

**Email to new students
25/09/20**

Dear new Somervillians,

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you on our teams call earlier this week. I look forward to welcoming you here in person next week.

I am sure you will be excited about the beginning of term, but I know many of you will understandably also be anxious. The headlines in the media over the last week about students' return to university can only compound those fears, so I wanted to write to you today to let you know more about the plans for this term and to reassure you that we are both ready and looking forward to having you back.

First, let me confirm now that when you arrive at College, someone from your household will be allowed to accompany you to your room to help you get settled in. I'm sure they will also want to see where you are going to live for the next year too.

You will also notice quickly that the site has changed since you came here for interview, with new signage and hand sanitiser stations at all entrances and exits. We have also put the finishing touches on our new temporary dining hall, which has been set up in socially distanced tables of three with a takeaway service also available. You can see some of the changes around college for yourself in [this video](#).

I am extremely grateful to all of you who have already signed the Student Responsibility Agreement. This is an absolute must for all students, if you've not yet signed it you can access it [here](#).

Next Monday, together with Professor Karen O'Brien, my co-chair on the University's Michaelmas Co-ordination Group, I will be joining our counterparts from Oxford Brookes along with representatives from the two universities' student unions, the City and County Councils, and Thames Valley Police, for a virtual Town Hall addressing the concerns of local residents. I am proud that, in signing the agreement, you have already demonstrated to all your commitment to minimising the risks this term. Just as importantly, you have helped to show that Oxford students do not look down upon the local community from behind high college walls.

There are many new things to remember this Michaelmas, but we will provide as much information as we can throughout the term. Our [student FAQs page](#) is regularly updated, and more information about households and using kitchens will be sent soon to the JCR President, Fabio Rossi, by Andrew Parker, our Treasurer.

The great thing about Oxford is that the vast majority of students live in college communities where it is easier to follow the rules regarding social distancing and the wearing of face coverings while living together than if you were spread across the city. It also means that we can take care of you, whatever the future brings. And we will be listening carefully to student voices throughout the term to allow you to take as much ownership as you can.

My colleagues and I have been working tremendously hard to make sure you can have the term you deserve, enjoying the amazing opportunity of an Oxford education in an environment that is safe and gives you the best possible chances to enjoy hobbies and socialising while following the guidance. It's not going to be easy for any of us; but if we work together, respect the rules and respect each other we can and we will have a successful term.



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Enjoy the last days of the holidays and have a safe journey home.

With all my best wishes, and see you soon,

Jan Royall
Principal