is responsible for issuing any relevant PPE on your first day back at work.

SHOULD I WEAR A FACE COVERING?

The Government has set out that people must wear a face covering whilst using public transport, in shops and supermarkets or when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient.

We are therefore recommending that all colleagues and students wear a face covering when inside College buildings. To support this, we are providing reusable College branded face masks and these will be distributed very shortly.

It is important to note that face coverings do not replace social distancing and that you need to use them properly i.e. wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off and ensure your mouth and nose are covered.

HOW WILL SOCIAL DISTANCING BE IMPLEMENTED?

- use of a one-way system;
- encouraging the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format;
- where it is possible to remain two metres apart, use floor markings to mark the distance, particularly in the most crowded areas (for example, where queues form);
- where it is not possible to remain two metres apart, staff should work side-by-side, or facing away from each other, rather than face-to-face if possible;
- where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to a minimum where possible;
- as much as possible, keep teams of workers together (cohorting), and keep teams as small as possible.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY OR FIRE?

In an emergency or fire, staff do not have to comply with social distancing guidelines if it is unsafe to do so. However, social distancing should be maintained if possible. First Aiders and those involved with providing assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

CHANGES TO YOUR NORMAL WORKING PRACTICES

Your contract of employment may specify your normal working hours and place of work. In the current, extremely unusual circumstances, your line manager may need to ask you to work different hours (although not excessive hours) and in a different location for a limited period.

For example:

- some staff may need to be asked to work different patterns from their normal pattern, for example if they share offices, or to make sure that there are always essential staff on duty. This might involve some staff working mornings and others working afternoons or evenings; or staff attending on alternate days or alternate weeks and some involving split shifts.
- it may be necessary to balance shifts across a team to take into account caring responsibilities and personal needs.
- some staff may need to be asked to work in a different building or in a different part of their usual building. If this happens to you, and you are working away from others in your team, your line manager will keep in regular contact with you.
- it may be necessary for some staff members to take on different tasks at a similar grade on a temporary basis to cover for colleagues who are unable to return to the workplace. However, you will not be expected to take on a cover role in addition to your normal role and your line manager will be responsible for ensuring that tasks are prioritised to cover key areas without overloading staff.

Your manager will discuss any proposed temporary changes to your normal working patterns and you will be informed of them in writing and asked to agree.

I HAVE AN UNDERLYING CONDITION. SHOULD I STAY AT HOME?

No, not necessarily, unless you are extremely vulnerable. Staff with an underlying health condition, should speak to their line Manager who will conduct a risk assessment based on your personal circumstances and your job. Most staff with underlying conditions will be able to work normally, while being particularly careful to follow social distancing measures.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I OR A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);

- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual);
- loss of, or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

If you or a member of your household are displaying COVID-19 symptoms (however mild) you must follow this guidance:

- if you are at home, stay at home
- if you are at work, you must leave immediately
- contact your manager and HR Manager to advise them that you or a member of your household have suspected symptoms of COVID-19

UNIVERSITY TESTING SERVICE

An in-house University testing service is now open to all academic and non-academic staff.

The central testing site in the city centre is the first to open, and is located in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ). A second testing site at the Old Road campus in Headington is scheduled to open in September when students begin returning to Oxford for the new academic year.

The Testing for COVID-19: Early Alert Service (EAS) is a free, customised service for staff of the University that will benefit the local community by reducing the risk of a further COVID-19 outbreak and reducing the pressure on NHS testing facilities. Designed specifically for a University environment, the service will ensure that staff who become unwell are quickly identified, with a rapid response initiated to protect others from transmission. The service is aligned with NHS and PHE guidelines and uses proven technologies and standard NHS procedures.

The University continues to evaluate various future options for better and wider testing of staff and students for COVID-19. We are constantly reviewing developments in government guidance, existing NHS/PHE facilities, local requirements and any new approved and appropriate tests as they become available.

Further information and details of how to book online can be found by visiting <https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/health/covid-testing>.

You will need to sign in using your SSO and you will need to be on a University network, Oxford eduroam or VPN. You will need to complete a booking form, giving your personal details and confirm that you have symptoms that you feel could be due to COVID-19. You will be given a choice of times and, if both testing centres are open, a choice of locations.

TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR TEST RESULT

If you develop symptoms, you may wish to alert the people with whom you have had close contact over the last 48 hours. You should tell them that you might have coronavirus but are waiting for a test result. At this stage (until the test result is known), those people do not need to self-isolate, but they should take extra care in practicing social distancing and good hygiene, like washing their hands regularly. They should also watch out for their own symptoms.

You may want to write down your recent close contacts now so that you have them to hand if you test positive.

HOW DOES NHS TEST AND TRACE WORK FOR SOMEONE WITH CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS?

- **Isolate:** As soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, you should self-isolate for at least 10 days. Anyone else in your household should self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If a member of your household experiences symptoms you must self-isolate for 14 days for the start of their symptoms even if you are symptom-free.
- **Results:** If your test is **positive**, you must complete the remainder of your 10-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household should also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If your test is **negative**, you and other household members no longer need to isolate but if you feel unwell, you may have a different illness that could spread to other people, so stay at home until you feel better. An unclear, void, borderline or inconclusive result means it is not possible to say for certain if you had coronavirus when the test was done. If this happens, you may be advised to ask for another test as soon as possible, as the test is most accurate within a few days of your symptoms starting. If you are not able to have another test, you and anyone you live with must keep self-isolating. If you have symptoms, self-isolate for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started. Anyone you live with who does not have symptoms must self-isolate for 14 days.
- **Share contacts:** If you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS Test and Trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you within 24 hours with instructions of how to share details of people you have been in close, recent contact with and places you have visited. It is important that you respond as soon as possible so that they can give appropriate advice to those who need it. You will be asked to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of our NHS contact tracers. Find out about [being contacted by NHS Test and Trace after testing positive for coronavirus](#).

HOW DOES NHS TEST AND TRACE WORK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO TESTED POSITIVE CORONAVIRUS?

- **Alert:** You will be alerted by the NHS Test and Trace service if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus. The alert will come either by text or email and you'll need to log on to the NHS Test and Trace website, which is the easiest way for you and the service to communicate with each other –

but, if not, a trained call handler will talk you through what you need to do. Under 18s will get a phone call and a parent or guardian will be asked to give permission for the call to continue.

- **Isolate:** You will be asked to begin self-isolation for up to 14 days, depending on when you last came into contact with the person who has tested positive. It is important to do this even if you do not feel unwell, because it can take up to 14 days for the symptoms to develop. This will be crucial to avoid you unknowingly spreading the virus to others. Your household does not need to self-isolate with you, but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and washing your hands.
- **Test if needed:** If you develop symptoms of coronavirus, other members of your household should self-isolate at home and you should book a coronavirus test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access. If your test is positive, you must continue to stay at home for 10 days. If your test is negative, you must still complete your 14-day self-isolation period because the virus may not be detectable yet.

WHAT ABOUT THE RISK DURING THE ASYMPTOMATIC PERIOD?

The risk of acquiring or transmitting infection is yet to be quantified in a valid way. COVID-19 is mainly spread through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is coughing. During the asymptomatic period, transmission is less of a risk when social distancing and hand hygiene is followed, as there is a lower risk of the asymptomatic person transmitting the infection, and any theoretical risk can be mitigated with the above measures. Self-isolation once symptoms start has been predicted to reduce risk of spread by up to 57%.

CAN I GET RE-INFECTED WITH COVID-19?

If you develop further symptoms of COVID-19, please self-isolate and re-present for testing. The evidence at present of the risk of re-infection is unclear.

IF I HAVE HAD COVID-19, AM I NOW IMMUNE?

This is not yet clear but, on the limited data so far, you probably have a level of protection that dwindles over time (possibly months). Whether this immunity prevents all reinfection or merely makes a second round of sickness less intense, and the period of time for which immunity lasts, depends on multiple factors, such as genetics, gender, the strength of your initial immune response, and the characteristics of the virus itself as it continues to evolve. We will update this advice as more information becomes available.

I AM AWAITING A TEST RESULT. SHOULD I COME INTO WORK?

For the most accurate test result, you should attend one of the University's test centres as soon as you have symptoms, to be tested in the optimum testing window. You should not

be coming into work whilst awaiting the results. This is because current evidence suggests infection declines very quickly within 7 days of symptoms. Once you have received the test result, inform your manager and the HR Manager.

I AM HAVING ONGOING SYMPTOMS DESPITE ISOLATING FOR SEVEN DAYS, CAN I COME INTO WORK?

Some symptoms, including a cough (but not continuous cough) and fatigue, can be ongoing for a time after the infection is over. However if you are still experiencing a fever or a continuous cough do not come into work. Self-isolate until these symptoms have subsided for 48 hours as a precautionary measure. The risk of reinfection is unclear, and if you re-experience a continuous cough and high temperature (that is, after 48 hours of being symptom-free), please self-isolate and re-present for testing.

SHOULD I BE RETESTED AND WAIT FOR A NEGATIVE TEST BEFORE RETURNING?

Evidence shows that tests can remain positive for over 14 days after symptoms subside. At present it is unclear what this means, as more research is needed in this area. We do know that after seven days your infectiousness is low. Retesting and isolating, awaiting a negative test, before returning to work is therefore not advised. Those with a positive test should stay off work for seven days and return to work on day eight, providing they are well and have been afebrile for 48 hours.

I AM SHIELDING, SHOULD I RETURN TO WORK?

No. The current guidance states you must not return to the workplace. If you have not already done so, please ensure you contact your line manager or the HR Manager to advise them that you are shielding in order that they can advise you on a safe return to the workplace. Up to date advice on shielding is available from the [NHS website](#).

A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY/SOMEONE I LIVE WITH IS SHIELDING, SHOULD I BE COMING TO WORK?

Yes. Where a household has a person who is shielding, the rest of the household are not required to adopt shielding measures. Guidance on measures to help protect households with someone who is shielding is available from the NHS website.

WHERE CAN I FIND WIDER GUIDANCE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS?

The situation is evolving rapidly. You should visit and regularly check the following websites for the latest updates and guidance:

- the [University's coronavirus advice page](#)

- the [UK Government's coronavirus webpages](#)
- the [Public Health England website](#) and [Twitter](#) page
- the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\) website](#)

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Academic and Non-Academic Staff