Introduction

Ahoy there!

Dear Friend,

We’ve written this with a bit of a maritime metaphor throughout. Like mariners rounding Cape Horn, or sailing into the High Arctic, all that you know now is that you’ve got a tricky time ahead, but that when you return home to port things must continue vaguely as before. The ship’s owners (or your tutors) may be pressing you to make good time (or complete your essays on time), but only you can see the sea state in front of you. Only you can see if you have a favourable wind, or if there high waves slowing your progress.

It is important to remember that as well as the landscape around us (physical, topographical or bathymetric), we also exist in our own emotional landscapes. Since these are not directly observable to those around us, it’s easy to dismiss them, but they are often as important as what the view out of our window is.

The game, friend, is to sail our ship round the proverbial Cape Horn of self-isolation, with all the sails, rigging and crew in one piece. If we do that, and arrive a few days late (or with a problem sheet handed in late), we will be in a much better state for the rest of our journey (term) than if we limp into harbour with our mast floating off somewhere in the Roaring Forties. For the astronomically inclined, you may find this CGPGrey video helpful as well.
Remember, it’s really important to reach out early and reach out frequently. At the back of this booklet there’s a list of people who are very happy to talk with you if things aren’t going brilliantly, you’re anxious or just plain old bored. Drop us an email and we can have a chat!

Wishing you a safe voyage through self-isolation,

The Christ Church Welfare Team

Acknowledgements

Ship Sponsors

This leaflet was initially produced by the Peer Supporters of Exeter College, but we thought that it was both helpful and interesting, and have consequently decided to adapt it for Christ Church. We are grateful to Exeter’s Peer Supporters for their work on this.

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Vectors from vecteezy.com and freepik.com

Colour palette: Terra
Your physical environment
KEEPING THE SHIP SEAWORTHY

Not to sound like your mum, but “Keep your room tidy!”. We know, we know, but it really does help. Remember, for the next fourteen days, you’re in here (no dropping down to University Parks or the Botanical Gardens to look at some nice things), so this (and your window view) is what you get to look at.

Keeping things tidy also:

1. Helps establish a sense of control over your immediate surroundings
2. Is, you know, hygienic, which is helpful given the circumstances.

On the point of hygiene, try to keep things as clean as possible. Throw Hall food boxes away once you’ve finished eating; wash up straight after dinner; put the dry things away (etc., etc...).

You won’t notice it at first, but you also need to air your room. Even just half an hour of fresh air will make things much more pleasant in there.

Keep on top of managing your laundry, and have it all ready to go when you make ‘landfall’! If you do need to do a load of washing, sadly you aren’t able to access the laundry facilities, so keep stuff fresh by spot washing with a bar of soap, rinsing off in your shower, wringing out, then airing. Febreze helps too!

It is vitally important that you follow all college rules relevant to self-isolation. These will be set out on an information sheet which will be posted under your door. The headline is that you should not leave your room or household except for in an emergency (this includes fire alarms).
On any voyage, it’s important to manage the physical health of the crew. You should keep an eye on any symptoms you are experiencing, but not obsess over them (easier said than done). Make a note of them in a diary (or piece of paper...), manage them, and then try to move on. If you’re in a household with other people, help support those people and their symptoms – it’s both good for them, and helps provide you with some purpose.

If your symptoms get worse, contact Midge (midge.curran@chch.ox.ac.uk) for non-urgent queries during office hours, or 111. In a medical emergency contact 999.

Make sure you eat plenty (and healthily!). The Hall Manager will get in touch after you are informed you need to isolate to organise the delivery of hot meals to your room. If you have any concerns/questions, you can email them on hallmanager@chch.ox.ac.uk.

If you need something extra (like some fresh fruit or chocolate), ask your friends to drop some by, but make sure that they stay outside your room, and you keep the door shut until they’re gone.

Try and do 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day, such as yoga or pilates (remember ChCh has a subscription to studentstretch.com, see the sports rep’s emails!). This will help your mood immensely and get you into a routine. Some recommendations include:

- Yoga with Adriene
- Yoga with Tim
- Hamilton dance workout
- Down dog (30-day free trial)
Most of the time, we mark out the passage of our days by moving around - from our room, to the library, to hall, to a pub... [not sure after that]. At the moment, and especially now you’re confined to your household, you have to manually stake out new landmarks. Having a daily routine is essential to navigating the emotional turbulence of self-isolation, so however you achieve it, strive to have one you can stick to. Having a written copy on your wall or a digital copy on your phone’s calendar might help schedule things and give you structure. It might also be helpful to do this as a household (see overleaf).

Try and keep regular sleep and meal times. Make sure your routine includes activities you enjoy as well (be that exercise, art, or music, or whatever nourishes you!) You might find it helpful to have a small non-academic goal to work towards throughout this time (e.g. knitting something) to keep you motivated. Arrange in advance to be in contact with friends and family throughout your self-isolation as an inoculation against loneliness.

Helpful mental health resources

_Counselling service resources_: Podcasts, blogs, and other COVID-themed self-help

_Togetherall_: 24/7 access to a global welfare community, sign up for free with your Oxford email address

_NHS advice_

_Headspace_: Meditation app (free with student Spotify subscription)
If you are religious, it may be helpful keep to daily religious observances more strictly than normal not only for the spiritual and emotional benefits, but also as a rock around which to build the rhythm of your day. Try to avoid consuming alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs, particularly on your own, in order to cope with the situation. In the longer term this won’t offer much succour, and is likely to damage your physical health.

It’s important to remember that when you leave this period, you’ll be rejoining a pattern of academic work, so as best you can try and keep up with your course work. If you can’t for any reason (remember, this could be something about your emotional landscape, not just your physical health/practicalities of your predicament), let it go, and turn to a task that is soothing and rooting to metaphorically fertilise your desk. Remember that a burned-out crew cannot sail well, so you deserve to be kind to yourself during this time.

Household rules

Keeping crew morale

If you’re in a household with other people, try and have shared points during the day (e.g. eating together) to encourage you all to keep to a shared and rooted rhythm, and also to reduce any loneliness you might feel. If you’re comfortable with this, you could work/play in each other’s rooms or shared living areas to have a change of scene. Perhaps you could learn something new together, or achieve a common goal (e.g. a jigsaw puzzle, or a musical piece).

We also recognise that this is a tense time for everyone and with emotions running high, it’s possible that things might boil over a bit with your household. Try your best to be kind and generous to those around you, to oil the wheels of household interactions. Contact people outside the household if you need to talk things through (see overleaf).
Leaving isolation

**MAKING LANDFALL**

When your self-isolation ends, try and ease yourself back into college life. Take some time to revisit those places you’ve been away from for a while. If you are still feeling worse for wear after coronavirus or self-isolation, remember to be kind to yourself, since you’re not likely to be able to get up to “usual service” for a while yet.

If you want to talk things through with someone, reach out! It’s always better to talk things through before they wear you out beyond coping.

**Help and where to find it**

**CONTACTING THE COASTGUARD**

We recognise things may not always go to plan during your voyage, and while welfare may look very different in self-isolation, there is still plenty of support available so please reach out if you need to speak to someone! The Wardens can also be contacted overnight via the Plodge (01865 276150), so there is always someone that you can speak to if you need, 24/7.

The *welfare section* of the college website and the brilliant *welfare handbook* sets out the full list of welfare resources available to Christ Church students. A brief list can be found on the following pages.
Captain's Daily Checklist

- Make your bed
- Get showered and dressed
- Open your windows
- Regular, healthy meals
- Stay hydrated: consider a water-tracker app
- 30min of exercise
- Call a friend or family member
- Check in with your other household members
- Spend at least 1 hour away from internet/screens
- Reasonable, regular bedtime