

How do we manage our own boundaries and our common life to feel safe during COVID?

It's not always easy to negotiate 'house rules' that everyone in a household feels comfortable with. We will all have started from a different set of experiences and assumptions, and a different sense of what our comfort zone is, when it comes to feeling safe and managing our boundaries around social distancing. As more of us are having to self isolate, it's important that we are able to have these important conversations in our households, friendship groups and interest groups. Here are some things that may help:

- If your household hasn't yet had a conversation about how you are managing your shared facilities and what kind of common life you are *all* comfortable with, we would encourage you to do that as soon as you can.
- The College Pledge is a good starting point for this conversation, and has been written precisely to enable us to live in community in a way that is safe and respectful or one another. Read it together and talk about what you think it means, and especially noting if there are many different interpretations within your household of what it should look like in real life.
- Everyone in your household should be able to feel safe in their own room: don't just walk in, or assume that they are comfortable with you being in their space.
- As a household, make sure you go the extra mile in keeping shared facilities safe and clean – this will ensure that everyone in your household feels equally safe, and will help demonstrate your care for one another.
- When setting up a social event or meeting, make sure that those who are self isolating are not excluded.
- As an individual, practice articulating your boundaries, so that if and when you have to say something out loud it comes naturally. Try some of these phrases, or make up your own:
 - "I'd like a chat too, but shall we go for a walk outside rather than meet inside?"
 - "I'm putting my mask on even though we're 2m apart, to be extra safe – would you mind doing the same?"
 - "I'm stepping back because I think we're a bit close"
 - "Please could you give me my 2m distance?"
 - "My household is self-isolating at the moment, so could we meet online instead of in person, or maybe postpone this social event?"
 - "There have been a few positive cases near my household recently so I'm trying to be a bit more careful, would it be OK if we meet outside and wear masks?"

NB If you or your household would like some support in navigating these things, please do contact the welfare team, and we would be happy to help you.