

**Document Administration**

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\*Please note the document remains valid until formally revoked or replaced by the University.

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| Version Number | Date Authorised | Summary of Key Changes |
| 1.1 | October 2020 | Clarification added to flow diagrams.  Response to comments from local Health Protection Team on version 1.0.  Clarification added about students in contact with staff member who has a positive test. |
| 1.2 | July 2021 | Updated organisational context to reflect current government restrictions  Update isolation requirements from 14 days to 10 days |
| 1.3 | September 2021 | Update removing requirement to isolate for close contacts if double vaccinated.  Addition of current COVID controls  Addition of explanation of current self-isolation rules  Addition of escalation scenarios  Addition of general escalation measures  Update and consolidation of flow charts to reflect current practice |
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**Version Control Table**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This policy sets out the arrangements to be implemented in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 at Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU). It provides a response informed by legislation and government guidance, , specifically ’. ‘[Higher education COVID-19 operational guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses/higher-education-covid-19-operational-guidance)’
2. The University will remain engaged with networks of influence and support locally (e.g., Department of Public Health, Lincoln BIG, Local Resilience Forum) regionally (e.g., Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Police) and nationally (e.g., GuildHE, Universities UK).

**ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

1. Following a period of ‘lockdown’ which began in March 2020, consistent with national government advice, the University put in place a programme of work to enable students, staff and visitors (including tenants) to return to the campus and re-introduced ‘In-person’ working under a set of strict protocols concerned with health, safety and well-being.
2. The successful roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine program has resulted in a high percentage of the population being partially or fully vaccinated. Countrywide rates of infection remain relatively high, which in part, is a result of vaccine hesitancy of certain groups, including 18–24-year-olds. The return of students to campus or to university-managed accommodation in the city of Lincoln in September 2021, will likely lead to localised outbreaks, however with the protection offered by the vaccine, the risks of serious illness or death amongst vulnerable groups have been significantly reduced.
3. On the 16 August 2021, the Government updated restrictions on self-isolation by removing the requirement for fully vaccinated persons to isolate after close contact with a COVID-19 infected person. With high levels of vaccine take up protecting against the worst effects of COVID, and the removal of precautionary isolation, BGU’s ability to continue in-person services in event of an outbreak has been greatly enhanced.
4. Induction for new and returning students emphasises the importance of appropriately responsible behaviour and information is available to students and staff through the University’s [Working Together Protecting Each Other](https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/workingtogether) website.
5. The University has introduced a [COVID-19 Code of Conduct (Students)](https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/document-download/151631) to ensure that the BGU community can stay safe together. It offers guidance about the measures that have been introduced (e.g., the use of face coverings, cleaning regimes and regular hand washing / hand sanitisation) and emphasises compliance with government’s self-isolation and quarantine regulations as well as associated University guidance.
6. The removal of social distancing and easing of rules on isolation for vaccinated persons means that regulatory restrictions which prevented staff returning to the office are no longer a barrier. However, so long as risks of a COVID-19 outbreak remain, it is prudent for business continuity reasons, that Department Heads decide departmental risk levels, and where appropriate maintain rotas and ‘shift patterns’, which aim to reduce footfall on campus, especially on the busiest days of timetabled student learning.
7. Students, staff or visitors to the University are being told to get tested if they experience any of the [Covid-19 symptoms](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/), even if only mildly:

* A high temperature
* A new, continuous cough
* A loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

**COVID OUTBREAK RESPONSE GROUP (CORG)**

1. Reporting directly to University Executive Group, the COVID Outbreak Response Group comprises:

* Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), chair
* Bishop Grosseteste Students’ Union (BGSU) representative
* Campus Operations & Accommodation Manager (COAM)
* Chief Operating Officer (COO)
* Director of Estates and Facilities (DoEF)
* Director of Human Resources (DoHR)
* Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications (DoMRC)
* Health & Safety Officer (H&SO)
* Registrar & University Secretary (R&US)
* Pro Vice-Chancellor – Students (PVC).

1. Its purposes are to:
   1. Monitor positive test cases across the University for students, staff and visitors
   2. Determine whether isolation measures have to be escalated based on the circumstances of each positive test result
   3. Liaise with and report to the local Health Protection Team (HPT) as appropriate
   4. Liaise with the University Executive Group over broader lockdown measures.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

1. The following general principles will be followed:
   1. The number of people on campus will be not be limited but may be managed if required to ensure the University is able to deliver as much In-person education as possible in accordance with the Government’s “COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021”.
   2. Wherever possible in-person teaching should be maintained.
   3. On campus social activity forms an essential part of the learning and improving the mental health of participants – it should be maintained for as long as possible in the event of an outbreak, however not at the expense of in-person learning.
   4. The University recognises staff and students have the same rights and are bound by the same constraints as any other citizen.

**COVID-19 CURRENT MITIGATION**

1. The best way to control and manage outbreaks is to avoid them in so far as it is possible. However, the University recognises it must balance the risks of catching COVID-19 against the risks of imposing such sweeping restrictions that staff and students suffer harm in other ways. The University has prepared carefully for the safe return of students to the campus. Measures taken include:

* **Hands.** Sanitising stations have been installed near every entrance and exit to our buildings and in all teaching spaces.
* **Face**. It is expected that all staff, students and visitors will wear a face covering, in communal areas and teaching spaces inside all University buildings, unless medically exempt.
* **Fresh Air.** All teaching spaces have been assessed for airborne risks, with clear guidance provided to occupants on measures which maximising air circulation and reduce hazards so far as reasonably practicable. Mechanical air handling systems have been set to operate at optimum capacity to support safe air circulation. Ventilation systems are regularly maintained and checked for effectiveness.
* **Signage**. We have installed clear signage at entrance points to reminding staff and students to sanitise their hands and put on their face covering. There is clear signage in each teaching space, which sets out the requirement to ventilate the space effectively.
* **Communications** a comprehensive communication plan has been developed, which includes emails to all staff and students, setting out the University’s revised operating procedures; letters to all students setting out the behaviours expected from them; videos explaining the safety measures in place on campus and social media content. All staff and students will be briefed on the safety measures in place as they arrive at / return to the University.

**COVID-19 SUMMARY OF ESCALATION MEASURES**

1. Primary controls for COVID-19 are vaccines, testing and reducing airborne particles by wearing face coverings, however as the pandemic evolves, we must remain prepared to escalate controls if the risks increase. Detailed steps for escalation can be found in Annex 1, below is a summary of measures available to BGU should the need arise:

* Introduction of NHS COVID Pass as condition of entry for non-academic events and activities
* Restricting access to campus to only students and staff
* Cancelation of non-academic and social events
* Reintroduction of 1m+ Social distancing
* Reintroduction of academic and accommodation bubble arrangements
* Working from home for all but critical staff
* Resumption of more or full online learning.

**SELF-ISOLATION GUIDANCE AND NOTIFICATION**

1. Where a student or member of staff has symptoms of COVID-19, they must self-isolate straight away, book and take a PCR test as soon as possible. People should also self-isolate straight away and until they get their test results if:

* They have tested positive for COVID-19.
* Someone they live with has symptoms or has tested positive (unless not required to self-isolate – see below).
* They have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace.

1. There is no need to self-isolate if someone you live with has symptoms of COVID-19, or has tested positive for COVID-19, if any of the following apply:

* You are fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS.
* You are under 18 years, 6 months old.
* You are taking part or have taken part in a COVID-19 vaccine trial.
* You are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

1. Even if you do not have symptoms, you should still:

• Take a PCR test on GOV.UK to check if you have COVID-19.

• Follow Government advice on how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19.

• Limit contact with people who are at higher risk from COVID-19.

When self-isolating, you should not leave home, except to post a test kit or for a PCR test appointment.

1. All students and staff should notify the University if they have symptoms or have taken a COVID test (PCR or LFD) whatever the result by completing the University’s online [Testing and Self Isolation Declaration](https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/coronavirus-support). In addition, students should inform their personal tutor and/or faculty administrator that they have developed symptoms or tested positive. Staff should inform their line manager. Everyone with symptoms must contact NHS Test & Trace to book a test, even if the symptoms appear very mild.

**DATA PROTECTION / GDPR**

1. Information relating to a student or staff member’s health should not normally be shared internally beyond those staff who require it for their role, or externally with third parties (other than public health authorities) without consent.
2. On rare occasions it may be deemed necessary to share information with a third party such as the emergency services without a student or staff member’s permission. This would only be done in exceptional circumstances, in “life or death” situations where it is in the individual’s vital interests to do so. This should only be done in consultation with the relevant line manager and on the advice of [registrar@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@bishopg.ac.uk).
3. In these rare occasions, strictly limited information proportionate to the situation that has arisen may be disclosed to University staff or third parties, including health care professionals. If any such data is to be provided by email rather than verbally, this must be done appropriately and by taking the necessary precautions – by marking any message as strictly confidential and externally by encrypting the email in accordance with University policy. All information must be stored in line with the University’s Data Protection Code of Practice. Further information can be obtained from [registrar@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@bishopg.ac.uk).

**ANNEX 1 - COVID OUTBREAK SENARIOS AND ESCULATION**

| **Scenario**  (a) | **Students** | | | **Staff**  (e) | **Other Comments**  (f) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teaching**  (b) | **Accommodation**  (c) | Social/Activities  (d) |
| 1. Minor local outbreak not affecting staff and students – limited impact on operations. | * In-person teaching continues. * Consider impact on vulnerable or shielding students – do some students need to self-isolate? | * Prepare for potential outbreak in student accommodation. | * Seek advice from Public Health officials through regular LRF forum attendance. | * Review risk assessments for vulnerable staff | * Increased COVID awareness communications. * Communications to emphasise the need to take asymptomatic tests, or book a PCR test if symptomatic, even if symptoms mild. |
| 2. Significant local outbreak – potentially a local lockdown not involving staff or students. | * In-person teaching continues. * Consider move to online teaching if outbreak prevents travel or significant numbers of staff and/or students need to self-isolate. | * Assume students may have to remain in accommodation. * Maintain high readiness for outbreak in student accommodation. * Enforce face covings in communal areas | * Consider COVID Pass for events * Consider restricting meetings of SU clubs and societies. * Advise students to minimise contact wherever possible. | * Consider asking additional staff to work from home * Consider vulnerable staff to remain at home. | * Increased COVID awareness communications. * Communications to emphasise the need to take asymptomatic tests, or book a PCR test, even if symptoms mild. * Encourage more regular asymptomatic testing. |
| 3. Minor outbreak in student accommodation | * In-person tuition should continue for students not affected by the outbreak. * Persons identified as “close contact” are to follow self-isolation guidance: * Fully vaccinated to take a PCR test and check if they have COVID-19. * If positive, self -isolate for 10 days. * If negative, take regular LFD tests * Unvaccinated to self-isolate for 10 days and arrange a PCR Test. They must remain in isolation even if negative test. * Initiate support for students self-isolating. | * Email to student(s) and households, advising them on next steps. * Follow self-isolation guidance: Students in close contact with confirmed cases may need to self-isolate for 10 days from symptom, or start daily LFT testing, if fully vaccinated. * Initiate deep clean of shared spaces * Guests prevented from visiting affected areas * Restrict movement into area where outbreak occurred * Encourage the same in private PBSA and HMOs. | * No immediate impact on provision. | * Inform affected staff, where necessary follow the notification and monitoring guidance on self-isolation. | * Students to notify University using the online form, contact NHS Test & Trace and book a test. * University initiates on campus contact tracing through attendance logs, activity logs and accommodation registers. * Email to affected student(s)/ staff advising them on next steps. * Cleaning requirements to be assessed in line with the University’s policy for potentially infected areas. * Increase communications emphasising the need to test at least twice weekly. |
| 4. Major outbreak in student accommodation (multiple cases across more than one self-contained flat/HMO). | * Consider limiting In-person teaching. * Affected staff/ students to follow self-isolation guidance | * Student(s) to follow self-isolation guidance where applicable * Restrict movement between rooms and flats * Students self-isolating are to contact University if needing support for food/medicine * Initiate deep clean of affected communal areas * encourage the same in private PBSA and HMOs. * Guests prevented from visiting all areas. | * Advise the SU to suspend off campus meetings of clubs and societies. | * Inform affected staff and where necessary follow the notification and monitoring guidance on self-isolation. * Review individual risk assessments of affected staff. | * Students: notify University using the online form, contact NHS Test & Trace and book a test. * Restrict access to accommodation to staff and occupant students only. * Email to affected student(s)/ staff advising them on next steps. * Ensure cleaning of potential infected areas follows enhanced PPE measures. * Communications to include the need for staff and students to test twice weekly |
| 5. Minor outbreak in a teaching group | * In-person teaching to continue for students not affected by the outbreak * Affected staff/ students to follow self-isolation guidance * Advise to commence enhanced (daily) LFT testing and consider limiting contact with people who are at higher risk of COVID-19. * Teaching space put out of use until deep clean conducted. * May result in a significant number of students self-isolating. * Initiate support for students self-isolating | * No immediate impact | * No immediate impact on provision. * Students in close contact with confirmed cases will need to follow self-isolation guidance | * Staff may need to self-isolate in the event of a unvaccinated. * Vaccinated staff should start daily LFD test regime. | * Staff/ Students: notify University using the online form, contact NHS Test & Trace and book a test. * University initiates contact tracing through attendance registers. * Email to affected student(s)/ staff advising them on next steps. |
| 6. Major outbreak across several departments/ cohorts. | * Consider introducing social distancing and reducing In-person teaching across the University * May result in a significant number of students self-isolating. | * Student(s) to follow self-isolation guidance where applicable * Restrict movement between rooms to minimising close contact * Self-isolating students to contact University if needing support for food/medicine * Deep cleaning likely required in BGU accommodation * Guests prevented from visiting all areas | * Advise the SU to suspend off campus meetings of clubs and societies. * Introduce COVID Pass for SU bar and events | * Larger numbers of staff may need to self-isolate. * At risk staff may need to work from home, or arrangements made to ensure they limit contact in the workplace. | * Staff/ Students: notify University using the online form, contact NHS Test & Trace and book a test. * University initiates contact tracing through attendance registers. * Email to affected student(s)/ staff advising them on next steps. * Restrict access to campus to staff and students only. * Consider implementing COVID Pass & Social Distancing for support services **on campus**, e.g. libraries, catering and sports facilities. * Communications – Restricting movements, twice weekly testing |
| 7. Major outbreak affecting both the community and University with a local lockdown imposed. | * All teaching online. | * Students to remain in Lincoln. * Potentially significant numbers of students may require support with food and medicine if self-isolating. * Guests prevented from visiting all areas | * All physical meetings of clubs and societies to be suspended. * Enhanced programme of online activities. | * All non-essential staff work from home. * Essential staff required to support students to work in bubbles * Rigorous social distancing maintained. | * All campus buildings to be closed except those needed for student support. * COVID Pass & Social Distancing implemented in areas open for support services e.g. libraries, catering and sports facilities. * Access to campus to be restricted and non-essential maintenance put on hold.. * Strong focus on internal communications covering testing and support available to staff and students. * Expect rise in welfare caseload, which may need support from NHS and other partners. * Communications to emphasise |

**Outbreak response flow diagram 1A: Student with suspected symptoms/Positive test**



**Outbreak Response Flow Diagram 1B: Suspected Symptoms / Positive Test - Staff**

**Colleague Suspects Symptoms**

**Colleague:**

* If at home, stays at home
* If at work, leaves immediately
* Informs HR
* Books Test
* Self-Isolates
* Declaration Form Completion

**IF POSITIVE**

Make CORG aware.

HR to confirm isolation end date with EN/NT so we can ensure that the spreadsheet is up to date.

If had contact with anyone who is not fully vaccinated, they may need to isolate for 10 days if they’ve has close contact and complete the declaration form.

If the colleague lives with another colleague, that person will need to isolate for 10 days if they are not fully vaccinated.

**Declaration** advises HR once declaration form comes through who then let line manager etc know.

Include: name, declaration entry number, symptoms start date, test date, when last on campus, where they visited, how they get to University, where they live (e.g. family home)

Advise HR of isolation end date calculation if we can and ask them to confirm with the colleague if this is correct when the result is known as well as HR looking into any close contacts.

**IF NEGATIVE**

No further action required & EN/NT advise HR if the colleague has let us know of the negative result before they’ve told HR.

Mark dark green on the declaration summary spreadsheet once isolation is over once it is confirmed by HR/the staff member.

Mark light green on the declaration summary spreadsheet once the negative result is confirmed.

**Annex 2 Living in shared accommodation**

**General advice for living in University accommodation:**

Students have signed to conform to the Terms & Conditions of their Contractual Agreement which covers behaviour:

* To behave responsibly with regard to treating staff and fellow students with dignity and respect as outlined in the [Student Charter](file:///\\bgc.local\staff-area\files\rboast\Downloads\student-charter.pdf) and in the specific [Covid-19 Code of Conduct (Students)](file:///\\bgc.local\staff-area\files\rboast\Downloads\Covid-19-Code-of-Conduct-Students-v1-Final-Copy.pdf),
* You must only use your own crockery and cutlery, and not share it with others.
* You must always leave shared facilities clean after you have used them,
* In event of an outbreak of COVID-19, the University reserves the right to prevent guests accessing the site. Residents of the accommodation will be informed if this measure is necessary.

For those living in University halls - **Constant Stewart or Wickham Halls**

* Wear face coverings in communal stairs / corridors
* Handwash / sanitise when you return to and before you leave your flat
* Bathrooms:
* for those with en-suite facilities, please keep these clean
* for shared bathroom users – only use your own towel(s), take-away your own toiletries and clean after use
* Kitchen – Use your own crockery and cutlery, put away your own food and packets, clear and clean the facilities after use.

**General advice for living in private houses and halls**

You should follow Government advice on visiting other households. We ask that you enjoy yourself responsibly and safely, protecting yourself, each other and the wider local community. For further information please see guidance on: [how to stay safe and help prevent the spread](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#history)

**Annex 3 Advice for students self-isolating in Halls of Residence**

This applies to anyone who is required to self-isolate for a period of 10 days

If you suspect you have symptoms or have tested positive you should see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> and follow the protocols outlined in the relevant sections of this web-page – **you must self-isolate and inform the University using the** [**Declaration Form**](https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/coronavirus-support) enabling the University to contact you and provide specific support.

**Practical guidance for those self-isolating**

* Use a separate bathroom from others if possible, ideally your en-suite bathroom if available
* In the case of a shared bathroom, draw up a rota with your bubble for washing or bathing, with the self-isolating person using the bathroom last.  Thoroughly clean the bathroom when you have finished and ensure you use separate towels from others.
* If you share a kitchen with others, if possible avoid using it when other people are present (draw up a rota).
* Take your meals back to your room to eat.
* Wash crockery, cutlery etc after use using detergent and warm water and dry them thoroughly, using a separate towel.
* Do not share household items with other housemates.
* You should remain more than 2 metres away from other people
* Regularly wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
* Do not have visitors or leave your accommodation (ask deliveries to be left outside the door)
* We advise that you wear face coverings when you are not in your student bedroom

**Fire Alarm Activation**

Should the fire alarm in your accommodation sound while you are self-isolating, you are required to vacate the property immediately as per the fire evacuation information in your accommodation and assemble at the Fire Assembly Point. When at the Fire Assembly Point, please stand away from the other people that are assembled.

**Laundry**

We would advise that you do not use the launderettes on site while in self isolation

**Rubbish Removal**

All waste, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. Do not dispose of the rubbish in the kitchen or external bins until the end of the self-isolating period.

**Maintenance**

Please report maintenance online via the Estates Helpdesk. Depending on the maintenance request, please note that it may not be practical for the maintenance to take place whilst in isolation and therefore jobs will be prioritised and will only be rectified if there is a risk to Health and Safety.

**Food & Drink**

You will need to make your own arrangements for delivery of these items whilst in self-isolation.  Please ensure that the deliveries are left outside your block / building. You may consider asking a friend or Accommodation Services to collect items delivered (advising of drop off slot) for items to then be left outside your door.

**Post and Delivery of Packages**

If there is a need for packages to be delivered, please have consideration for the delivery service personnel and take advice from the delivery company.

**Concerns Raised by Students in the Flat**

We advise that you proactively inform other residents in your household bubble that you are self-isolating. In order to minimise the risk to others, we will need to inform other residents if you are self-isolating as a result of showing symptoms of COVID 19. We advise that as long as the advice above is followed you can self-isolate while living in your current accommodation.

**Looking After your Mental Health**

**If you are feeling anxious or depressed the University has a range of self-help resources available from Student Advice and Accommodation Service.**

**The University provides free local counselling support via Park Practice – contact Student Advice to be referred to a counsellor.**

**You can also access 24/7 online support, peer support and self-help materials via TogetherAll at**[**www.togerall.com**](http://www.togerall.com/)**.**

**If you, or someone you live with is experiencing severe mental health difficulties and you are concerned from a welfare perspective, you can contact Student Advice during office hours, or our Night Warden for out of hours support on 07958 248653, and they will be able to access Mental Health Nursing support from Thornbury Nursing Services, who are working in partnership with BGU**

**Accommodation Services**

Where possible Accommodation Services will be in contact with you to provide welfare check ups via phone or email if you do not have a UK mobile number listed.

If you have questions about self-isolation or if we can help with any other concerns, please contact [accommodation@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@bishopg.ac.uk) or [studentadvice@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@bishopg.ac.uk)