

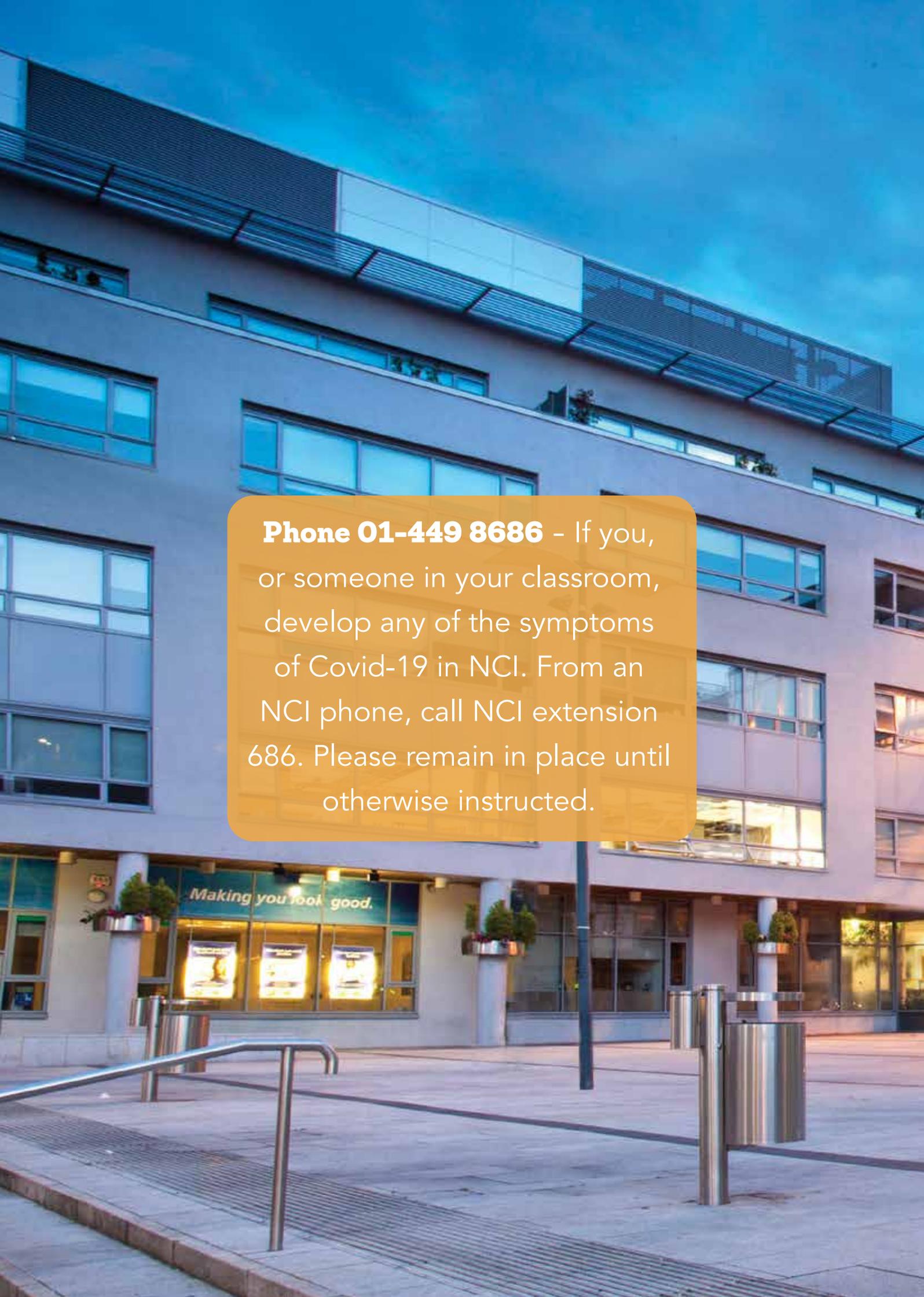


National
College *of*
Ireland

COVID-19

RETURN TO CAMPUS SAFETY PROTOCOL

For NCI Students



Phone 01-449 8686 –If you, or someone in your classroom, develop any of the symptoms of Covid-19 in NCI. From an NCI phone, call NCI extension 686. Please remain in place until otherwise instructed.



WELCOME BACK TO CAMPUS

For some months now, our returning students have been learning remotely. We would like to thank those students for achieving so much during this time.

As we start a new academic year, welcoming new and returning students to the college in a controlled way, we would like to highlight some very important information pieces and logistics to you.

We would also like to acknowledge that NCI is committed to taking every precaution to provide a safe return for our students, staff and visitors.

This document is designed to outline for students how NCI will operate the various protocols in place, and to inform students about the measures we have introduced to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

This document represents a collaborative approach between NCI and its staff, following positive engagement with Student Union representatives.

We would urge all our students to note carefully all the information provided and to keep up to date with changes on the college website and other information channels as the situation evolves.

We all have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in the college in order to keep each other and our community safe.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Quin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Gina Quin, NCI President



It is my pleasure to welcome new students and those returning for another great year at NCI. All of us at NCISU are very excited to have College resume, even under current circumstances, and we look forward to seeing your faces again on campus, from a safe distance.

Your Students' Union has been working tirelessly with the College to ensure that students have a safe return to campus. Your Union is here to represent you in the different forums dealing with Covid-19, addressing your concerns and answering your questions about the safety of returning to College. These are challenging times and it's important that we all work together.

We hope that you find this document helpful and informative. Please follow all the safety instructions contained within to ensure your safety and that of others is protected while on campus. If you have any comments or queries, please get in touch with us and we'll try our best to get an answer for you.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Conor O'Reilly,
NCISU President

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COVID-19

Infection with Covid-19/Coronavirus can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 to 14 days for symptoms to appear. They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu. The most common symptoms are:

- Cough: any kind of cough, usually dry but not always.
- Fever: high temperature, over 38° C.
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing.
- It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to appear.

For the complete symptoms list, see the [HSE Website](#). Some people infected with the virus, called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all

HOW COVID-19 SPREADS

The virus is spread in fluid droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person coughs, sneezes or speaks. The droplets land on surfaces. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these surfaces and bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose, or mouth. Covid-19 can also spread if infected droplets land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose, or mouth.

It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces. Studies show it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently-touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is needed it must be performed in addition to, never as a substitute for cleaning.

While people are most likely to pass on infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus prior to displaying symptoms themselves.

DISPLAYING SYMPTOMS OR CLOSE CONTACT

To protect you, your colleagues and family, it is essential that if you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms you immediately self-isolate and make phone contact with your GP or the HSE helpline, 1850 241850, and follow the advice given. You should also immediately inform your line manager.

Even if you do not feel unwell, if you have been in close contact with a confirmed Covid-19 case you should self-isolate at home and seek medical advice and contact your line manager.

Close Contact is defined as:

- Spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of an infected person.
- Living in the same house or accommodation as an infected person.

It is advised you do not return to work after isolation unless:

- It has been 14 days since your first symptoms.
- 5 days have passed without a temperature.
- You have no symptoms.
- Your doctor recommends otherwise.

If you are in an at-risk or vulnerable group, as advised by the HSE, or have any concerns you should contact your GP.

PROTECTION FROM COVID-19

There are certain measures we can all take that provide protection against the virus. These include hand and general hygiene, good respiratory etiquette and physical or social distancing. **The most important thing is that we all take personal responsibility to prevent the spread of the virus.**

Hand Hygiene – This is one of the most important things you can do to prevent the spread of the virus. Wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face and eyes. Use hand sanitiser where soap and water is not available. If hands are visibly dirty, wash hands with soap and water prior to using the sanitiser. Remember that this should be for at least 20 seconds. Wash hands regularly and in particular situations:

- Before and after eating or preparing food.
- If in contact with someone displaying any Covid-19 symptoms.
- Before and after using public transport.
- On arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites.
- Before having a cigarette or vaping.
- When hands are dirty.
- Before and after toilet use.

General Hygiene – Be aware of general hygiene. For example, do not share any objects that touch the mouth such as bottles or cups. Do not share items like pens. You should clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and keep your environment clean. A new cleaning and sanitising programme is in place on-campus. However, it is important for individuals to sanitise their workspace before and after use. You should also sanitise any device or equipment you use.

Respiratory Etiquette - when coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Place used tissues into a closed bin and wash hands. If a tissue is not available, use your bent elbow.

Physical or Social Distancing – Measures to minimise contact between individuals can help to reduce potential spread of infection. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres. We should all adopt the following measures to help maintain physical distancing:

- Respect the NCI no hand-shaking or hugging policy.
- Observe the NCI one-way system and all directional signage and queue management procedures in place.
- No in-person student events should be hosted where social distancing may be difficult to implement.

BEFORE RETURNING TO COLLEGE

We are pleased to welcome students back on to our campus in a coordinated way. We all must adhere to the following procedures to ensure this can be managed safely:

- Before you attend on campus – whether that is for your timetabled classes or to use your pre-booked study space or for any other reason – you must complete a [COVID-19 Questionnaire](#) and receive a response confirming that you may return to campus. You may be asked to show this email confirmation at the entrance of the College. If you receive an email saying that you must not attend a campus, be assured that the COVID Manager will contact you within 48 hours to explain why or to better understand your circumstances.
- As library facilities, study spaces and some limited on-campus learning will be made available to students, a booking system will be introduced to control student numbers on site at any one time.
- Only NCI students will be able to use the booking system. Non-NCI students will not be allowed entry to the College.
- NCI is obliged to keep a log of all students on the campus and this will be available to the HSE to assist in contact tracing. All students and staff will be required to log in or out on entry and exit to the building and to different classrooms.
- All students can avail of temperature testing at entry to the building. Currently this is not mandatory but may become so. Students displaying a high temperature will be advised to return home.
- Everyone must wear a face mask while on campus. You are responsible for supplying your own mask.
- Everyone must keep a contact log of persons they meet during the course of their work, on a daily basis, and this should be readily available.
- All students are asked to download the [HSE Covid-19 tracker app](#).

DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19 IN THE COLLEGE

You should not attend College if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following steps are in place to deal with a suspected case that may arise on-campus.

If you develop any of the symptoms of Covid-19 while at College immediately phone 01-449 8686 (NCI extension 686) and explain that you have developed symptoms. You must not circulate around the building. Please remain where you are until a member of the response team comes to escort you to an isolation suite.

NCI has prepared suitably equipped isolation suites to accommodate anyone presenting with symptoms. The person showing symptoms will be facilitated to remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home, and will be assisted in contacting their GP or medical practitioner. NCI will arrange transport home or to hospital. Public transport of any kind should not be used. The person displaying symptoms should avoid touching people or surfaces. It is always important to maintain social distancing of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person.

NCI will carry out an assessment which will form part of determining follow-up actions. NCI will arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation and work areas involved.

Additional advice on dealing with a suspected case is available from the [NSAI](#).

AT-RISK/VULNERABLE STUDENTS

Special consideration will be given to at-risk persons on campus to ensure they receive any necessary additional support to maintain the 2-metre physical distance and other safety protocols.

STUDENT FACING ROLES

Many of the learner-facing supports such as reception, fees, student services, library and IT support have reception counters and the following measures will be implemented:

- Sanitisers will be provided in these areas.
- Appointment procedures will be introduced to avoid queues.
- Screens will be installed where appropriate, with visible floor markings throughout the College.

ADDITIONAL CLEANING AND SANITISING

NCI has revised its cleaning schedules to improve the frequency of cleaning and sanitising. Students will be required to sanitise their study area on arrival and before leaving. The NCI cleaning company will clean and sanitise hard surfaces twice daily in public areas.

NCI HEALTH AND SAFETY

All existing occupational Health and Safety provisions will continue to apply, and the most up to date information will be available on the staff information portal and on the [NCI website](#).

The following measures are also being implemented.

- The NCI Health and Safety Committee will meet bi-monthly.
- Covid-19 Taskforce group is in operation.
- An external Health and Safety consultant will carry out all risk assessments and site inspections on an ongoing basis.
- The NCI Safety Statement has been updated.
- Staff and Students' Union have engaged in H&S and Covid-19 awareness.
- Appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) equipment is available.
- All students are responsible for supplying their own mask.
- Fire drills will be carried out with social distancing guidelines.
- Infection management plan in place.
- Infection reporting has been implemented.

SUPPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH

At NCI, we are conscious that our students are currently in the midst of a lot of change and disruption to their normal college life, as they find their feet and learn new ways of working from home and online. Student Health and Wellness is a real priority for NCI, and it is important that we connect you with all the supports that are available to you.

All students should visit and enrol themselves in the [Student Support Moodle](#) page for resources and Learning Supports, which are available to all students.

HEALTH SUPPORT

- Student Health: The College offers a subsidised medical service for all full-time students at [Hanover Medical Centre](#). Note that they have asked all patients to phone or email in advance of attending the surgery, to make an appointment.
- Students' Union: Your NCISU team (see section below) are available during this time and have been sharing useful tips for looking after yourself on their [Instagram stories](#).

STUDENT COUNSELLING AND WELLNESS SERVICE

One-to-one sessions

The Student Counselling and Wellness Service is still up and running and offering telephone counselling to NCI students. Simply email: counselling@ncirl.ie to register with the Service and set up an appointment with a Student Counsellor.

These one-to-one appointments are offered

- 1) Via phone
- 2) Via Microsoft teams
- 3) In person, once the College campus has re-opened to students for the new Academic Year.

Students have found the service very helpful, particularly during the Covid-19 crisis. There are many positive testimonials from previous students about the Service. This is a confidential, free service for full-time students, who can discuss any difficulties they may be having while studying in NCI. Students can access anywhere from 1 to 6 sessions with their Counsellor. The Counsellor can help the student decide how many sessions are necessary depending on the presenting issue.

STUDENT COUNSELLING AND WELLNESS MOODLE PAGE

The Service has also set up a [Student Counselling and Wellness Moodle page](#) for NCI students where hints, tips, advice, helplines, websites, blogs, and apps on all areas of Student Health and Wellbeing are shared.

This is a popular site and a great option, in particular, for those who do not need to book an actual Counselling Session but would like to learn more about Student Health and Wellbeing and maintaining positive mental health while they continue their studies in NCI.

The Moodle site has several videos and PowerPoint presentations on how to best work from home, goal setting, and the importance of taking breaks from your study.

WEEKLY WELLBEING & HAPPINESS CALENDARS

A weekly Wellbeing Check-up is also available to students, along with the extremely popular Action for Happiness Calendars.

The Action for Happiness Calendars are listed every month and are packed full of ideas, hints, tips, and actions students can take to create a happier, healthier life. These Calendars are a useful reminder of the importance of Self-Care and help aid positive mental health and wellbeing for NCI students.

WELLNESS WORKSHOPS & RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

The Wellness Workshops, which were run on-campus, continue online, covering various mental health topics such as: self-care, stress management, coping with exam nerves, motivation and procrastination; giving students helpful ideas, hints and tips on how to make the most of their time in NCI.

Specific relaxation techniques are frequently updated and shared with students. These techniques are sourced by our Counsellors from various evidence-based resources to help aid and assist with tension relief, stress management and relaxation.

COVID-19 SPECIFIC RESPONSE

Naturally we are aware that Covid-19 and its restrictions have had a real impact on the NCI community, particularly the Students so, in response to that, three additional sections of the Student Counselling Moodle site were specifically designed to advise students on Covid-19 distress and how to cope during this difficult time.

- 1) The first is a list of emergency service and helplines.
- 2) The second is a list of specific websites designed to offer good advice, support and guidance to students suffering with Covid-19 related stress.
- 3) The third section points students towards blogs, videos, and guides and how to cope with their mental health during the ongoing pandemic.

Below is a list of websites and helpline numbers also available to all NCI students:

HSE LIVE	Phone, Twitter, Find a Service 1850 24 1850
HSE Text	50808
Hanover Medical	(01) 675 0040
Out of Hours Doctor	1850 224 477(DDoc) 01 454 5607 (Dub Doc)
Aware	1800 804 848
Samaritans	116 123 Text 087 260 9090
Pieta House	1800 247 247
Spun Out	Advice on young people's health issues
Spun Out	Text Line - 086 1800 280
Jigsaw	(01) 658 3070
Mental Health Ireland	(01) 284 1166
Turn2Me	Online 1 to 1 support

YOUR STUDENTS' UNION

Your Students' Union Executive is still here to guide, support and advise you. You can contact the team through the following means:

Conor O'Reilly, President

E: president@ncisu.ie

M: 0871867883

P: 014498692

Jennifer Treadwell, Vice-President for Welfare & Equality

E: vicepresident@ncisu.ie

M: 087 406 2619

P: 014498681

Síobhra Weir-Sharkey, Communications Officer

E: communications@ncisu.ie

Naomi Halpin, Clubs and Societies Officer

E: clubsandsocs@ncisu.ie

Lorcan Mills, Entertainments Officer

E: entertainment@ncisu.ie

The Students' Union will mainly be working remotely and is currently working on a safe process to allow limited appointments in the offices this coming year. The health and safety of students is top priority, while ensuring the team remains available to you during these challenging times.

NCISU will keep you best-informed of any developments on campus, communicating any major changes, and sharing useful tips for looking after yourself, on Instagram and Facebook.

- NCISU [Vice-President](#) for Welfare is available if you have any questions, concerns or queries relating to your welfare, accommodation and finance.
- As a member of NCISU you can also access mental health support through the [Union of Students in Ireland \(USI\)](#)
- [Mental Health Society](#): one of NCI's many active clubs and socs, the Mental Health Society is dedicated to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the College.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This advice is not intended to be exhaustive; additional issues may be raised, which will require further clarification and guidance, as the country moves through the reopening phases and NCI policies change in line with the current health advice.

Does any flexibility exist in relation to the current recommendation of 2m social distancing?

Current health advice recommends a 2-metre distance to minimise risk of transmission. While it is acknowledged that physical distancing may be difficult in certain situations, at present, there is no flexibility in any circumstance. Higher education facilities are advised that physical distancing of 2 metres be maintained where possible, and particularly in common areas and open-circulation areas.

Is a relaxing of social distancing requirements envisaged?

As the country progresses through the stages set out in the Roadmap to Reopening Society and Business, it is envisaged that a relaxation in physical distancing requirements may be made. However, we should be prepared for the possibility that, depending on the level of transmission recorded, any relaxation of physical distancing requirements may also be reversed.

What are my responsibilities in minimising the risks of spreading or contracting Covid-19?

Each person must take responsibility to minimise the risk of spread of infection, including adherence to current advice from the HSE and the provisions of this document and any applicable risk assessments. In some cases, individuals will be expected to take an active role, for example, ensuring that they clean equipment and work benches/study areas before and after a classroom/study session. Should a student fail to follow safety measures, or is found to be putting others at risk, such actions may be subject to investigation in line with College policy and procedures, and outcomes may be considered under NCI's disciplinary procedures.

Am I required to wear a face mask at NCI?

NCI requires all staff and students to wear face masks while on campus. You must wear a mask when you are moving around the College: in the Atrium, corridors and stairwells; in classrooms, the library and lecture theatres; and in any place where social distancing is difficult. You are responsible for supplying your own mask.

Face masks are currently mandatory on public transport and in shops and shopping centres. It should be noted that wearing a face mask is an additional measure to other public health guidelines, which must also be followed, such as handwashing and respiratory etiquette, and is not a substitute for correct working practices. In addition, the health advice also acknowledges that face masks are not suitable for all individuals, for example, those with breathing problems or with special needs.

Do we have to take our temperature when entering campus?

We will have a facility for everyone entering the campus to temperature check on a voluntary basis at the NCI Atrium entrance. It is not mandatory at this time but may become so. Even where it is not mandatory, staff, students and all campus visitors are asked to participate in this scanning for everyone's health and safety. People with a high temperature will be advised to return home for the safety of all members of our campus community. Please keep yourself informed of current HSE advice. Students are advised that they should not attend College if they have any symptoms of Covid-19.

What happens if I must self-isolate?

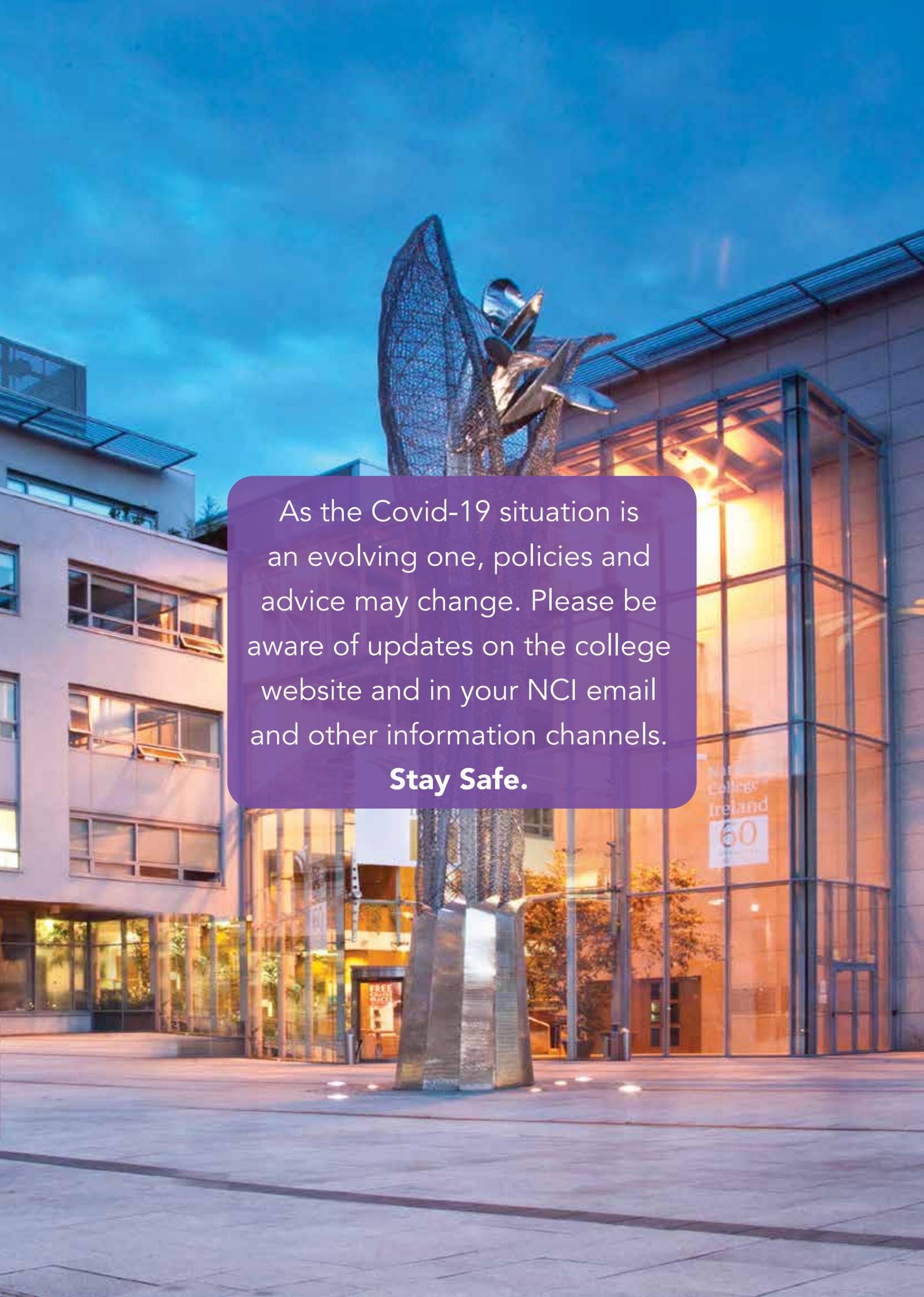
Students who must self-isolate because of exposure to the virus, or who may be experiencing symptoms, are required to contact their GP who will arrange a test. The student must also contact their Programme Director and Programme Co-ordinator as soon as possible through NCI email/Microsoft Teams. If you have been on campus in recent days, your contact log will be required by the HSE as part of contact tracing. In a confirmed case, the HSE will advise all parties as to what the next steps are.

Can you advise if contact logs are envisaged to be a requirement for all students and, if so, how should it be implemented consistently across the College?

All students accessing the campus for study reasons must keep their own Covid-19 Contact Diary. This contact diary should be used to record details of the owner's activities when on campus, including what locations you accessed, who you had contact with, and for how long in each case. These diaries can then be made available to the HSE or others for contact-tracing purposes in the event of a positive Covid-19 case on campus. In addition to your contact log, the following measures are also in place:

- Each person on site will be required to swipe their student card at a Covid Log-in/-out point located at all entrances to the college buildings.

In the unlikely event that students attend face-to-face meetings, they should keep their own record of such meetings and the attendees, to facilitate close contact tracing if necessary. All meetings should remain online via Microsoft Teams until advised otherwise.

A photograph of a modern building at dusk. The building has a large glass facade and a prominent sculpture in the foreground. The sculpture is made of metal mesh and is illuminated. A purple text box is overlaid on the image, containing a message about COVID-19 policies and advice. The text is white and reads: "As the Covid-19 situation is an evolving one, policies and advice may change. Please be aware of updates on the college website and in your NCI email and other information channels. Stay Safe." The background shows a clear blue sky and the building's interior lights are visible through the glass.

As the Covid-19 situation is an evolving one, policies and advice may change. Please be aware of updates on the college website and in your NCI email and other information channels.

Stay Safe.

Contact Info

National College of Ireland

Mayor Street, IFSC, Dublin 1

Tel: Reception (01) 4498500

Course/College Info: 1850 221 721

Email: info@ncirl.ie

Web: www.ncirl.ie



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