

**Weekly Covid-19 Update for Students: 0th Week Michaelmas
09/10/20**

We have almost reached the end of Freshers' Week. Getting to this point is a milestone even in an ordinary year. But in this strangest of years, it has been a real challenge – for which we would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff who have done so much to make our return a success, as well as the JCR and MCR committees that have produced such wonderful online and in-person activities.

There have been some lovely moments. Seeing students about the place and hearing the conversation and laughter from households has been especially welcome. The college and university have lain dormant for many months, and now the place feels alive again, doing what it was created for.

Of course, the week has not been without difficulties. We know the adoption of our new COVID-19 Guidelines has been stressful. However, the vast majority of students have embraced the new system responsibly, maturely and supportively, recognising the inescapable fact that it is our best shot of remaining here.

Unfortunately, a small minority are still not following the restrictions. Selfishly placing others at risk in this way is unacceptable and totally at odds with our college traditions and culture, not to mention decency and common sense. It is insulting to your peers who spent last term at home in order to help us get back to the point where we could all return in person. It is also frustrating for everyone who is doing the right thing and sticking to the guidance, not least to those students who marked their return to Somerville from abroad last month by doing their bit to help keep us all safe and self-isolating for 14 days.

Most of all, it is profoundly disrespectful to our support staff, who have told us that this week has been tremendously stressful and even upsetting at times due to the thoughtless actions of a very small number of students. They have worked tirelessly this summer on your behalf, and continue to work around the clock to feed you, ensure your safety, and keep your accommodation clean and well maintained. They deserve better from you.

So, onto the stats. Each week, this message will provide you with the latest numbers of on-site staff and students across four metrics: positive cases, negative cases, those who have taken a test and are awaiting a result, and the number of households in college self-isolating. These figures will be presented in a way that preserves anonymity, yet maintains complete transparency.

The figures are on the slide below. They reflect that the college is currently on a stable footing, with all our safety protocols functioning exactly as intended.

Thank you for everyone who has helped to make this a successful first week back. All our very best for the beginning of lectures, classes and tutorials next week - we know you will be fantastic.