COVID 19 UPDATE
For students who are renting directly with Downing Students.

A big thank you to all of our residents and partners who have shown patience and understanding while we at Downing Students have been working constantly to find solutions to alleviate the very difficult circumstances in which we have all found ourselves. We are immensely grateful to our staff who continue to work harder than ever and under great pressure so that we are able to continue to provide all our students with access to safe, secure managed accommodation.

There has been a lot of conflicting information circulated by some universities and accommodation providers which has caused confusion and some distress to our residents. We urge everyone to help the Government to save lives by adhering to current advice and restrictions. Please note the following official statement from Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Universities:

“The Government’s advice is that students remaining at university in England should now stay where they are and not attempt to travel. If you are living in student halls, or private rented accommodation, you should remain there and stay indoors while current restrictions are in force. As the Prime Minister said, staying put and remaining indoors is a crucial step now to slow the rate of transmission of COVID-19, to protect the NHS from being overwhelmed, and save the lives of fellow citizens. The government published advice on staying at home here.”

The Government have responded rapidly with assistance packages to help families and businesses and student finance payments will continue. We want to try to support our students as best as we can by contributing and offering a compromise to help lessen some of the pressures during this time, but also being mindful of our need to keep our buildings open and our staff supported.

We hope the following guidance will offer some reassurance and assistance to those who have rented directly with Downing Students:

Your tenancy agreement
Please be assured that all current Downing student tenancy agreements will remain in place and will expire in the normal manner on their existing contractual expiry dates. Buildings will remain open and normal services provided where possible in line with Government directives.

RESIDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY STAYING IN A DOWNING STUDENT PROPERTY

If you are staying in your room until the end of your current tenancy period

At Downing Students we understand that this is a very uncertain and distressing time. For those of our residents who chose to remain in their accommodation we want to reassure you that our priority is your safety and well-being. Of course, we must follow government restrictions for the benefit of both our residents and our workforce and although our staff may not always remain visible to you, they continue to be available and work harder than ever, on site, so that you can remain safely in your Downing home. Common sense dictates that for your protection some non-essential facilities and services cannot be available for now and we thank you for your patience and understanding.

We are all facing this together and we are grateful also for the cooperation of our residents in abiding by the advice of Public Health England and Government restrictions. On the 26th March, the UK government advised that students remaining at university should now not attempt to travel home while current travel restrictions are in
place. We ask that you continue to follow all government advice, the latest of which can be found here: gov.uk/coronavirus

Extensions
If you are on a 39, 43 or 44 wk. tenancy and the ongoing restrictions imposed by the government don’t change before the end of your tenancy, please contact your halls team to discuss ways we can assist you.

RESIDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY NOT STAYING IN A DOWNING STUDENT PROPERTY

If you have left no belongings in your room and are not intending to return

You will receive 6 weeks rent reimbursement, if:

- you have completed the on-line form by 5pm, 7th April 2020 (see below)
- you have already left your accommodation
- you do not return to your accommodation during the tenancy period
- you have removed all your possessions from your room and shared kitchen
- you have paid in full all your rent outlined in your tenancy
- you have returned keys as set out below

This rent reimbursement payment will be processed after the end of the tenancy. Your deposit will be refunded, in the normal manner, subject to the terms of the tenancy, through the deposit protection service. This is an unprecedented situation and we ask for your patience and understanding whilst we process these payments.

You will need to complete the online form using the link/button at the bottom of the page, to notify us by 5pm 7th April 2020. If we do not receive a completed online form from you by this date we will assume you are staying and we will be unable to process the rent reimbursement payment.

If you have emptied the contents of your room/flat but are still in possession of the keys, your key set must be returned by tracked delivery and be with us no later than 5pm Monday, 13th April 2020. Please note: we will hold your keys to your order. Your tenancy will remain in place until the tenancy contractual expiry date. For security reasons only your fob will be deactivated. If you wish to return please give us 24 hours’ notice to reactivate your fob and collect your key.

If you do not intend to return to live in your accommodation but have been unable to collect your belongings due to current government travel restrictions

You will receive 6 weeks rent reimbursement, if:-

- you have completed the on-line form by 5pm, 7th April 2020 (see below)
- you have already left your accommodation
- you do not return to live in your accommodation during the tenancy period other than a day time visit to collect your belongings
- you have removed all your possessions from your room and shared kitchen (or, if you have been prevented from doing so by government travel restrictions you have, by no later than the termination of the tenancy, authorised us to remove and dispose of your possessions)
• If you are unable to return to the building due to restrictions before the end of your tenancy please get in touch. We will not dispose of your belongings unless we have authorisation to do so.
• you have paid in full all your rent outlined in your tenancy
• you have returned keys as set out below.

This rent reimbursement payment will be processed after the end of the tenancy. Your deposit will be refunded, in the normal manner, subject to the terms of the tenancy, through the deposit protection service. This is an unprecedented situation and we ask for your patience and understanding whilst we process these payments.

You will need to complete the online form, using the link/button at the bottom of the page, to notify us by 5pm 7th April 2020. If we do not receive a completed online form from you by this date we will assume you are staying and we will be unable to process the rent reimbursement payment.

Your tenancy will remain open until the tenancy end date. For security reasons only your fob will be deactivated. If you wish to return please give us 24 hours’ notice to reactive your fob and collect your key.

For your benefit, please see “Extension to Contents Insurance” section below.

If you have left temporarily and intend to return before your tenancy end date
If you intend to return, there is no need to complete the online form, that has been emailed to you. Your room will be there for you for when you are able to safely travel back before the end of your current tenancy period, we ask that you continue to follow all government advice when planning your travel. Please continue to make payments in line with your tenancy agreement.

Extension to Contents Insurance
We understand some of you have already travelled home and are now worried about the belongings you’ve left behind. We wanted to give you an update on the additional coverage and new benefits we have added to your contents insurance together with our partners Endsleigh Insurance to give you peace of mind about your belongings. Further information on the policy can be found on their website

Further to this, if the government restrictions don’t change and your tenancy period is coming to an end, please contact your halls team to discuss ways we can assist you with arranging collection of your things.

HOW TO RETURN YOUR KEYS

Keys must be returned to the property you were living at and contact details can be found here https://www.downingstudents.com/contactus/ We are unable to accept keys given in person to our team, but if you are still in residence you can post in the ‘Reception’ mail boxes. Please keep proof of postage for reference. Please note: we will hold your keys to your order.

PAYMENTS

If you are experiencing problems, as always, our policy is to help as much as we can. For payments please contact payments@downing.com all other queries should be directed to your site team, contact details can be found here https://www.downingstudents.com/contactus/