

Meeting family and friends

Can I still meet with friends or family?

If you live in Oxford you must not meet socially with friends and family in any indoor setting unless you live with them or have formed a [support bubble](#) with them. This includes private homes and any other indoor venues such as pubs and restaurants. You should follow these rules all the time, even if you are seeing friends or family who live in a medium alert level area. You can continue to see friends and family in an outdoor space. When you do so, you must not meet in a group of more than six. This limit of six includes children of any age. You should also follow social distancing rules and limit how many different people you see socially over a short period of time. Meeting in larger groups is [against the law](#).

What would happen if I break the law?

The police can take action against you if you meet in larger groups. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines (fixed penalty notices). You can be fined £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400. If you hold or are involved in holding, an [illegal gathering](#) of over 30 people, the police can issue fines of £10,000. If you live in a high alert level area, **you also cannot meet indoors with people outside of the area, unless exceptions apply.**

Can I meet a friend in a pub or restaurant in another area of Oxfordshire or anywhere else that is in the medium alert level?

No. If you live in Oxford, you must not socialise indoors with people from other households, including in pubs and restaurants. This applies whether you are meeting in Oxford, in Oxfordshire as a whole or in another area at a different alert level.

You can, however, still visit pubs and restaurants indoors with up to six members of your own household or support bubble. You can also go to an outdoor pub or restaurant with up to six people from different households. At least one person in your group should give their contact details to the venue or check-in using the official NHS COVID-19 app so [NHS Test and Trace](#) can contact you if needed.

My friend lives in a lower level area and can still meet people indoors. Can they visit me at home or can we meet in the pub?

No. If you live in Oxford, you must not socialise indoors with people from other households, including at home, in pubs and restaurants. This applies whether you are meeting in Oxford, in Oxfordshire as a whole or in another area at a different alert level. If people are travelling to areas that are under a higher restriction level to where they live, they have to abide by the higher level rules during their visit. **If you**

are unsure what level an area is in, use the [postcode checker](#) on the government's website.

Can I visit a relative or friend in a care home in Oxford?

You should not visit a care home except in exceptional circumstances, for example to visit an individual who is at the end of their life. Read the [guidance on visiting relatives in care homes](#).

What are the exemptions to the household mixing rule?

Exemptions to the household mixing rule apply to people who are in your support bubble or childcare bubble.

In addition, you can visit another household for the following reasons:

- for work purposes, or for the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- for the purposes of education or training
- for the purposes of childcare provided by a registered provider or informal childcare as part of a childcare bubble
- to continue existing arrangements for access to, and contact between, parents and children where the children do not live in the same household as their parents or one of their parents
- to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person
- to provide emergency assistance
- to enable one or more persons in the gathering to avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm
- to visit a person who is dying
- to attend a birth at the mother's request
- to fulfil a legal obligation
- to help with a house move

Travel

Can I travel outside Oxford for work or school?

Yes. People living inside and outside of high level areas can continue to travel for work or school. However, you should limit the number of journeys you make to work, and work from home where possible.

I live in Oxford, can I travel to someone's house in an area that's not subject to high level restrictions?

No. You should not visit other households - this applies whether the household is inside or outside of Oxford or Oxfordshire.

Can I use public transport and car share?

You are advised to use public transport for essential purposes only, such as travelling to school or work. You are encouraged to walk or cycle wherever possible.

It is difficult to socially distance during car journeys, and transmission of coronavirus can occur in this context. So you should avoid travelling with someone from outside your household or your [support bubble](#) unless you can practise social distancing. Read the [guidance on car sharing](#).

Business and continuing to work

Can I go to work in Oxford?

Businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law.

If you are required to travel to an area at a different local COVID alert level (for example to go to work or school), you should follow the guidance for whichever area has the higher alert level. For example, if you live in a medium alert area but work in a high alert area, follow the work advice for a high alert area. If you live in a high alert area but work in a medium alert area, continue to follow the advice for high alert areas.

I run a business in Oxford. What are the rules now?

Restrictions on businesses and venues in high alert level areas include:

- Certain businesses selling food or drink on their premises are required to close between 10pm and 5am.
- Businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm so long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through; orders must be made via phone, online or by post.
- Hospitality venues in ports, on transport services and in motorway service areas do not need to close at 10pm, but must not serve alcohol after that time (see the [full guidance on what businesses are permitted to remain open](#)).
- Businesses must ensure that they operate in a COVID-secure manner, including restrictions on table service and group bookings.
- Certain businesses and venues are required to collect customer, visitor, and staff data to support NHS Test and Trace.

- [The wearing of face coverings for customers and staff in certain indoor settings.](#)
- Businesses must ensure that, if their workers are required to self-isolate, they do not work outside their designated place of self-isolation.
- Businesses and venues must ensure people do not meet in their premises with people from outside of their household or support bubble.
- Businesses and venues that fail to comply with these restrictions may face fines of up to £10,000, prosecution, or in some cases closure.

Read the [full guidance](#) on which businesses and venues are permitted to be open where the local COVID alert level is high on the government's website.

Will shops in Oxford have to close?

As above, businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-secure manner, other than those that remain closed in law.

Childcare

Who can provide childcare support in a high level alert area?

The following people can provide childcare support in private homes:

- registered childcare providers, including nannies
- people in your support bubble
- people in your [childcare bubble](#).

You can link with one other household, such as family members or friends, to provide childcare if the child is aged under 14. Childcare bubbles are to be used to provide childcare only and not for the purposes of different households mixing where they are otherwise not allowed to do so.

Children of parents who are separated can continue to move between households, providing the two separate households are in the same support bubble together.

Friends or family who do not live with you and are not part of a support or childcare bubble must not visit your home to help with childcare.

You can continue to use early years and childcare settings, including childminders and providers who offer before-school or after-school clubs or other out-of-school settings for children.

Can both grandparents from the same household look after my children at the same time?

Yes. Grandparents who live in the same household can link with one other household to provide childcare.

Two sets of grandparents usually look after my children at different times. Is this allowed under the new restrictions?

No. You can only link with one other household to provide childcare.

I'm a grandparent with grandchildren living in different homes. How many can I look after at the same time?

One set of grandchildren from one household only.

Educational settings

How do the changes affect schools, colleges and early years settings in Oxford?

Oxford's schools, colleges and early year settings will remain open; they are following Public Health England and Department for Education guidance on keeping students and staff safe.

Does my child need to wear a face covering at school?

Face coverings should be worn in secondary schools by staff, visitors and students when moving around school in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult.

It will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and where they may inhibit teaching and learning.

Does my child need to wear a face covering on the school bus?

All children over the age of 11 should wear a face covering on council-provided transport from home to school, unless they have specific medical conditions.

How do the changes affect universities and further education (FE) colleges?

Oxfordshire's universities and FE colleges will remain open; they are following Public Health England and Department for Education guidance on keeping students and staff safe. University and college students must follow the specific guidance and rules set by their university or college.

So what are the specific university and FE rules in a high level area?

You can move home and travel to go to university, but there are some stricter rules in place for areas in high alert level areas:

- You must not move backward and forward between your permanent home and term time address during term time – subject to limited exemptions set out in law.
- Students living at their university term time address in a high alert level area should follow the same guidance on meeting other people and travel as others in that area.
- Commuter students (those who live at a family home and travel to/from university each day) should be able to continue to travel to/from their university as required, this being for education purposes. If you commute into a high alert level area to go to university, you must not:
 - meet people you do not live with in their home inside the area, unless they're in your household, childcare or support bubble
 - host people you do not live with in your home, if they live in the affected area, unless they're in your childcare or support bubble
 - meet people you do not live with in their student halls, whether inside or outside of the area, unless they're in your childcare or support bubble.
- If you move out of, or currently live outside of, an affected area you should not:
 - host people you do not live with in your home or student halls if they live in a high alert level area (unless they're in your household, support bubble or childcare bubble).

House moves and home maintenance

Can tradespeople (eg cleaner, plumber, builder or electrician) do work inside my home in Oxford?

Yes. Official/registered tradespeople can go to other people's homes for work purposes as long as they follow national guidance on how to work there safely.

Can I move home?

Estate and letting agents and removals firms can continue to work and people looking to move home can continue to undertake viewings. Follow the [national guidance on moving home safely](#) which includes advice on social distancing and [wearing a face covering](#)

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Weddings, civil partnerships and funerals

Are there restrictions on weddings, civil partnerships and funerals taking place in Oxford?

Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and receptions and funerals must only take place in COVID-secure venues or in public outdoor spaces, unless in exceptional circumstances. For England, the following attendance limits apply:

- Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are limited to 15 people.
- Wedding receptions and celebrations can continue for up to 15 people in the form of a sit-down meal and in a COVID-secure setting, not in a private home.
- Funerals (including ceremonies at crematoria) are limited to 30 people depending on the venue.
- Wakes or linked ceremonial events (such as stone-settings) before or after the funeral are limited to 15 people and must not take place in private homes. Where food or drink is consumed, this should be in the form of a sit-down meal.
- All other religious or belief-based ceremonies or celebrations are limited to six people.

Anyone working at these ceremonies or events is not included as part of the person limit.

The additional restriction on mixing with other households within indoor settings does not change the attendance limits.

Within these larger gatherings, people do not need to limit their interaction to groups of six or their own household, but social distancing should still be followed between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.

People living outside of a high alert level area can travel to Oxfordshire to attend an event, but they must not meet with another household indoors.

Read the guidance on [small marriages and civil partnerships](#) and [managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic](#).

Can I attend a place of worship in Oxford?

You can attend places of worship for a service if you're in a high alert level area. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble. You should follow the [national guidance on the safe use of places of worship](#).

Gyms, swimming pools and exercise classes

Can I go to a gym, leisure centre, a swimming pool or attend gym classes in Oxford?

Yes, provided these venues have the required COVID-secure risk assessments and guidelines in place you can go to the gym, gym class, leisure centre or a swimming pool.

Organised indoor sport, exercise classes and other activity groups are only permitted indoors if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). Where it is likely that households (or support bubbles) will mix, these activities must not go ahead. Social interaction before and after any sport or exercise should be limited to people from the same household or support bubble. All businesses and venues should follow [COVID-secure guidelines](#) to protect customers, visitors and workers.

Restaurants, cafes and pubs in Oxford

What are the rules for restaurants, cafes and pubs in Oxford?

Hospitality businesses must ensure that:

- They operate in a COVID-secure manner, including restrictions on table service and group bookings.
- People do not meet inside their premises with people from outside of their household or support bubble.
- At least one person in a group should give their contact details to the venue or check in using the official NHS COVID-19 app so [NHS Test and Trace](#) can contact them if needed.

Businesses and venues selling food or drink on their premises are required to close between 10pm and 5am. Businesses and venues selling food for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm so long as this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through.