

## Aston Students' Union approach to Coronavirus Compliance

This document aims to outline Aston Students' Union (ASU) approach to Coronavirus (CV-19) and how as an organisation it intends to meet its legal and moral obligations in order to keep its members, staff, volunteers and student officers safe over the coming weeks and months.

Our guiding principles in our approach are:

1. To follow national, regional and local guidelines/laws.
2. Adhere to the Aston University's policies and procedures (who in turn are being led by Public Health England).
3. Continue to deliver a high standard of service whilst protecting both students and staff.
4. Provide a blended approach to student membership and support services; primarily delivering online opportunities and events with some limited if essential face to face interactions
5. Listen to and be open to students and staff about their concerns and provide services to support their physical and mental health.



We're proud of our Aston University community and how we look after each other. We have never needed each other more than we do today. Help us to help each other by being considerate to others and behaving appropriately at all times. By working together we can all help to make Aston a safer place.

Together we ask that you:



### Be respectful

Show consideration towards other students, staff and visitors. Respect those whose personal circumstances differ from yours, and who may need to adopt different safety measures.



### Be observant

Follow guidance on social distancing and health and safety measures, and adhere to signage and instructions around campus to maximise the safety of yourself and others who are sharing space with you.



### Be kind

Show empathy towards others and be supportive to those in need. Offer friendship, be inclusive, and speak out to a member of the Aston team if you think someone needs assistance.

If you show Covid-19 symptoms, follow Government guidance to self-isolate, get tested and inform us via [Covid19Reporting@aston.ac.uk](mailto:Covid19Reporting@aston.ac.uk)

The Students' Union believes that by following the Aston together pledge the first term of 2020, will be a successful one for students. It will undoubtedly be differently for students, but no less valuable or memorable than any other Term One.

## What will day to day life be like on campus? What do I have to do?

### Wash Your Hands

Its as important now as it has always been, but please make sure you wash your hands well and use the hand sanitizer that is dotted around the students' union building

### Wear a face covering

While in University buildings and the Students' Union , particularly when using circulation spaces, corridors, staircases, lifts and toilets we expect students to wear a face covering. This does not include offices or meeting room of if you are eating and drinking.

The wearing of face coverings is for the protection of other people who may be susceptible to the COVID-19 virus and is part of a comprehensive range of measures we are putting in place to help us create and maintain a COVID-secure environment on campus as more people occupy the buildings.

Some people do not have to wear a face covering for medical or other reasons. If you fall into one of these categories, you may feel more comfortable in having something to show that says you do not have to wear a face covering.

In order to help you, you are encouraged to download an exemption badge either for your smartphone or in printed form from the University's Coronavirus web pages: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/health-wellbeing/coronavirus>

### Socially Distance whenever possible, stay 2m apart

Within the Students' Union building we have implemented a wide range of protective measures including one way systems, social distancing signage and barriers, Perspex screens at key points, additional cleaning of frequently touched areas and hand sanitizer stations. The capacity of our rooms has also changed and no more than 20 people will be allowed in any of our larger rooms.

These arrangements are in line with UK government guidance on safe workplaces and the University's Risk Assessments.

### Tap, Track and Trace

We are supporting Public Health Birmingham's track and trace obligations and are requiring all students who enter the building to tap their card, this allows to know who was in the building and when they entered.

Should the University discover a student or staff member has tested positive for CV-19 and you were in the same space as them, you are likely to receive a phone call or email.

If you become aware of a postive Covid case (or yourself test postive) you must inform the University via this email [covid-19reporting@aston.ac.uk](mailto:covid-19reporting@aston.ac.uk)

### Using the SU Building

The building will be open from 9:00am – 10:00pm each day. Students are more than welcome to come and spend time in the building, eating, drinking, learning and relaxing with friends.

Our reception will be open though the day from 9:00am – 6:00pm to answer your questions, whether SU/Covid or University related.



Our Officer team and staff team will be available for meetings via MS Teams only. This includes Activities and Voice, Advice and Representation and Aston Student Homes

Security will be on the door to ensure only Aston students can access the space and that students are aware of their obligations (wear a mask, sanitize and tap your card)

We have merged the Good Place and Lounge for the coming year with a limited range of food and drinks available each day from 10:00am to 10:00pm. To put it simply, we are still selling coffee and soft drinks and we are still selling beer. We ask students to come to the Lounge in their relevant social bubbles.

We are continuing to allow and encourage students to bring their own food and drink into the SU building. However, we can only allow this to be consumed on the ground floor. If you want to sit upstairs in the Lounge, then you must purchase something from the Lounge.

Food can still be prepared / cooked / heated up in the student kitchen on the first floor, but the strict guidelines must be followed. Good hygiene is more important than ever.

Students can continue to use the toilet facilities. We shouldn't have to say it but let's all try and keep them as clean as we find them.

The pool tables will continue to be available for use, we ask only those playing pool congregate around the tables. Any students 'watching' need to maintain social distance requirements.

## **How will we keep students informed?**

### **The University Website**

This contains the latest information from the University and should be the first places students go for information, advice and guidance

<https://www2.aston.ac.uk/current-students/health-wellbeing/coronavirus>

### **Social Media**

The SUs social media channels will be used to update students on any significant changes to policies or procedures with regards to CV-19 and the steps we are taking to be Covid-19 compliant

### **Campus video**

A short video has been produced primarily for new international students to prepare them for what the University environment will look like in September. You may find it useful to watch the video before you come to campus

### **Signage**

Unsure about what to do? You can expect plenty of signage around the SU building and campus giving you advice and guidance about particular requirements in certain areas. Similarly, the digital screens in the SU will also provide you with up to date information

## Advice & Guidance for Activities

### Face to Face Activities

- No events can take place unless signed off and agreed by the Activities and Voice Department
- Complete a risk assessment for each event/ activity you hold and email it to [student.activities@aston.ac.uk](mailto:student.activities@aston.ac.uk)
- Ensure you track which of your members attend in person events or activities so that in the event of a participant contracting COVID19, you can inform those who may have been in contact with them
- Government guidelines state that people should continue to socially distance from those they do not live with wherever possible. Social interactions should be limited to a group of no more than six people
- University policy is that no more than 20 can be in one room together but this is dependent on the size of the room.
- Any meetings with SU officers and staff will take place via MS Teams. Students will not be allowed into the office and work places of the officers and staff. If students are in distress, we will of course make exception and meet with them face to face, but in a socially distant manner
- If the event is deemed educational the SU and University may allow for up to 20 members to take part, if not the limit will be six and you will be encouraged to hold the event online.

### Specific Guidance for Sports Clubs

- Sports governing bodies are developing tailored guidance outlining how their sport can be conducted safely. Where there is clear guidance in place, sports can be played in groups larger than two households
- Team sports that do not have approved guidance should not be played. Instead, people should train together and take part in activities, such as conditioning or fitness sessions in groups of no more than 6 people (outdoors)
- You should socially distance from people you do not live with.
- Please check in regularly with the advice given by your National Governing Body and adhere to their plans for return to play.
- Consider the whole end-to-end 'user journey' when planning safe operating practices; this means all activities from the time of arrival on site to leaving, not just the sporting activity.
- Collate your proposals as discussed in your individual meetings and send them through to us before commencing any activity.

### Trips and Tours abroad

- We appreciate that for many of you these trips are a highlight of the year, and you will be reluctant to cancel such exciting events. However, given the spread of Coronavirus, and the associated risks to public health, any unnecessary foreign travel is now considered very unwise.
- The Students' Union, at this stage, will not approve any foreign travel for any group. Please do not book anything.
- We would urge you to read the government advice about travelling abroad, which is available at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).
- When looking into cancellation of your trips, please check your travel insurance for information on refunds and issues around repatriation. Your travel insurance is what provides you with protection in the event of cancellation. The Students' Union is NOT liable for covering any associated costs, including refunds, or additional expenses if you have to stay abroad longer than planned.

## On Campus Facilities/ Room Bookings

- Room bookings should be made following the [Event Request Form](#). Although no firm bookings can be made currently, please send in your requests and we will try our best to facilitate it. Room bookings will need to be made in advance.
- Rooms in the University Main Building will not be available after 8:00pm each night and need at least 72 hours notice.
- 24/7 and out of normal working hours access and use will not be permitted at this time.
- Furniture should not be moved around in the rooms, as this has been laid out to be socially distanced
- No room, irrespective of size, will allow more than 20 people in the space
- Sport Aston facilities are slowly beginning to open up. Further information will be released on the use of these spaces: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/sport/news>

## Online/ Virtual Activities

- 101 ideas for online/virtual event can be found here: <https://www.organised.fun/student-opportunities-digest/101-online-event-ideas>
- It's recommended to use Microsoft Teams in the first instance. Every Aston student has a MS Teams account. You can download the app to a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile. There are other platforms available such as Zoom and Discord.
- You can also use these online platforms to hold live try outs/ auditions where possible or ask members to record their auditions separately and send them to the committee.
- Ask your members to share their favorite moments from socials or activities to spread some positivity on your social media pages and to also show new members what you're all about!
- Each month we will highlight and celebrate which club and societies have been most effective at using the new digital platforms

## Health and Wellbeing

- Check in with your members to see if you are all ok. You may not be meeting as regularly as before and some members may be really missing this contact! Keep your community that you've worked so hard to build up alive.
- Students can always contact the ARC for advice, and through the first few weeks we will be highlighting various avenues for support, information, advice and guidance for all students
- As you can't hold as many face to face socials, it may be nice to hold socials where members can drop in and out for a chat with not defined activity or agenda.

## Advice and Guidance for Student Representatives

- The Course Rep scheme was primarily run via the website and email even before Covid-19. Having over 600 reps means that face to face support was limited to a small proportion of students
- Hence the fundamentals of support for reps will not change too much. Training will now take place online only and we are looking at how we can best use MS Teams as an app to help support and manage the team of reps around campus.
- Any meetings with the Vice President Education and Student Engagement Coordinator (Voice) will take place via MS Team
- We expect student reps to be more important than any other year and encourage all students to sign up and register: <https://www.astonsu.com/voice/representation/>
- Any meetings the reps attend with the University will also take place via MS Teams

## Advice and Guidance for using the Advice Service

The Advice and Representation Centre continues to offer an online service to students. If students have any concerns about aspects of their course or student experience they can email [advice@aston.ac.uk](mailto:advice@aston.ac.uk) and an appointment will be made.

Students can feel confident there will be no loss in service whilst we provide you with information, advice and guidance online.

## Advice and Guidance for using Aston Student Homes

Aston Student Homes continues to offer an online service to students. The service can be accessed via the website: [here](#) and if they have any special questions they should email [astonstudenthomes@aston.ac.uk](mailto:astonstudenthomes@aston.ac.uk). Any meetings will take place via MS Teams.

## Advice and Guidance for Student Living at The Green

For those students who live at The Green, the accommodation provided by the Students' Union we expect and hope you will continue to live in a Covid compliant manner and remain within your house/flat bubbles and within the six person limit for social gatherings as recently declared by the Government.

Any questions or clarification should be sent to [thegreen@aston.ac.uk](mailto:thegreen@aston.ac.uk) and please check your emails.

## What happens if and when things change?

1. These plans will be kept under constant review in line with the most up-to-date government and we are also working closely with the Director of Public Health for Birmingham on tracking and tracing in the event of any cases of COVID-19 on campus.
2. It continues to be the University's policy to follow Public Health England's advice about COVID-19, along with guidance from the NHS and the Foreign Commonwealth Office in the UK.
3. The Students' Union will take its lead from the University and follow its policy where possible.
4. View the [NHS's overview and FAQs](#) surrounding Coronavirus (COVID-19)
5. View the [Government's advice](#) around Coronavirus (COVID-19)
6. The World Health Organisation (WHO) provide daily updates on the emerging situation, for anyone seeking information regarding the virus in other countries.