



Jesus College Oxford

COVID19 **Questions & Answers** **for College Employees***

This document addresses many of the questions that have been raised by staff members over the past couple of weeks. It will be updated as more information comes available about the outbreak and how it is managed.

The following links provide a wealth of current information about COVID-19 and we recommend that you read these web pages if you have any general questions about the virus.

[University webpage - Coronavirus](#)

[coronavirus advice for travellers - NHS](#)

[Government further information](#)

[Prime Minister statement on coronavirus 16 March 2020](#)

Stay at home-guidance for households with possible coronavirus covid 19 infection

General information on COVID-19

How is COVID-19 different from flu?

Influenza (the flu) and COVID19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus, are both infectious respiratory illnesses. Although the symptoms of COVID19 and the flu can look similar, the two illnesses are caused by different viruses.

COVID19 is caused by the novel 2019 coronavirus (known in medical terms as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2).

How COVID-19 is spread?

From what is known about other coronaviruses, the spread of COVID19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission; these are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, in the same way colds can spread.

*All information is taken from the University, Gov.uk, Public Health England and OxFed



Jesus College Oxford

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID19:

- CO-LOCATION: infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs
- TOUCH: it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knobs or shaking hands then touching own face). Our current understanding is that the virus doesn't survive on surfaces for longer than 72 hours.

There is currently little evidence that people without symptoms are infectious to others.

Regular cleaning of frequently-touched hard surfaces and hands will therefore help to reduce the risk of infection.

Will wearing a facemask protect me and prevent me from catching COVID-19?

During normal day-to-day activities facemasks do not provide protection from respiratory viruses such as COVID-19 and do not need to be worn by staff in the workplace. Facemasks are only recommended to be worn by infected individuals when advised by a healthcare worker, to reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to other people.

Public Health England recommends that the best way to reduce any risk of infection for anyone is good hygiene (e.g. regularly washing your hands) and avoiding direct or close contact (within 2m) with any potentially infected person.

I am worried I will get COVID-19. How can the spread of infection be prevented?

There are general principles everyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Washing your hands often - with soap and water, or using alcohol sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if handwashing facilities are not available - this is particularly important after taking public transport
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin
- People who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work (remember to contact the HR Director (or your office Director) in the first instance if this is the case.)
- Employees should wash their hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at work
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation



Jesus College Oxford

- before eating any food, including snacks
- before leaving work
- on arrival at home
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I have COVID19 symptoms or think I have been exposed to COVID19?

NHS 111 has an online COVID service that can tell you if you need medical help and advise you what to do. To use the online system follow the link <https://111.nhs.uk/service/covid-19>

The Government advice is as follows:

- If you live at home and you have symptoms, however mild you should stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms started.
- if you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for **14 days**. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- for anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.
- Should a household member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days**. The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to re-start 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.
- At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.

The symptoms:

- A high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- A new, continuous cough – this means you have started coughing repeatedly

Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home. **You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you are staying at home.** If you are concerned, do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Call [111](https://111.nhs.uk) if you need to speak to someone.



Jesus College Oxford

Can I get coronavirus from food?

There is currently no evidence that you can catch coronavirus from food, but it's always a good idea to wash your hands in soap and water or use hand sanitiser gel before you prepare or eat food.

How long the virus can survive?

How long any respiratory virus survives will depend on a number of factors, for example:

- what surface the virus is on
- whether it is exposed to sunlight
- differences in temperature and humidity
- exposure to cleaning products

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

It is known that similar viruses are transferred to and by people's hands. Therefore, regular hand hygiene and cleaning of frequently touched surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection.

Travel related questions

What countries and areas are affected?

For the latest country information please see the [list of countries and areas affected](#).

College Procedures

What steps has the College taken to minimise the risk of COVID19?

The College has set up a COVID-19 planning group to manage our response to the outbreak. The group consists of the Principal, College Officers and other relevant staff. This group is monitoring and implementing the advice circulated from the University, Public Health England, the Government websites and our College nurse and doctors. As a result we have implemented the following practical measures:

- Alcohol based hand gel has been placed in all toilets and distributed to all offices
- Signs have been placed in toilets to encourage thorough washing of hands (the best way of containing the spread of the virus)
- Additional cleaning has been implemented in areas where the number of visitors is higher
- We have a supply of facemasks in College should they be needed.



Jesus College Oxford

In addition the College has closed itself to bed and breakfast, day visitors and tour groups in order to reduce the number of unknown or little known people within the College. Further large gatherings such as dinners have been cancelled or postponed. Students have been encouraged to go home if at all possible.

The College has further taken the decision to minimise the opportunities for groups to gather and has therefore closed the JCR, MCR and SCR, the library (other than to collect and return books) and the staff room.

We are looking at implementing home working for those where it is possible to do so.

What should I do if I notice someone becomes unwell in College and it is believed they have been exposed to COVID19?

If an individual becomes unwell in College with: a high temperature – they feel hot to touch on their chest or back; or a new, continuous cough – this means you have started coughing repeatedly, the unwell person should:

1. Either remove themselves or be asked to remove themselves to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people - if possible to a room or area where they can be isolated behind a shut door. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation
2. The individual who is unwell should make arrangements to get home and self isolate.
3. If the person has become seriously ill, injured or their life is at risk, the situation is deemed an emergency and 999 should be called ASAP
4. The person should remain more than 2 metres away from others. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in a bag then throw the tissue in the bin. If they don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
5. If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available. This will apply only to the period of time while waiting for transport to hospital.

How should rubbish be disposed of, including tissues, if we have a case of suspected COVID19?

In the unlikely event that the College has a case of contamination or suspected contamination, all waste that has been in contact with that individual including used tissues should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be



Jesus College Oxford

put in a safe place and marked for storage until the COVID19 test result is available, which will be within 24 hours.

If the individual tests negative, this can be put in the normal waste.

Similarly, laundry from the room of a possible case should be stored safely until the result of the test is known.

Specific health advice

How should I isolate myself if I think I might have coronavirus?

If there's a chance you could have coronavirus, you may be asked to stay away from other people (self-isolate).

This means you should:

- stay at home
- not come to work or visit other public areas
- not use public transport or taxis
- ask friends, family members or delivery services to carry out errands for you
- try to avoid visitors to your home – it's OK for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food.

Who do I need to contact at Jesus College if I contract COVID19?

If you do have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has, please **do not** come into College. You should call the relevant College representative as follows:

ALL NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

Contact Rosalyn Green, HR Director or the Director in charge of your respective area.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rosalyn Green, HR Director (tel 01865 279716 email rosalyn.green@jesus.ox.ac.uk)

Employment Specific

Will I still get paid if I am not feeling unwell but I have been told to self-isolate due to contact with an infected person?

If you are employed directly by the College and you are required to self-isolate due to close contact with a person suspected of or confirmed to have COVID19, you must contact the College to explain the situation. The College will first explore with you whether home working is possible.



Jesus College Oxford

If the College decides that that is not a possibility, the absence will be covered under sickness absence and will require self-certification of absence. The College pay contractual sick pay from day one.

I cannot come into work as I need to look after a dependant who is unwell with COVID19. Would the College allow me to have the time off?

Employees are entitled to time off work to help someone who depends on them (a 'dependant') in an unexpected event or emergency. This would apply to situations to do with COVID19. For example:

- If you have children you need to look after or for whom you need to arrange childcare because their school has closed.
- To help a child or another dependant if they're sick, or need to go into isolation or hospital.

There is no statutory right to pay for this time off, but the College would consider whether taking annual leave was an option and would be flexible in authorising time off without pay.

The amount of time off an employee takes to look after someone must be reasonable for the situation and all attempts should be made to share the responsibility, for example with a partner. In the first instance, please discuss any concerns with your line manager.

I don't want to go to work because I am scared of going out in case I catch COVID19

Your welfare is important to the College and as an employer, the College will listen to any concerns that staff may have. If there are specific concerns which relate to the individual, the College will look to support the employee through appropriate means such as flexible working, authorising holiday, unpaid leave or home working.

The member of staff would make contact with the HR Director and/or their own Director to talk to them about the situation.