

COVID-19 guidance for staff

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Introduction

There are no restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in higher education environments in England as a result of COVID-19. We continue to conduct risk assessments and implement sensible and effective measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at Spirit Studios.

We all have a responsibility to follow the guidance outlined in this document to minimise the risk to health of all staff, students and visitors at Spirit Studios.

If multiple diagnoses of COVID-19 occur within the Spirit Studios community, such as a large-scale outbreak, restrictions may have to be implemented to control that outbreak. Such restrictions could include a reduction in face-to-face learning and facility access. It should be noted that such measures will only be taken in exceptional circumstances as a last resort and in agreement with Directors of Public Health. Any measures will be kept to the shortest amount of time possible.

COVID-19 symptoms

The [NHS states the main COVID-19 symptoms](#) are:

- **a high temperature** - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- **a new, continuous cough** - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** - this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste difference to normal
- **shortness of breath**
- **feeling tired or exhausted**
- **an aching body**
- **a headache**
- **a sore throat**
- **a blocked or runny nose**
- **loss of appetite**
- **diarrhoea**
- **feeling sick or being sick**

The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

COVID-19 vaccination

We strongly encourage all students to take up the offer of both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, and any subsequent booster doses. The vaccines are safe and effective.

If you haven't already, please register with a local GP. Those who are registered with a GP will receive an invitation to be vaccinated. You can then book your appointment at a vaccination site, a community pharmacy, some GP run sites and some hospitals through the [national booking service](#) or by calling 119.

Face coverings

Face coverings are no longer advised for students, staff and visitors in teaching settings or communal areas.

We ask all staff to be in possession of a face covering. There may be instances where wearing a face covering feels right, or other individuals in the same room as you feel more comfortable with all parties wearing a face covering. We ask you to please be mindful of others in this regard.

Face coverings should fit securely around the face to cover the nose and mouth and be made with a breathable material capable of filtering airborne particles.

Do not dispose of any disposable masks in the general bins at Spirit Studios. If you use disposable masks, please safely dispose of them away from the Spirit Studios premises.

Hand washing

One of the most effective ways in reducing the spread of COVID-19 is regular and thorough washing of hands. Please wash your hands immediately upon arrival at Spirit Studios, prior to entering any rooms and prior to signing out equipment. Hand sanitiser dispensers are located in reception and throughout the building. Signs are located in each toilet and next to hand sanitising stations showing the recommended approach to washing hands thoroughly.

Some individuals may have sensitive skin which is irritated by the alcohol-based hand sanitiser that we use. Please use soap and warm water instead. There may also be effective alternatives that you can purchase too. If in doubt, speak to your GP.

Try to reduce touching your face with your hands. Always carry tissues and use them to catch a cough or sneeze. Dispose of your tissue and then wash your hands as quickly as possible. Remember: Catch it, bin it, kill it..

Self-cleaning of frequently touched surfaces

Cleaning materials for your own use are available in rooms and from reception should you wish to clean surfaces, such as computer keyboards and mice, console armrests and chair armrests.

What do I do if I'm clinically extremely vulnerable?

The shielding programme has now come to an end and adults previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) should, as a minimum, continue to follow the same guidance as everyone else. It is important that everyone adheres to this guidance but people previously considered CEV may wish to consider taking extra precautions. Use the [guidance for people previously considered CEV](#).

In some circumstances, you may have received personal advice from a specialist or clinician on additional precautions to take and you should continue to follow that advice.

What do I do if I have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19

There is no longer a legal requirement for people with COVID-19 to self-isolate, however if you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result, the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

You should follow the public health advice on [people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#).

Inform your line manager if you test positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms associated with COVID-19.

What do I do if I've been identified as a close contact of a positive case?

A contact is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. A person can be a contact any time from 2 days before you developed symptoms (or, if you did not have any symptoms, from 2 days before the date your positive test was taken), and up to 10 days after, as this is when you can pass the infection on to others. This includes:

- Face-to-face contact including being coughed on or having a face-to-face conversation within one metre of you
- They have been within one metre of you for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- They have been within two metres of you for more than 15 minutes (either as a one-off contact, or added up together over one day)

If you've been identified as a close contact of a positive case, you should follow the public health advice on [People with COVID-19 and their contacts](#).

Supporting staff who need to self-isolate

We understand how difficult it is for those who are self-isolating due to COVID-19. Your line manager will be able to offer you support. You may find the following information helpful.

Food deliveries - Many supermarkets have dramatically increased provision for home deliveries. You could also ask a friend or family member to deliver a grocery shop to your front door. [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) are also available.

Laundry - There are a number of 'click and collect' laundry facilities in Manchester.

Medicines - Many pharmacies now provide delivery options. You could also ask a friend or family member to collect medicines for you. [NHS Volunteer Responders](#) are also available.

Mental Health - If you're currently isolating and experiencing mental health difficulties, please contact us ASAP. Contact our welfare department, your line manager, any senior manager, or anyone you feel comfortable talking to.

Other - Contact us via covidsupport@spiritstudios.ac.uk if you require any other help or support

NHS Volunteer Responders can help with things like collecting shopping, collecting medicines and prescriptions and phone calls if you want to chat to someone. Call 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm, everyday) to arrange help from a volunteer.

Accommodation

You may be sharing accommodation with friends, family and other individuals. It is important that any shared areas within accommodation, such as kitchens and bathrooms, are cleaned regularly to minimise the risk of transmission. This is especially important if someone within the household/accommodation has tested positive or is displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Where households follow good practice to minimise transmission at all times, the overall risk of transmission will be reduced. Keep shared areas well ventilated, frequent hand washing with soap and water, limiting sharing surfaces or objects where possible and frequently cleaning shared surfaces and objects.

Educational visits and field trips

There are no legal restrictions on educational visits and field trips within the UK, however a venue may have their own policies that we would be expected to abide by.

What we're doing to keep you safe at Spirit Studios

Please see our [COVID-19 control measures](#) document to see the measures we've implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 at Spirit Studios.

Appendix 1. Additional guidance for tutors

In addition to the main guidance, we have further guidance specifically for tutors:

- Where appropriate, prop open internal doors of rooms to assist with creating a throughput of air. External windows may also be opened, where available. Please ensure any doors and windows are closed at the end of your session in that room.
- Try to refrain from touching the keyboard and mouse of a student workstation. Instead, instruct the student to perform any actions.

Appendix 2. Additional guidance for technical support staff

In addition to the main guidance, we have further guidance specifically for technical support staff:

- When someone requests technical support via reception, see if technical support can be provided verbally at that point, rather than entering the facility they are using
- As above, all technical staff will wash their hands prior to entering a facility. Be vigilant in not touching your face after touching any surfaces within the facility and wash your hands immediately on exit