



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE



# Teacher Guidelines: Ensuring a safe teaching and learning environment for staff and students at LSE

September 2020

Professor Laura Bear and Dr Claire Gordon

*Professor Laura Bear is Head of the Department of Anthropology at LSE and a member of the UK Government's Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviours (SPI-B), a sub-group of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).*

*Dr Claire Gordon is Director of the LSE Eden Centre for Education Enhancement.*

## Contents – click on the links below to go to different sections of this guidance note

Introduction .....	2
First class/seminar .....	2
How do I keep my students and myself safe while teaching? .....	2
What should I do if a student is taken ill during class? .....	4
What should I do if a student informs me that they are unwell (outside classroom)? .....	4
What should I do if a student tells me they have tested positive for COVID-19? .....	5
What do I do if a student is not wearing a face mask? .....	5
If a student misses a class/seminar, what do I need to do to help them catch up? .....	6
What do I do if a student approaches me by email to say that they do not feel safe in the classroom? .....	6
How do I manage rumours circulating about the health of a student in my class/seminar? ...	6
What do I do if I witness a negative incident between students? .....	7
What do I do if a student complains about the behaviour of another student? .....	7
What should I do if I get sick? .....	7
Who will support me in my role? .....	7
Note to Departments .....	7

## Introduction

These Teacher Guidelines have been designed in line with Government and Public Health England health and safety advice to support teachers in ensuring as safe as possible a teaching and learning environment for staff and students. Our aim is to reassure teaching colleagues that the necessary protections have been put in place and to provide some advice on how to approach teaching this term. **We aim to work collaboratively with our students so that together we can do all we can to take care of each other and remain safe and well during Michaelmas Term.**

LSE has put in place the highest level of COVID-safety measures possible going beyond UK Government guidance. We have made the environment safe for you through the introduction of physical distancing on campus including in classrooms, ensuring good ventilation and by reducing the number of students on campus. In addition, we have put in place our own LSE tracking system ([LSE Trace](#)) that will lead to more effective processes of track, test, trace and isolate and developed the [COVID-Safe Code](#) and the [Quarantine protocols for staff and students](#).

We recognise that all the members of the LSE community are working very hard to ensure a safe campus for all in the Michaelmas Term. This is an evolving situation and therefore these guidelines may be updated in line with the changing advice and conditions.

## First class/seminar

Each class, but especially the first class, is very important for ensuring that students understand and are able to maintain COVID-safe practices. Your first class is an opportunity to have an explicit discussion together with your students about the [COVID-Safe Code](#). You can discuss healthy behaviours and collectively build a sense that 'we are all in it together'. A clear message can be conveyed that if students and teachers do not follow safe practices, the campus will be at risk of closing due to outbreaks of coronavirus. You can also reassure students that all appropriate measures have been taken to ensure safety on campus. Teachers might want to combine the discussion of the code with a conversation around broader ground rules for the seminar/class.

## How do I keep my students and myself safe while teaching?

To support this collective work, the School is asking all teachers to follow a series of practical steps designed to support our COVID-Safe environment.

As a class teacher you are a person with a high contact occupation. A high contact occupation is one in which you work with diverse groups of people who might not otherwise interact. Each class is already a mixture of various social networks (students can be from many departments and are not likely to all live in one place together) and by teaching more than one class you expose yourself to these multiple networks and, crucially, you also join these various networks to other classes you teach. This means that you need to pay special attention to your health and to that of others by following protective behaviours.

In addition, as a teacher you are involved in indoor work that involves projecting your voice and speaking intensely over a period of time. Since COVID-19 spreads by aerosol transmission as well as through droplet dispersal this means that potentially you could be the source of a wide transmission to the group you are teaching (a so-called 'super-spreader').

Infection is mitigated by protective behaviours and environments, along with the duration of contact.

The protective mitigating behaviours that are most important for LSE class teachers are:

- Where possible, making sure that windows (where present) and the door of the classroom is open (prevents build-up of COVID-19 aerosol transmission over time). Estates will make sure that rooms without windows are appropriately ventilated but, where possible, keep the door of the classroom open in these rooms as well.
- Wiping room equipment down before using it (prevents droplet transmission)
- Frequently washing and sanitising your hands
- Wearing a mask when you cross the tutor teaching lines at the front of the classroom to carry out break-out group work.<sup>1</sup> (Teachers do not have to wear masks inside the tutor teaching space but they can choose to do so).
- Limiting break-out group work to one segment of no more than 15 minutes in each teaching session and not spending more than 5 minutes with any one group.
- Taking masks on and off properly without touching the front of the mask when you wear these for break-out group work.
- Wearing a mask on public transport.
- Washing your mask (if reusable) and work clothes as soon as possible on return home.

Please follow this sequence of practices each time you use a classroom. If there is more than one teacher in the classroom then you can share some of this work, but also maintain physical distancing from each other.

- Check if any students have emailed you to let you know they can't wear a mask due to medical or other valid reason to do with disability. Students will carry a sticker on their ID card if they are exempted from the duty to wear a mask but we are also exploring other ways of visibly displaying that they have been provided with an exemption.
- Arrive in good time at the classroom so you can check, if there are windows, that these are open.
- Check all students in the physically distanced queue for the classroom have a mask on (unless they are exempt). (See below guidance for what to do if a student is not wearing a mask).
- Manage entry to classroom so as to maintain physical distancing. Let students in the physically distanced queue into the room one at a time and allow them to take their desk position before letting the next student in.
- When everyone is seated ask them to clean their desk space with the wipes provided.
- At the same time clean the classroom equipment that you will be using with the wipes provided.
- Ask people to dispose of the wipes safely into the provided rubbish bin.
- Keep windows and doors open where possible.
- Do not rearrange any of the furniture in the classroom.

---

<sup>1</sup> Students and staff have been supplied with two free reusable 3 ply face masks as part of their campus welcome pack.

- Do not give out handouts or allow students to share notebooks, pencils or other items. (During the class students can access hand-out through their individual laptops).
- Maintain your position at the front of the class in the designated teaching space and try to maintain a two-metre distance as much as possible.
- When carrying out break-out group discussions instruct the students to turn and face each other, but maintain their safe distance and not move any furniture. This safe distance will be indicated by a marker on the floor underneath each student's chair. Importantly DO NOT hold break-out groups for any longer than 15 minutes in total in any one class.
- When you circulate between break-out groups wear a mask. DO NOT spend more than 5 minutes with any one group.
- Ensure that your class finishes punctually at five minutes to the hour or half hour at the latest.
- Allow enough time at the end of the class for students to leave the classroom one by one in a physically distanced fashion. This can start with the desk nearest the door.
- Do not speak to students at the end of the class in the hallway. Instead remind students to book online office hours or raise questions via Moodle or email.

#### **What should I do if a student is taken ill during class?**

- Stop the class and reassure the group in line with the safety provisions that are already put in place.
- If the student is well enough, they should be asked to go home/to their place of residence using whatever form of transport is most practical and wear a mask, employ good hand hygiene and social distance at all times. They should also be told to contact NHS for advice, either on 111 or via [NHS 111 ONLINE](#).
- If the student is not well enough, take the student to the nearest quarantine room (currently the Student Salon, which can be accessed via Security, extension 666 on campus) where they can wait for assistance (from friends or family).
- Refer the student to [student quarantine protocol](#).
- Tell the student to contact the LSE Trace system for advice on what to do next.

#### **What should I do if a student informs me that they are unwell (outside classroom)?**

- Ascertain whether the student needs immediate medical support.
- If the student is well enough, they should be asked to go home/to their place of residence using whatever form of transport is most practical and wear a mask, employ good hand hygiene and social distance at all times. They should also be told to contact NHS for advice, either on 111 or via [NHS 111 ONLINE](#).
- Refer the student to [student quarantine protocol](#).
- Advise the student that they should contact their Academic Mentor or other contact nominated by your department.
- Advise the student that they should not attend class until they are feeling better.
- Explain to the student the alternatives to F2F teaching and how you can support them to catch up (e.g. office hour).
- Reassure the student that many students may miss a class/seminar in the course of a term.
- Encourage the student to regularly access and engage with course Moodle site.

- Remind the student to get in touch with their class/seminar partners for notes etc.

### **What should I do if a student tells me they have tested positive for COVID-19?**

- Refer to [student quarantine protocol](#).
- Remind the student that they should self-isolate and that they should not come to class.
- If student has tested positive but does not have serious symptoms, explain the alternatives to F2F teaching and how you can support them to keep up (e.g. office hour).
- Reassure the student of the support that is available to help them catch up.
- Encourage student to visit [Academic Mentoring Portal](#) which outlines range of support available across the School.
- Be alert to extensions that may be required for work that is due.
- Inform the student that if their illness is likely to affect assessed work they can consult the [deferrals procedures](#).

### **What do I do if a student is not wearing a face mask?<sup>2</sup>**

- The School requires students to wear a standard face mask unless they have obtained a health exemption.
- All students who are unable to wear a mask will be expected to [seek an exemption](#) from the Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) on arrival at campus. DWS will notify the Departmental Manager of any exemptions. The students will be asked to notify their class teacher in advance of the first class when the class is taken place on campus.
- Students who seek an exemption from wearing a mask will be asked to wear a visor as an alternative – if possible.
- Any student that has an exemption from wearing a face mask, should have a sticker on their ID card to show that they have registered their exemption with DWS.
- Staff can politely ask to see a student's ID to check if they have an exemption.
- Where you are sure that the student does not have a medical reason for not wearing a mask, you should ask the student to put on their mask upon entry into the classroom.
- Where a student refuses or does not have their mask with them, you should ask the student to leave the classroom.
- If they refuse again, you should cancel the class and notify the School's Senior Advocate for Students, Pete Evanson ([p.evanson@lse.ac.uk](mailto:p.evanson@lse.ac.uk)) of the name and ID of the student concerned. If possible, you should also supply a brief report of the incident.

---

<sup>2</sup> Causing a health and safe concern (e.g. by not wearing a mask unless you have an approved exemption) is a potential disciplinary matter. The Addendum to this year's Conditions of Registration also states that: "If you fail to abide by the School's health and safety guidance, any member of staff may ask you to leave a particular area of the School's premises, such as a teaching room or the library, for a specified period; for example, to the end of the teaching session." If a student does not abide by this request, this is in itself a (further to not wearing a mask) potential disciplinary offence.

**If a student misses a class/seminar, what do I need to do to help them catch up?**

- Reassure the student that many students may miss a class/seminar in the course of a term.
- Encourage the student to engage with the course materials that are available on the course Moodle site.
- Depending on the course/approach to teaching in the department, tell the student that they may be able to join another online class/seminar group.
- Remind students that you are available through office hours and encourage them to set something up once they have recovered
- Encourage the student to talk to other students in the class and where appropriate to get in touch with their Academic Mentor.

**What do I do if a student approaches me by email to say that they do not feel safe in the classroom?**

- Understand whether there is a specific reason for this (e.g. behaviour of other students in the classroom) or whether this relates to their own anxieties/concerns about their health.
- If the concern relates to the behaviour of other students in the classroom, reassure the student that you will watch out for this behaviour in subsequent classes/seminars. Where this behaviour is repeated you should manage it in the way defined in the above answer.
- If the concern relates to a student's own anxieties, you should reassure the students of the safety of campus, referring them to the steps that have been taken. The student should be encouraged to talk to their Academic Mentor and can be reminded of the [various support services](#) that are available to them.

**How do I manage rumours circulating about the health of a student in my class/seminar?**

- Remind the students that the LSE Trace in place is designed to inform them as quickly as possible if they were a close contact of anyone who had become unwell.
- Remind them that the social distancing of desks in the classroom, wearing of masks, and ventilation should protect them from transmission even if they have been in the classroom with a student or teacher who has COVID-19. These measures go beyond those in most workplaces and the government guidelines.
- Reassure the students that seasonal flu and colds are very common in the Winter months in the UK.
- Reach out to the student concerned via an email if they have been absent from class. In this email, as you usually would for an absent student, inquire after their health and if they need any help from you.
- Try to ascertain whether there is any truth to the rumour by contacting the relevant Academic Mentor and Department Manager. They will usually be informed if their mentee is unwell or if there is a case within their department.
- If the rumours are not confirmed, reassure the students that the rumour are unfounded and inform them of the behaviours expected of all students as outlined in the [COVID-Safe Code](#). These specifically mention not stigmatising or assuming that people are unwell with COVID-19.
- If true, you should reassure the students of the procedures that are followed in this situation and that if there is a concern for other students, someone will be in touch

through the LSE Trace system.

#### **What do I do if I witness a negative incident between students?**

- You should intervene and attempt to de-escalate the situation. [Bullying is not permitted](#) within the LSE Community.
- Then you should refer the student to their academic mentor.
- For further advice you can contact Pete Evanson ([p.evanson@lse.ac.uk](mailto:p.evanson@lse.ac.uk)), the School Senior Advocate for Students.

#### **What do I do if a student complains about the behaviour of another student?**

- If a student complains another student is not complying with safety guidance then you should have individual online meetings with each of the students involved to inquire further. For the student who is not complying you can refer them to the [COVID-Safe Code](#) and to the health addendum that they agreed to abide by as part of their conditions of registration. Explain that if they do not follow guidelines this may lead to outbreaks and the shut-down of the campus.
- If a student alleges that they have experienced bullying behaviour from another student then refer them for support to their academic mentor.
- For further advice you can contact Pete Evanson ([p.evanson@lse.ac.uk](mailto:p.evanson@lse.ac.uk)), the School Senior Advocate for Students.

#### **What should I do if I get sick?**

- If you feel unwell while at home you should contact your course convenor/programme director and your Departmental Manager as soon as possible.
- If you feel unwell while on campus, go home as soon as possible and contact the Course Convenor, the relevant Programme Director and/or Deputy Head Teaching and your Departmental Manager.
- If you feel unwell, check whether the symptoms you have are those of COVID-19 rather than the flu or a common cold. If you believe you exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and follow, if necessary, the guidance in the [Staff Quarantine Protocol](#).
- Depending on your symptoms and how you are feeling you could consider delivering your class(es) online as a zoom call.

#### **Who will support me in my role?**

- Your Course Convenor and Department Mentor, along with your Deputy Head of Department (Teaching/Education) will all be able to provide you support within your department if you need it.

#### **Note to Departments**

Where appropriate Departments can make changes to this document to reflect departmental practice such as in terms of key points of contact. However, please note that the first part of **'How do I Keep My Students and Myself Safe While Teaching'** until the end of p. 4 cannot be changed as it follows current epidemiological and health and safety guidance.