

**Accommodation Information and FAQs**

Last updated: 17/09/2021

Students living in accommodation on campus have been assigned to household bubbles based on the communal areas that you will share with others.

What this means may change at points throughout the year in response to updated government guidance. However, in general household bubbles mean that students living on campus are able to follow the latest household isolations advice and ensures that you will be able to socialise more freely with others of the same household.

As part of living in a household bubble, particularly regarding the use of shared facilities there are steps that should be taken to ensure that you can all enjoy living in halls as safely as possible.

**Using a shared kitchen**

Whilst sharing a kitchen with others, it is essential that you keep the area clean and hygienic.

Do not leave dirty dishes in the sink or on the draining board. Wash your dishes using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly, remembering to use a separate tea towel. These should then be placed in your cupboard or stored in your room.

The Housekeeping team will clean communal kitchens daily, but are only able to do this if the area is free from obstructions and is kept tidy.

**Shared bathrooms**

Shared bathrooms will be cleaned daily by the Housekeeping team. However, you should also ensure that you keep them clean between uses (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). You will need to make sure you have the necessary cleaning products.

**If you live in University accommodation on campus, and a cleaner is working in a shared kitchen or bathroom, please allow them to finish their work before entering the room.**

Other shared areas

All communal areas such as entry ways and stair cases will be cleaned daily by the Housekeeping team.

These areas may be used by more than one household to access their accommodation areas; therefore, residents should move through them as briefly as possible.

Using the launderette

The laundrette remains available for use by resident students.

**Guidance for students self-isolating in accommodation on campus and Frequently Asked Questions**

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# Self-isolating in accommodation on campus

If you need to self-isolate in your accommodation on campus, you must notify the University by completing the [coronavirus self-notification form.](https://wellbeing.formstack.com/forms/coronavirus_notification_20_21)or by calling Student Services Telephone 020 8240 8238 or 020 8240 2359 (Mon-Fri 9am -5pm). Outside office hours you can telephone Security 020 8240 4335.

A member of our Student Life team will check in with you, to discuss any individual support requirements and to arrange for meals to be delivered to you.

You should ask friends or relatives if you require help with shopping or picking up medication. Alternatively, you are likely to be able to order medication by phone or online via your Doctor’s surgery.

If you find that you are experiencing difficulties in getting access to supplies, including any cleaning products you may need we may be able to assist you. You should contact studentlife@stmarys.ac.uk if you require any additional support.

If you are experiencing symptoms or have tested positive for Coronavirus, other members of your household bubble who are not exempt also need to self-isolate for 10 days. The Accommodation Service will contact any members of the household to advise them of this requirement.

You should try and stay as far away from other members of your household as possible. Everyone should ensure that they wash their hands regularly for at least 20 seconds and avoid using any communal areas at the same time as each other. Shared facilities such as bathrooms or kitchens should be cleaned down after use.

## Meal Delivery

Where students are isolating in campus accommodation, the catering team will arrange for delivery of your meal plan.

If you have notified the university that you are isolating, you will be contacted with further information and asked to pre-select your meals.

Please check food allergen information on packaged goods and contact catering for any enquiries.

If you require any assistance you can contact catering@stmarys.ac.uk or call 0208 240 4069 on weekdays till 5pm or 07909996535 on weekends.

## Personal Waste

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed in another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside in your room for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external waste bin.

## Laundry

For laundry, you should wait a further 72 hours after your isolation period has ended before you take your washing to the washeteria.

## Maintenance

Maintenance will only attend to urgent repairs, during any period of self-isolation. If you require maintenance you can notify the team at fmhelp@stmarys.ac.uk or in an emergency by calling Security on 020 8240 4335. If maintenance need to attend your room while you are self-isolating you will be required to clean any surfaces beforehand and will be asked to maintain appropriate distance and wear a face mask while they attend.

## Housekeeping

Housekeeping will continue in communal areas only during periods of self-isolation. Students are expected to maintain standards between cleans and to not be present whilst staff are cleaning.

## Fire Alarms

If there is a fire alarm in your halls while you are self-isolating you will need to leave the room and make your way to the assembly point. You should avoid touching handrails and door handles as much as possible, and avoid close contact with others. You should try to contact the fire warden to let them know that you are self-isolating so that they can let you back into your room as a priority, remaining at least 6 feet away from other individuals, until permitted to return back into the building.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I know what Household bubble I’m in?

Household bubbles have been created for those who share facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen in accordance with Government guidance. Each household bubble is identified by a combination of a colour and letter (for example Red A, Red B, Yellow A, Yellow B) which is displayed in all relevant areas of halls and is printed on your Student ID card.

This means that you will be able to socialise more freely with others of the same household bubble so that you won’t need to wear a mask or keep your distance.

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## How do I self-isolate?

You must not leave your home if you are self-isolating, further guidance can be found from the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/), and the [Government](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).

##

## When to get a test?

You should get a test as soon as possible if you have any symptoms of coronavirus.

The symptoms are:

* a high temperature
* a new, continuous cough
* a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

You can receive a test or collect home tests at the St Mary’s on-site, walk-in test centre which is located next to the Commuter Lounge and Reprographics / behind the Refectory, and is open Monday – Friday from 9am – 4pm.

Please do not visit the asymptomatic test centre if you have symptoms or are self-isolating. If you experience any COVID-19 symptoms, including high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss of taste/smell, you must self-isolate immediately and [book a PCR test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) through the NHS.

##

## Someone in my halls is self-isolating, what should I do?

Resident students have been assigned to household bubbles, organised by use of shared areas. If someone in your Household bubble has symptoms of Coronavirus or has tested positive, they should notify the University by completing the [coronavirus self-notification form.](https://wellbeing.formstack.com/forms/coronavirus_notification_20_21)

Government and NHS advice is for any members (who are not exempt) of the same household as someone with Coronavirus symptoms to also self-isolate for 10 days. Further Government advice regarding household self-isolation can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Not all self-isolation require a household to isolate, if a student in your halls has [travelled to the UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk) (from a red list country or an amber list country and are not fully vaccinated), or has been contacted by [Test and Trace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works) then only that individual needs to isolate unless they develop symptoms.

Following notification of students self-isolating in accommodation on campus, the University will take necessary steps to contact any students of the same household bubble who are also required to self-isolate (subject to exemption).

If you are self-isolating, you must notify the University by completing the online self-referral [form,](https://wellbeing.formstack.com/forms/coronavirus_notification_20_21) so that the University can make necessary arrangements to support you and any other students affected.

## Am I exempt from isolating?

From Monday 16 August, the rules in England changed so that you are not legally required to self-isolate if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid-19 (which applies if you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace or via the NHS COVID-19 app or are part of the same household), if you are not displaying any symptoms and you have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved in the UK at least two weeks prior to contact.

You are also exempt from self-isolation if you are free from symptoms and are under 18, taking part in an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial or you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Even if you are vaccinated, you can still be infected with COVID-19 and pass it on to others. If you are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 but you are not required to self-isolate, you can still help protect others by getting a PCR test and limiting your contact with other people.

You must still self-isolate if you are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or you receive a positive PCR or LFT result, regardless of your vaccination status.

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## How long do I need to self-isolate for?

[Self-isolation](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection) guidance states that if you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 10 days from when your symptoms started. If you do not have symptoms but have tested positive, you should stay at home for 10 days starting from the date of your positive test.

If you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 10 days. Other members of the household who are not exempt and remain well should self-isolate for 10 days from the day when the first person in the household became unwell. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms during the 10 days, they must stay at home for 10 days from when their symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 10-day isolation period.

If your test result is negative, and others in your household who have had symptoms have also received a negative test, you will usually not need to continue to self-isolate. Further information about what to do when you receive your test results can be found [here.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/what-your-test-result-means/)

If your test result is positive and at the end of the 10 days you continue to experience symptoms such as a high temperature or feeling hot and shivery, a runny nose or sneezing, feeling or being sick or diarrhoea you need to continue to isolate until these symptoms end. Isolation can end at the end of the 10 days if symptoms such as a cough or change to smell/taste continue as these can last for some time after the infection has gone.

If you need to isolate because you have [travelled to the UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk), or have been contacted by [Test and Trace](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works) then others in your household are not required to also self-isolate unless you develop symptoms. In these instances, you need to isolate for the full 10 days, even if a negative test result is received.

## How will self-isolation in halls be arranged?

Following notification that you are isolating, The University will contact you to make arrangements to support your self-isolation and to establish if a household isolation is required.

We will attempt to contact you as soon as possible, so please ensure that your mobile is switched on, and that you have given the correct contact details when you notify the University.

## If I am self-isolating in halls how will I access the meal plan?

Once you have notified the University that you are isolating in hall, a member of staff will get in touch to discuss catering needs and other practical arrangements for your self-isolation period and will assist with the delivery of food.

If your isolation begins out of office hours including at a weekend and therefore you have not had chance to pre-select meals, you will be included in the existing meal delivery arrangements and will be able to pre-select specific meals from the next working day.

If you require any assistance you can contact catering@stmarys.ac.uk or call 0208 240 4069 on weekdays till 5pm or 07909996535 on weekends.

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## What should I do if there is a fire alarm while I am Self-isolating?

If there is a fire alarm you will need to;

* Leave the room
* Try to avoid touching handrails and door handles as much as possible, and avoid close contact with others.
* Try to contact the fire warden to let them know that you are self-isolating so that they can let you back into your room as a priority.
* Remain at least 6 feet away from other individuals, until permitted to return back into the building.

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## How can I take care of my mental health and wellbeing during self-isolation?

Our Student Services, offer you somewhere to discuss, in confidence, any concerns you have that may affect your studies or your time at University.  We are here to listen and provide advice and guidance where necessary; whether you need a solution to a specific difficulty or require ongoing support. For further information and contact details click [here.](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-services/about.aspx)

[Togetherall](http://www.togetherall.com)is a digital mental health support service available to all St Mary’s students. It’s available online, 24/7, and is completely anonymous so you can express yourself freely and openly. Professionally trained guides monitor the community to ensure the safety and anonymity of all members. There are also useful resources you can work through, including tailored self-help courses on anxiety, sleep, depression and more.

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## I have other accommodation related questions

If you have any other accommodation related questions please email accommodation@stmarys.ac.uk