

Some Guidelines on Safety and Security for our Students

PERSONAL SAFETY

STREET AWARENESS

When you are walking in the street, appear confident. Some thieves target tourists or strangers.

Do not look lost. Plan your journeys and carry a map (but avoid studying it too obviously). If you use an app such as CityMapper, it will alert you when to get off the bus/tube and show you what route to walk.

Walk on well-lit roads, especially late at night. You should try to avoid quiet roads. If you think you are being followed move to a busy place, such as a shop or restaurant, if you can. Be aware of the people around you (in cars or on bikes as well as other pedestrians). Do not use headphones when walking alone at night.

Keep away from dangerous areas (ask local people if there are places to avoid). Ignore rude people who shout abuse at you. Try to avoid gangs and groups of drunken people. Show respect to other people at all times.

You do not have to carry your passport with you in England. We can make a photocopy of your passport for you to carry with you instead. It is also a good idea to take photographs of your passport and visa to keep on your phone.

Keep a copy of important telephone numbers, credit card numbers and the Frances King emergency number with you.

BUSES AND TRAINS

Try to sit near other passengers if you are travelling by yourself on public transport. Avoid empty train carriages with no one else or with just one person or one group of people. The lower part of a double-decker bus may be safer than upstairs. Sit close to exits. However, also be careful with your bag/phone if sitting right next to the exit. Sometimes a thief will grab someone's bag just as they are getting off the bus.

Look for the location of passenger alarms when you get onto a train. On buses, speak to the driver if you feel unsafe or if another passenger is making you uncomfortable.

TAXIS

If you don't feel safe walking home, use a taxi.

The safest choice is to use a licenced taxi (for example a black cab, which can be stopped in the street). You can pay using a credit card if you don't have cash on you.

If you use a mini-cab, they may not take credit cards. Make sure that it is working for a licensed company and that you order it from a booking office. Do not accept a ride from someone who asks you in the street if you need a taxi. Mini cabs are not allowed to accept a booking on the street, so if someone is offering to give you a ride they are committing a crime, and probably not someone you want to ride with!

Many people like to use taxi apps, such as Hailo, Uber, Kabbee or Swiss Cottage Cars, as this means you don't need to pay cash, and your journey and driver are tracked by the app.

If you want, you can ask your taxi driver not to drive away until you have entered your house safely. Just ask: "*Would you mind waiting here until I've gone in?*"

CARS

Do not get into a stranger's car.

If someone offers to give you a lift home or to take you out somewhere in a car, don't worry about refusing if you have any doubt about your safety.

You can say something like: "*Thank you, but I prefer to walk*".

PUBS AND CLUBS

Do not leave your drink unattended in a pub or club. Ask a friend to watch your drink if you want to dance or go to the bar or toilet.

Someone may try to add drugs or strong alcohol to your drink (this is known as spiking the drink).

Avoid arguments or fights. Always show respect to other people and be prepared to apologise if it will help to calm down a situation – even if you are right and the other person is wrong!

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Do not enter someone's private property (for example, their home) unless you feel that you can trust that person. Keep out of a stranger's bedroom.

Depending on the situation, you can say something like: "*If you don't mind, I'll wait for you outside*" or "*I'm afraid that it's time for me to go home*" or "*Can we go to a pub instead?*"

PROPERTY AND MONEY

HOLD ON TO YOUR BAG

Women and foreigners are most commonly targeted by thieves and pickpockets. Keep your bag in front of you in crowded areas, with the fastening near your body. Be particularly careful with rucksacks (backpacks) - do not wear them on your back in busy areas. Close your bag securely.

Be careful if anyone pushes you or try to distract your attention. For example, someone may drop coins on the ground, spill a drink, knock your shoulder, ask you to take a photograph, or ask for directions. Another person may be stealing your things while this is happening. Never allow anyone to distract you while you are taking money out of a cash machine. Thieves often operate in small groups and may use young children. Thieves often wear hats or coats with hoods to try to avoid being identified on security cameras. If you think someone is acting suspiciously, hold onto your bag and move away quickly.

Be careful in crowded areas: for example, in stations during rush hour (8-9am, 5-7pm), in busy shopping areas (such as Oxford Street), in tourist areas (such as Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square or Baker Street), in airports and in hotel lobbies and in / just outside busy Underground stations. Be

careful in a café, cinema, pub or other place of entertainment where your attention may not be on your bag - do not leave your bag on the floor.

Do not leave your bag unattended in a public place, even if you want to go to the toilet. It may be stolen, or if it is considered suspicious it may be destroyed by police.

Don't have your name and address visible on any luggage tags (or on your keys). A thief may read it and target your home while you are travelling.

MONEY / JEWELLERY

Try to keep your valuables out of sight.

Be careful if you are wearing jewellery or an expensive watch (someone may try to snatch these from your body).

Be careful after you have used your wallet or purse. Someone may be watching where you put it and may start to follow you. Avoid keeping your wallet or purse in your back pocket in crowded places, or in a coat pocket that does not close with a zip or button.

Be careful after you have withdrawn cash from a bank or cash machine. If possible, use a machine which is inside a bank (avoid busy places such as stations).


Do not to carry a lot of cash with you. If you have a bank account, you can use your debit card for most of your shopping. In London most people don't use cash very often, so it is normal to see people pay for a coffee with their credit card!

You can get cards from companies like [Revolut](#) or [Monzo](#) to have a card they can use in the UK without paying international charges. ([Here](#) is a comparison of the two services if you need help deciding.)

Be suspicious of anyone who offers to help you to use a ticket machine or a cash machine. Tell the person you don't need any help. At underground stations there is usually an official employee (in uniform) to help you with the ticket machines – don't accept help from anyone else!

It is normal to only have about £20-30 in cash on you in London. If you have to carry larger amounts of cash on you, the safest way is to use a money-belt.

Keep spare cash, your passport and other important documents locked inside your suitcase, which you keep in your room. If your room has a safe, you should use that.

Do not write your credit card details on an internet page which is not secure. If a page is secure, a lock mark should appear by the address: .

IDENTIFICATION

It is not necessary to carry identification in the UK. We need to see your passport on your first day at the school or when you check in to a residence/hotel, but other than that you do not need to carry it with you.

Instead just carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa) and keep a digital copy in your phone.

If a police officer stops you in the street and demands ID – first you need to be sure they are a real police officer as this can be part of a crime where a fake police officer steals all your cash! If they are in uniform, then it is quite obvious they are a real police officer, but if they are dressed in normal clothes, then a British police officer will always show you ID and tell you who they are. It is ok to ask to look more closely to their identification. If they are a real police officer and want to see some ID,

show them the photocopy of your passport. Police officers in the UK will never demand a payment of cash from you. If they tell you that you are in trouble, say you want to go to the police station, but then only go in an official police car (which a real police officer can easily arrange). It is a serious crime to pretend to be a police officer, so if anyone ever does this, you must report it to the Police.

MOBILE PHONES / ELECTRONIC GOODS

Keep your mobile phone with you but be careful about using it in busy places and in the street at night. Thieves sometimes wait outside busy stations or places of entertainment and look for people using phones when they come out: the first thing a lot of people do when they get out of the Underground is to check for messages, so the thieves wait there and grab the phone when they take it out. Theft of mobile phones is quite common. Your phone could be taken from your bag or snatched from your hand or a table.

Make sure that you hold your bag securely and that you are aware of people around you while you are talking on your phone.

If you notice a CCTV (closed circuit television) camera, stand in the view of the camera while you are using your phone.

Use the security lock on your phone. This will stop someone else from using your phone.

Put security marks on your mobile phone, tablet, laptop, camera or other expensive equipment which you carry with you. Avoid using a laptop on trains or in public places.

Make sure that your insurance will cover the cost of replacing any expensive electronic goods which you carry with you.

PINS

When you use a cash machine, make sure that nobody can see you typing in your PIN (your personal identification number) at a cashpoint or in a shop. Do not allow anyone to stand close behind you or to distract you when the card is released by the machine (for example, by dropping something or by tapping your shoulder). It is normal to cover your hand while entering your PIN, so no one will be offended if you do this.

Do not write down your PIN.

LOCKS

When you are leave your house/apartment/room, close all the windows and use window locks if you have them. Lock any doors that lock with a key (some doors lock automatically, some need you to fully turn the key to secure the lock).